

The mountain stands alone.

Between conservation in Pirin National Park and tourism demand

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(30hp/credits)



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Lund University Centre for
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Abstract

A balance between conservation of nature and economic development is becoming harder and harder to achieve. While, biodiversity is blooming under strict protection laws, people are increasingly lacking tools and resources to feed their local economic growth and development. The following thesis aims at investigating the conflict around ski zone Bansko, located in Pirin National Park in Bulgaria. The discrepancies between conservation and development can be clearly observed in this particular case. Decisions leaning towards loosening the regulations over protected areas have led to continuous protests and public debates, where stakeholders cannot find a common agreement regarding the management of the park. The specific inquiry I am going to impose, brings the attention to perceptions of nature and different values stakeholders and groups in society attributes to nature. I ask what the differences between perceptions of nature from different stakeholders are and if they can be considered as part of the problem. These perceptions were obtained from official documents, statements, reports etc and analysed with the framework of discourse analysis. Perceptions of nature related mainly to instrumental value and with some stakeholders – intrinsic as well. The differences appeared in the interpretations each stakeholder places on instrumental value of the mountain – a resource for different development paths.

I further asked whether individual perceptions could also differ from organisational one – represented by the stakeholders. Individual perceptions were acquired through semi-structure interviews and showed a greater variety of both instrumental and intrinsic value. On individual level could be observed a genuine concern about the environment and the main theme revolves around the mountain itself. While, stakeholders seem to use the mountain debates as a platform to bring about other issues and topics they seem to think are more relevant – like political demands, economic rights, identity issues. Questions remain about whether stakeholders are debating about the nature, or just about their interests and agendas.

Keywords: tourism, nature conservation, mountain, Pirin, value, perceptions

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Abbreviations

MEW - Ministry of environment and water

ABTOTA - Association of Bulgarian tourism operators and tourism agents

BBF - Bulgarian biodiversity foundation

NBT - National Tourism Board

PNPA - Pirin National Park Agency

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1. Introduction

“The world is in the midst of an unparalleled period of biotic change driven by human alterations of the natural environment.”

(Ladle & Whittaker, 2011, p. 247)

Increasingly around the world biodiversity is becoming a pressing issue, undermining the health and stability of ecosystems and compromising the ecosystem benefits humans obtain from nature (Hooper et al., 2012; Therville, Mathevet, Bioret & Antona, 2018). The crisis is induced by human activity – transforming land masses and habitats (Ladle & Whittaker, 2011). These changes can be tackled with designation of protected areas (Chape, Harrison, Spalding & Lysenko, 2005), the purpose of which is to create conditions where human interference is minimum in order for biodiversity to continue to exist (Phillips, 2003, June). Biodiversity and stability of ecosystems are an important factor for increasing human systems capabilities to tackle and adapt to climate change (IPCC, 2014).

Pirin National Park is a protected area in Bulgaria, with one of the highest status for conservation. Thus, its continuous preservation plays important role for future generations (History, n.d.). The park has achieved international recognition with entering the UNESCO World Heritage lists (UNESCO, 1983). The mountain provides habitat for many endemic and endangered species and has unique landscape features, which are strategic for conservation in the Balkan region (Grunewald, & Scheithauer, 2010). On the other hand, the mountain is of crucial importance for sustaining local economies and inducing regional development. Beside the traditional forms of land use - agriculture, forestry etc, this particular mountain has been developed as a tourism destination and today in the city of Bansko winter sport tourism has become “the most dynamic and fastest growing branch of the economy” (Grunewald, & Scheithauer, 2010, p. 27). The high concentration of people and infrastructure results in increasing pressures on the ecosystems ((Grunewald, & Scheithauer, 2010), which further compromises the attractiveness of the mountain.

2. Problem and aim

“By and large, our present problem is one of attitudes and implements.”

(Leopold, 1989, pp. 225-226)

2.1. Nature, value and society

When Aldo Leopold wrote about the Land ethic (2014), he argued that one of the most important ingredients towards conservation are “love, respect, admiration and high regard for the value of the land” (Leopold, 2014 p. 120). His vision about addressing threats for human welfare from the

changing environment and the fear of an upcoming crisis, called for a deeper understanding and inquiry of how people value nature (Piccolo, 2017). Foster (1997) poses some fundamental questions about the relationship between value and environment – what is the value assigned to nature and should that be considered in actions towards the environment and further, is studying human values going to illuminate the ways the environment and the economy interact. The economic system does have significant effects on the environment, up to the point when a new period in Earth’s geological history has formed - the Anthropocene, which is now clearly distinguished from the previous - the Holocene (Trachtenberg, 2015). On the other hand, the environment is recognised as a supporting structure for the development, welfare and growth of the economic system (Foster, 1997).

The interactions between society and nature happen through various activities and are related to ways of managing landscapes and ecosystems and to increasing rates of biodiversity loss and resources exhaustion. Preservation debates call for challenging the paradigm of economic growth and an examination of how nature is perceived and handled (Kopina, Washington, Gray & Taylor, 2018). However, human impact on natural processes seems more deplorable in its negative consequences on ecosystems (Rogers, 2000). The environment exists only to satisfy our needs and support our development, thus having only instrumental value for the human society, which is not against some sustainability theories that engage with the concepts of natural capital and economic valuation (Foster, 1997). Raising the question if this way of approaching nature has a positive view and does it all perceive nature as valuable (Foster, 1997).

Assigning value to nature is a process that actors in society perform when they attribute importance to things or processes (De Vreese, Leys, Dendoncker, Van Herzele & Fontaine, 2016). This takes part in most decisions regarding use of natural resources and landscape management (Jacobs et al, 2016). Whether differing values are implicitly or explicitly expressed, they are part of the decision-making process and the justification of its consequences in society (Kelemen et al, 2015). Further, theoretical inquiries about value are a central topic of debates regarding environmental ethics (Palmer, 2003), where questions centre around different versions and perceptions of value, how these values are distributed in society, what is their origin and how different values are used, accepted and recognised (Butler & Acott, 2007).

2.2. Possible source of a conflict

A study by Turnpenny and Russel (2017) assessed the UK’s ecosystem service network in several aspects all revolving around what ideas about nature are carried out on policies, how these ideas vary between different stakeholders. This variety and pluralism of values is a clear indicator of lack of singular assigned and agreed upon meaning about value and nature and thus can become a source

for conflicts and heated debates about decisions regarding the environment (Turnpenny & Russel, 2017). Dryzek (2013) argues that these conflicts are expressed with higher intensity when decision about the environment have to be taken - often debating and conflicting discourses form public disputes. Going back to Turnpenny and Russel's study (2017) they claim that understanding different values about nature provides a complementary approach towards resolving such conflicts. However, more often than not, the debates revolve around the policy itself, distracting the attention from problem definition and furthermore ideas about value (Mertha, 2010). This applied to environmental policy decisions and development pathways will shift the focus towards properly defining the problems the environment is facing and the ideas we have about nature. Furthermore, exploring the ideas also leads to uncovering deep, principal worldviews, which orient directions of policies (Turnpenny & Russel, 2017). However, focusing on ideas and concepts behind policies, does not exclude the importance of examining practices (Turnpenny & Russel, 2017). The relationship between ideas and worldviews and how they play out in practice is of even greater importance when decisions concern the environment.

Uncovering these values and perceptions can assist in creating a multi-valuation tool - integrating ecological, socio-cultural, economic, but also spiritual, philosophical values which can strengthen the decision-making processes in regard to land use or resource exploitation (Jacobs et al. 2016). Monetary and non-monetary value could complement each other in order to uncover the differences in stakeholders' perception about ecosystems and nature as a whole, work towards resolution of conflicts and improve communication between different actors (Lamarque et al, 2011). In order to achieve sustainable management of natural resources, in this case of the Pirin mountain region, this plurality of values and perceptions from stakeholders should be better understood and taken into consideration (Walz, Gret-Regamey & Lavorel, 2016); what people believe is important and further how they perceive nature - its role in society, its value and people's obligations towards it (Butler & Acott, 2007). Evenmore, when the environment and landscape management is a major area for conflicts between communities, institutions, private sector actors and their expressed contestable values and perceptions (O'Neill, 1997). I understand investigating this plurality to be directly related to questions regarding environmental ethics and core perceptions people have of the environment. For Aldo Leopold (2014) an ethical approach will be to extent the boundaries of our ethical system towards animal or water, to living and non-living nature, compound in the land itself. This is related also to how we devalue certain aspects of nature in order to maintain current economic system and thus reproducing the paradigm of growth (Kenney-Lazar & Kay, 2017). Making the plurality explicit will also be a powerful tool for emancipatory and equitable policies (Kenney-Lazar & Kay, 2017).

2.3. Focus and aim

Ideas are not something that occurs isolated and have no relation to actions - especially in public decisions that regard the use of natural resources - the mountain - which makes the effort of illuminating them theoretically and in practice of equal importance (Turnpenny & Russel, 2017). Bearing in mind the importance of investigating values of nature, I will look into different stakeholders' perceptions of nature in the case of ski zone Bansko and Pirin National Park in Bulgaria. Investigating official documents, statement, published opinions, management plans, etc, I strive to understand whether stakeholders have differences in perceiving nature and whether they value the park differently. Additionally, my investigation leads towards the discrepancies between stakeholders as organisational or institutional entities in society and individual perceptions from people that are part of those stakeholder entities. Leading to the formulation of the following research questions. With answering them I hope to contribute an important point of view to the conflict, which will help stakeholders better understand each other's positions and come to a decision that will benefit nature and satisfy at least some of their demands.

RQ1. What are the perceptions of nature of different stakeholders involved in the conflict around Ski zone Bansko and Pirin National Park?

RQ1.1 What value do they attach to it - instrumental or intrinsic?

RQ1.2. Can different understandings of the value of nature be considered part of the conflict between stakeholders?

RQ2. How does the discourse around nature relate to other issues and controversies between the stakeholders?

RQ3. What differences can be observed in perceptions and values between individual level of understanding and that of a stakeholder's one?

With the first research question I focus on investigating the stakeholders as represented in the face of organisations, institutions, companies. My aim is to find out if they have different perceptions and place different value on the park. For this I am going to use two generalized concepts - instrumental and intrinsic value - RQ1.1. And additionally, ask if they are part of the reason for the conflict. RQ2 regards the discourse of nature and whether the debates take different direction and the attention and emphasis is placed on policies, economy, development quarrels rather than nature itself. RQ3 seeks to understand if individuals have also differing understandings of nature and value it in different ways, compared to the stakeholder's perceptions.

3. Methods and Research design

In order to answer the research questions, I have applied a qualitative mixed method approach - combination of discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews - aimed at examining the perceptions stakeholders have concerning nature and its value, regarding the case of development of Pirin national Park and ski resort Bansko in Bulgaria. As Bryman (2012) noted, qualitative research strategies are usually inductive interpretivist and constructivist, where the theoretical explanation comes after the data collection and follows the findings. However, in my study I am drawing upon theoretical concepts beforehand, for the purpose of formulating my research aim and discovering the proper data. I have also maintained an open attitude and have not limited the scope of my data and analysis based on my theoretical understandings. The social constructionist approach as an epistemological standing is reflected in my chosen methods. This position reflects on the premises that perceptions and actions of actors continuously form the social sphere and further, that perceptions are constantly revised by actors or stakeholders (Bryman, 2012). This implied dynamic of meanings and perceptions compliments my study rather well and reflects on the complexity of people's perception of nature.

3.1. Setting the stage

In order to answer my research questions, I first had to contextualise the problem - both in terms of historical development and significance - and identify the main involved stakeholders. For that purpose, I conducted review of the historical development of the park as a protected area through governmental orders and the management plans that set the governance structures. Further, my review included UNESCO decisions and reports made by the agency, responsible for governing the park. This helped me develop a thorough understanding of the development of conservation efforts and the trends in the policies that allowed for the emergence of the ski zone Bansko. This information also was useful for the identification of the main stakeholders involved with either the protection of the park or the development of the ski zone.

3.2. Data for discourse analysis

The second step of my research involved collecting my main data set, namely statements, letters of appeal, transcribed interviews, reports, recordings of round table discussion, strategies for development, presentations of future development plans etc, from the different stakeholders – a list of documents used can be found in the Appendix 1. This set of data was collected in order for me to achieve the aim of the research and to answer RQ1 and RQ2. Every document has been acquired online from official channels of each stakeholder. Understandingly, not every type of document could

be found for each of the stakeholders and some of them have published significantly more statements on the matter than others. This does not reflect the importance each of the stakeholders has to play in the conflict, since some of the stakeholders have been and are being under public pressure - for example the consortium responsible for the development of the ski zone Banskó, the local municipality and the consultancy companies, that have worked towards future management plans.

3.2.1. Discourse Analysis

This data set is analysed with the aim of uncovering different discourses each of the stakeholders constructs about nature and its perceived value. The way people communicate their understanding of the world, how they frame it or perceive it is understood as discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Discourse analysis provides me with a flexible framework for uncovering specific objects of interest, which in the context of this thesis are nature and its value. Illuminating the different discourse stakeholders use, will point out the different perceptions and understandings they have about the nature. As a method discourse analysis is a social constructivist approach and as such shares several premises that other social constructivist approaches have (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). They are summarised by Burr (as cited in Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 5) in four major points, out of which the most important for this study is the link between knowledge and social action. Differing perceptions of the world do have social consequences, since they lead to social actions and decisions (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Wodak, 2001). Applied to the focus of this thesis it means that stakeholders' perceptions of nature are bound to have an effect on how they act and what decisions they make for the management of the park.

A second important premise for analysing discourse is that the way people perceive the world cannot be understood as objective truth - people construct opinions based on discourses (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). These discourses I find in the language and I obtain a balanced position describing them as being a force for constitution of actions, as well as one that has been constituted by historical contextual development (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Ideally, critical discourse analysis represents this balanced position and is regarded as a valuable method for this study due to its focus on language and the constructs it articulates - a discourse that shapes the social context and orients decisions (Wodak, 2001) but also is being constitute (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The notion of critique is issued differently with different authors, but in general implies a certain distance of the researcher from the data (Wodak, 2001) which helps to uncover meanings that constitute and orient actions in the social world and alleviate tensions between unequal position (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). From the text, seen as a basis for communication in

society are uncovered structures of power, discrimination and control that shape society organisation and decision making process (Wodak, 2001).

3.2.2. Limitations

I take Fairclough's position (as cited in Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 66) about the limitations of studying only text for the purposes of discovering discourses. A more interdisciplinary approach is needed and combining analysis of text with social structures and power relations, will provide a deeper insight and a better pathway for resolving the conflict at hand. However, for the scope of this thesis I will focus only on data from written texts.

Further, I am using discourse analysis not for the purposes of uncovering certain power relations and inequalities, but rather to describe how nature is constructed as a discourse by stakeholders, acknowledging the limitations I thereby pose on the method.

The role of the researcher in discourse analysis is not to make an evaluative judgement, but rather to uncover meaning-systems people use to orient their actions (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Thus, it is aimed at understanding various perceptions of reality and use that knowledge to alleviate social conflicts.

3.2.3. Approach

Since I am focusing specifically on discourses around nature, I have created several guiding questions to help me uncover meanings each stakeholder, as a group, constructs and how they perceive nature, through this specific case about Pirin National park (see App. 2). The guide focuses on the perceptions each stakeholder has about themselves with relation to the park or nature in general. Further, I ask what justification each of them provides for the position or actions they have taken, which I view as important for understanding their attitude towards nature and what value they attribute to it. Since, the conflict also revolves around debates and disputes between different stakeholders, it is important to understand how they view each other's position.

3.3. Data for interview

In order to answer RQ3, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews with individual representatives of as many stakeholders, as have agreed to participate. I contacted 25 organisations that represented either a specific stakeholder or were part of a coalition of organisations that forms one stakeholder (see section 6.2). 10 responded back and in the end, I had 5 stakeholders that responded to my questions. 2 of the interviews were conducted via skype, the rest requested to obtain the questions in written form and answer them in the same way. Further, I had the

opportunity to contact interviewees for follow-up questions and to clarify any misunderstandings. Overall, the majority of people that agreed to participate were from the environmental organisations. From the government institutions, I received only one response from Pirin National Park Agency, which directed me to their website for the required information. As, for the economic part of the debate - none of the companies or organisations contacted, were willing to participate in this stage of the study. All the participants were informed of the aims of the study beforehand and assured that the information gathered will be used only for the purposes of this thesis and for possible future scientific publications.

3.3.1. Interviewing

Interviews are usually a preferred way for qualitative research, since they help the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the personal views and/or motivation people have for taking certain actions or a certain stand on a matter (Bryman, 2012). The purpose of this type of method is to shed light on individual perceptions of nature and value applied to it, both as representative of a certain stakeholder organisation and as an individual persona.

3.3.2. Limitations

Since the purpose of interviews is to uncover any discrepancies between personal and organisational view on nature and its value, the questions had to be formulated as objective as possible. Furthermore, it had to be made clear that the interview questions did not seek to discredit the position of the stakeholders as a group with their individual personal view. This quest for assurance that the information will not be held against the stakeholder's position as a group, may have influenced the validity of the answers I obtained, since I am looking for differences between group and individual perceptions about nature.

Another limitation to my analysis is the way I gained information. During one of my skype interviews, the respondent expressed concern about me recording the full interview, therefore I had to take notes during our conversation. Three of the rest answers were obtained online via written form, which takes away the possibility for me to ask additional questions on the spot.

3.3.3. Approach

My interview guide was developed in two main sections, both asking for individual perception of group motivation and for their personal motivations to participate in the debate (see App. 3). The first section regards the conflict around the development of the ski resort and the preservation of the park. The second section is focused on uncovering perceptions of nature that the interviewees have.

Questions in this section are more abstractly formulated, however still maintaining the focus on the specific park. The answers were coded in order for me to obtain better understanding and to analyse them in a coherent way.

3.4. Reflections

I am aware that investigating such a contentious issue and using discourse analysis with combination of interviews requires a certain reflexivity of the background and context the problem is being played out. However, in my analysis I have not paid great attention to these aspects, due to spatial and time constraints. Further, my position on the debates is sympathising with the conservationist one. Acknowledging the sensitivity of the matter and the multiple perspectives I wanted to obtain and understand, I have guided my research in the most neutral way possible, so that my results are not biased and people from different positions will agree to participate. Overall, each of the methods used has its own limitations and my role as a researcher is to acknowledge them and to adjust my approach, so that I will obtain the data needed for answering the RQs and still provide credibility of my research.

4. Theory

“How we treat and think about the natural world is bound up with the value that we place on it.”

Krushil Watene

In this section I aim at elaborating on the concepts referring to different perceptions of nature and assigned value - mainly how they are theoretically defined, what are their limitations etc. Then argue that frameworks and policies should strive at incorporating multiple perspectives and values in order to achieve better balance between economic development and nature conservation.

Most common divide between values about nature usually refers to intrinsic vs instrumental. Attempts have been made to incorporate intrinsic and instrumental values for the sake of conservational efforts, but their compatibility, or rather conceptual integration of intrinsic value within the economic system depends on ethical and moral perceptions (Davidson, 2013). New conservation for example is an approach that tries to resolve the controversies between preservation and exploitation of the environment, emphasising on services that are provided for humans (Pearson, 2016). This still entails that use value is predominant and the developed approach might not end up incorporating opposing value. However, questions remain regarding the sufficiency of using intrinsic value for the purposes of conservation policies (Pearson, 2016). In order to properly rethink how the decisions are made and if they can incorporate plurality of values and perceptions,

the focus should be shifted towards exploring what role does intrinsic valuation plays in conservation policies (Piccolo, 2017).

4.1. Levels of perception

4.1.1. Spatial and biological divide

Important for multiple valuation tools is spatial context people use, when they talk about their value of nature - their perception could regard nature as whole, in broader sense, could refer to a specific ecosystem or even some specific parts of it (Arias-Arévalo, Gómez-Baggethun, Martín-López, & Pérez-Rincón, 2018). The distinction between these levels is important for justifying decisions when managing a specific landscape - the mountain in this case. Study on individual valuation has shown that species as a whole are more valuable than single representative organisms of the same species (Butler & Acott, 2007), thus creating another level of assigning value - between biological entities, species, ecosystems etc. There is official recognition by the Society of conservation biology that organisms, ecosystems and general resilience developed from the evolutionary process all have intrinsic value (Piccolo, 2017). However, it should be also acknowledged that levels of value can co-exist and are not exclusive to each other. Further distinction can be observed between value place on global ecosystems and local ones (Trachtenberg, 2015).

4.1.2. Individual vs Communal

Another distinction that has to be made is regarding how and if valuations differ between different levels of societal organisation. The value can be expressed by individuals, social groups, communities, institutions (Kenter et al, 2015). This differentiation is important because it affects the valuation techniques and the choice of perception that is going to be the main driver for decision makers. For example, contingent valuation techniques seek to evaluate individual perceptions with monetary terms and thus focusing on individual rational choices and preferences (Saarikoski et al, 2016). Some theories state that individual valuation is influenced by shared value in society, opposing in a way the rational individualistic approach (Arias-Arévalo et al, 2018). Perception between individuals and groups in society, representing shared vision about nature and its value might differ, oppose or integrate each other - thus it is important to study the differences and similarities in order to better assist decision-making processes.

4.1.3. Attitudes: Humans vs Nature

Romantic ideas about nature being pure and good, representing the right state of things, leads to strict protection and even awe (Lindahl & Linder, 2015). Another view can be drawn from the

Enlightenment period according to which nature is imperfect and needs to be corrected, used and/or improved by humans (Lindah & Linder, 2015). These distinctions are associated with the perception of nature as human-exclusive entity that can maintain its own equilibrium and nature as constantly intervened by humans (Lindah & Linder, 2015). Human intervention also correlates with the idea of nature being socially constructed concept, deep entrenched in every context of community (Ramadanovic, 2013), which leaves little opportunity for creating a more universal idea and approaches for management of natural resources. Poststructuralism implies there is no universal truth and as such fragmented efforts and evaluations or differing points of views and opinions are in the way of one encompassing effort aimed at solving environmental issues on a broader scale (Ramadanovic, 2013). Ecocriticism is a way of mitigating these negative consequences of poststructuralism. It focuses of the totality of nature and that it exists for everyone everywhere and supports the idea and the environmentalism as a stand should be perceived as global view (Ramadanovic, 2013). "... at the present moment ecological theory has two important goals to meet: to make science accept poststructuralism and to make poststructuralism come up with a universal theory." (Ramadanovic, 2013, p. 21).

4.2. Nature's rights

Concepts relating to nature and value are often referring to nature's rights in human society and the obligations humans have towards nature. Although, it can be argued that nature as one holistic entity can be assigned rights (Altshuler, 2013) there are many problems with incorporating nature in the modern language of rights and justice that deals with the human societal conflicts (Rogers, 2000). Especially when conservational efforts, for the sake of nature's rights, contradict with human development rights and thus are perceived sometimes as non-democratic (Kopina et al, 2018). On the other hand, with accepting the premises that humans are part of nature enforces an understanding that non-human organism do have rights (Kopina et al, 2018). Leaving humans as moral creatures that have responsibilities for maintaining and protecting the integrity of the natural systems (Kopina et al, 2018). Rights as a concept is related to intrinsic value and it assumes equality in society. On the other hand, there is a fine line between the two as rights revolve around a holder who is entitled to engage in certain activities or have certain conditions that maintain his existence (Batavia & Nelson, 2017). While, having intrinsic value means no more than just the acknowledgement of fundamental and irreplaceable quality (Batavia & Nelson, 2017).

4.3. Intrinsic value

People are usually regarded as the only species possessing intrinsic value, but conservationists are calling for inclusion of non-human entities in the scope of the concept, which is leading to various debates (Butler & Acott, 2007). Countering the utilitarian anthropocentric value of nature, conservationists are urging for recognition of non-instrumental value of nature (Batavia & Nelson, 2017b; Arias-Arévalo et al, 2018; Lockwood, 1999). Rolston (2005) also calls for acknowledgement of intrinsic value in nature, one that does not depend in way of human's actions or perceptions. Intrinsic value should be understood as autonomously possessed by an entity, for its own purposes and goals (Lockwood, 1999), even if humans do not recognise it, intrinsic value exist objectively - a "moral fact" (Trachtenberg, 2015, p. 41). Opposing views state that it is absolutely necessary to think about intrinsic value through the eyes of the valour, which means that intrinsic value is recognisable through the position of subjective unique human position (Batavia & Nelson, 2017). This intrinsic value is experienced by immersing oneself in nature and feeling awe and inspiration, wonder and humility (Rolston and Leopold in Butler & Acott, 2007; McShane, 2007). These individual experiences aren't absolute proof for the actuality of intrinsic value, but they do pose a question whether individual subjective perceptions are useful for recognising this type of value (Butler & Acott, 2007). Scientific research is not sufficient enough to make account for the existence of intrinsic value (Butler & Acott, 2007). The rational language of science and the pragmatic (Arias-Arévalo et al, 2018), commodifying one of economy are seen as essential part of constructing and communicating value to decision makers, or wide public (Turnpenny & Russel, 2017). The choice of language is important for emphasizing values and the outcomes of public decisions (Jacobs et al, 2016).

4.3.1. Beyond intrinsic

Existence value is associated closely with intrinsic value, however Davidson (2013) makes an attempt to clearly distinguish between the two and to point out the benefits each one has. It implies valuing non-human entities for the fact that they exist and is related to the benefits people can obtain, but do not have the intention of gaining at the present moment (Davidson, 2013). It does have the possibility to make human lives better (Davidson, 2013, puts it under non-use value category), and thus there is a moral duty to sustain or create/restore it, if has ceased to exist. Further it does not require altruistic behaviour, which intrinsic value implies on humans (Davidson, 2013).

Ecocentrism is part of intrinsic valuation theory and implies attribution of intrinsic value to species, ecosystems, but even abiotic environment (Batavia & Nelson, 2017b). In deep ecology this is related to the complex and rich forms of existence that have an absolute right to exist (Naess, 2016). Ecocentrism is also related to a social justice principle that all members in society have equal rights

(Kopina et al, 2018), expanding the boundaries of the definition from community members to non-human entities as well. The justice principal incorporates the nature's rights issue that was presented before (see 4.2).

4.3.2. Shortcomings

Some studies suggest that intrinsic valuation approach is not useful for conservation and thus argue that instrumental value of nature is the best way to promote conservation policies (Justus, Colyvan, Regan, & Maguire, 2009; Batavia & Nelson, 2017). This is due because the concept itself comes with a lot of uncertainties both related to people's understanding of the idea behind intrinsic value and from the consequences of its application.

The notion of dichotomizing the human-nature relations still plays an active role in intrinsic valuation. On the one hand, the process of recognition is anthropocentric, thus some groups like ecofeminists – are calling for a co-creating more open and inclusive to other non-human agents process, that would bring about new and dynamic meanings (Batavia & Nelson, 2017b). On the other hand, even if people make efforts to use intrinsic valuation, usually the concept is simplified to the level of non-direct utilitarian use (Butler & Acott, 2007). Aesthetic or cultural use of landscapes are recognized as intrinsic valuation, even though they result from the human nature subjective relations (Butler & Acott, 2007). Individuals also find difficulties expressing abstract concepts in one unifying way and even more do institutions, for which they have little operational use (Arias-Arévalo et al, 2018).

Another obstacle in the way of using intrinsic valuation is the presumption that environmental intrinsic valuation is elevated on some sort of a pedestal and argues against triviality of human needs for the sake of higher profound moral stands (Rogers, 2000) - a paradigm of the Green elites, sole beneficiaries of service like human health, social development or human right etc. (Rogers, 2000). The argument could also be taken further in suggesting that protecting nature can put a severe break on economic development (Turnpenny & Russel, 2017), which is still one of the high praised paths of development. Pearson (2016) suggests that due to this tension between conservation and human development, intrinsic value should be used as a tool practically only for certain species and ecosystems, which absolutely cannot exist elsewhere.

4.4. Instrumental value

“Natural agents ... are serviceable to us, by increasing the abundance of productions, by making men richer, by adding to value in use”

(Ricardo, as cited in Gómez-Baggethun & Ruiz-Pérez, 2011, p. e2)

“Gaining from nature” as a metaphor is elaborating on the major competitor of intrinsic value - the instrumental one (O’Neil, 2008; Arias-Arévalo et al, 2018). It is widely use in ecosystem frameworks with the emphasis on the significance of natural systems for a better and healthier human development (Reyers, Polasky, Tallis, Mooney & Larigauderie, 2012). Despite the existence of debates about what exactly ecosystems are, how are they defined, what do they provide or how do they align with biodiversity conservation policies, there is a general agreement that the essential idea of the concept is what humans gain from ecosystems (Häyhä, Franzese, Paletto, & Fath, 2015). Natural resources are the basis for successful human development and that’s why instrumental valuation is preferred, since it doesn’t sacrifice progress and growth for communities over conservation, but in a way tries to incorporate them (Kopina et al, 2018). Instrumental value further implies that services and goods are in general substitutable with one another (Arias-Arévalo et al, 2018).

4.4.1. Natural capital

Recognition of the importance of natural resources, their fragile state due to exploitation from the economic system and their significance for conditioning the human society, is the implementation in neoclassical economics “natural capital” as an operational concept (Parks & Gowdy, 2013; Häyhä et al, 2015). Natural capital can be defined as storage and flow of services that sustain the socio-economic human systems (Häyhä, & Franzese, 2014; Turnpenny & Russel, 2017). Presenting instrumental value with monetization of ecosystem services is the most commonly used method and language for communicating biodiversity and conservation ideas with politics and business structures (Arias-Arévalo et al, 2018). Using numerical values for ecosystem services could be useful, since it brings politics, economy and conservation on one language level. However, since there are a lot of controversies with monetizing the environment, it is recommended to use this valuation method only as a contribution when implementing already defined targets from political agendas, rather than as a main source of valuation (Spangenberg & Settele, 2010).

4.4.2. Limitations

There are many shortcomings from commodification of the environment. A study found out that a focus on monetisation within individual perspective give a very controversial results since this type of instrumental valuation technique cannot account for the intrinsic values people place on nature (Clark, Burgess & Harrison, 2000; Ludwig, 2000). Services like aesthetics, spiritual value, cultural values are almost impossible to quantify by individuals themselves, who rely on multiple values in their perceptions (Clark et al., 2000).

Further, there is a negative perception that present generations should limit themselves in order to preserve resources for the future ones (Parks & Gowdy, 2013). Drawing further on a “negative time preference” (Farber, Costanza, & Wilson, 2002, p. 381), where people limit themselves for the purposes of experiencing better conditions in the future.

Commodification implies to a certain extent emphasis on individual preferences, whereas environmental benefits are usually collective goods (Burney, 2000). Hence, using aggregated individual perspectives only with economic terms as a valuation technique is questioned, since this method cannot reflect and comprehend a communal value that an environmental asset may have (Farber, Costanza & Wilson, 2002).

Finally, the use of economic methods for assigning value and the use of economic language, as it is the neutral one that can overcome grievances, preferences and societal conflicts is also a limitation. Monetization is also part of certain paradigm and implies certain beliefs and assumptions about the world (Ludwig, 2000).

5. Contextualisation of case Study

5.1. Status and governance

National park Pirin has been protected by laws for more than 50 years and currently incorporates 40 356.0 ha (see figure 1) (Pirin National Park, n.d.). At the beginning of the 80s the park was also given a UNESCO world heritage status (UNESCO, 1983) and is also under the international protection of Nature 2000 (Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation [BBF], 2016).

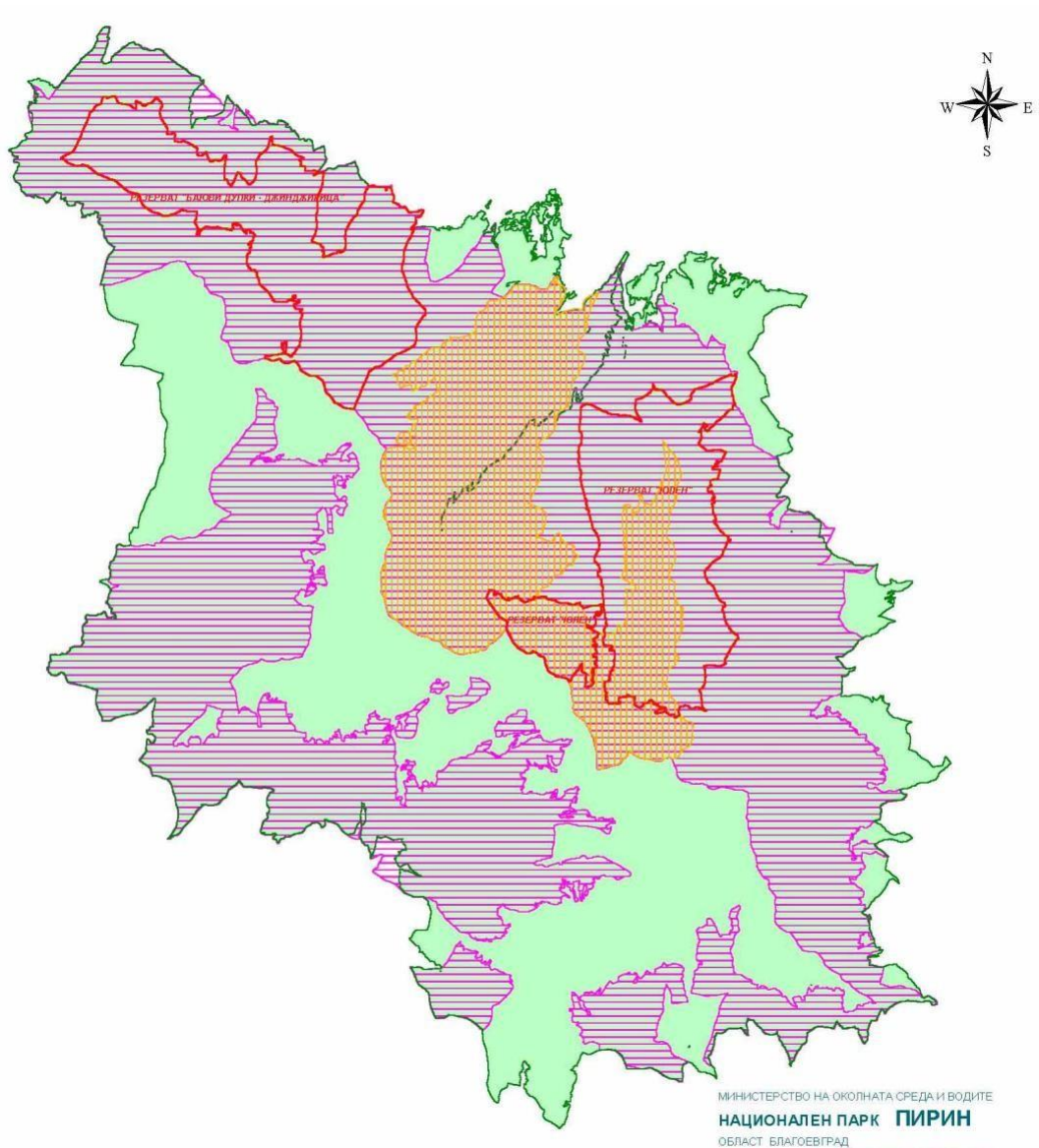


Figure 1. Designation of the park and the Reserves within its borders, changes in the park boundaries. Orange indicates the area that was initially given status of a National Park in 1962. Purple indicates the expansion of the protected territory in 1974. Green Indicates further expansion in 1987. Retrieved from *Management plan* (table 31), by MEW & BBF, 2004, http://mountain.bajhui.org/pictures/NPP%20zones/map_04.jpg

Bulgarian government has recognised the potential of mountain areas for enhancing regional development and growth – clearly observable in the various decrees and ordinance the government has adopted between 1960 and 2000, aiming at achieving better quality of life and work in these areas (Koulov, Nikolova & Zhelezov, 2016). For proper management of the park and the protected areas inside its borders, a special government body was established during 1979 - Pirin National Park Agency (MEW & BBF, 2004). During 1992 a Commission for Development of Mountainous Regions was established, following principles in the new Constitution for providing balance circumstances and opportunities for development of regions (Koulov et al., 2016)

During the 90s the country was going through reformations in all its sectors and between 1996 and 1997 the principle for good management of natural areas was adopted in Bulgaria (MEW & BBF, 2004). The core of this principle is the conviction that management of common resources and the direction of development should be formulated with the help of the people, thus ensuring a long, healthy and productive life for everyone (MEW & BBF, 2004). These principles were reflected in the first issue of a specialised Management plan for the National park, adopted during 2004 (MEW & BBF, 2004). As its main objective the plan has outlined conservation of the ecosystems and landscapes in the mountain with a balanced use of its resources for recreational and sport tourism, aiming at utilizing the protected areas as a key factor for social-economic growth of the region (MEW & BBF, 2004).

5.2. How the Consortium came to be

Process of privatisation was also taking place in the country and didn't exclude parts of the national park. Of interest here is the ski resort in Bansko, which includes sport's infrastructure inside the boundaries of the park and in 2001 was given via signing a contract to a consortium named Yulen for investments and development for the following ten years (Republic of Bulgaria, 2001). The consortium is a specific management model, which in this case designates national property - parts of Pirin National park - to a joint-stock collective of companies, public organisation and other actors, for the purposes of continuous financial and non-financial investments (Assenova, Marinov & Yaneva, 2015)¹.

The villages didn't have any access to alternative sports infrastructure, so main focus of the development was the winter tourism (MEW & BBF, 2004). Furthermore, a study of people's perception of tourism found out that the prevailing ideas revolve around making quick profits, based on expanding facilities supporting winter sports tourism - hotels, restaurants etc, without any alternative visions for development (MEW & BBF, 2004). All this was supported the chosen development path of the consortium.

5.3. Management plan from 2004 - defining the directions

The establishment of the consortium over the ski zone in the park and the management plan set the tone of development of the region for the next decade and a half.

¹ This model of governance is specific since it grants rights to the companies over construction of winter sports facilities, but does not give away property rights of the land itself - that remains under government jurisdiction, as Assenova et al. have described in thoroughly (2015).

Conservation activities and ecosystem protection are the main objectives of the plan, and as such they are considered to have greater importance (MEW & BBF, 2004). All activities and policies regarding the park should bear in mind that preservation and maintenance of biodiversity in the park are key goals for long term management (MEW & BBF, 2004). In order to achieve the main objective for preservation different regimes had been established in the park (see table 1 and figure 2 below).

Table 1. Different zones designated in the National Park Pirin with the first management plan, 2004.

No	Zone	Ha	% of total	regime
Ia	Nature reserve	5 991.8	14.8	strict
Ib	Zone for limiting human influence	8 198.5	20.3	strict
IIa	Zone for protection of forest ecosystems and recreation	18 245.0	45.2	Ecosystem protection
IIb	Zone for sustainable use of open areas and recreation	6 808.8	16.9	Ecosystem protection
III	Zone for tourism	895.1	2.2	Ski-zone Bansko
IV	Zone of buildings, facilities	218.8	0.6	Huts, chalets, etc.

Table 1 describes the different zones in Pirin National park, their regime of protection or either what they include. Adapted from *Management plan* (table 31), by MEW & BBF, 2004, p. 150.

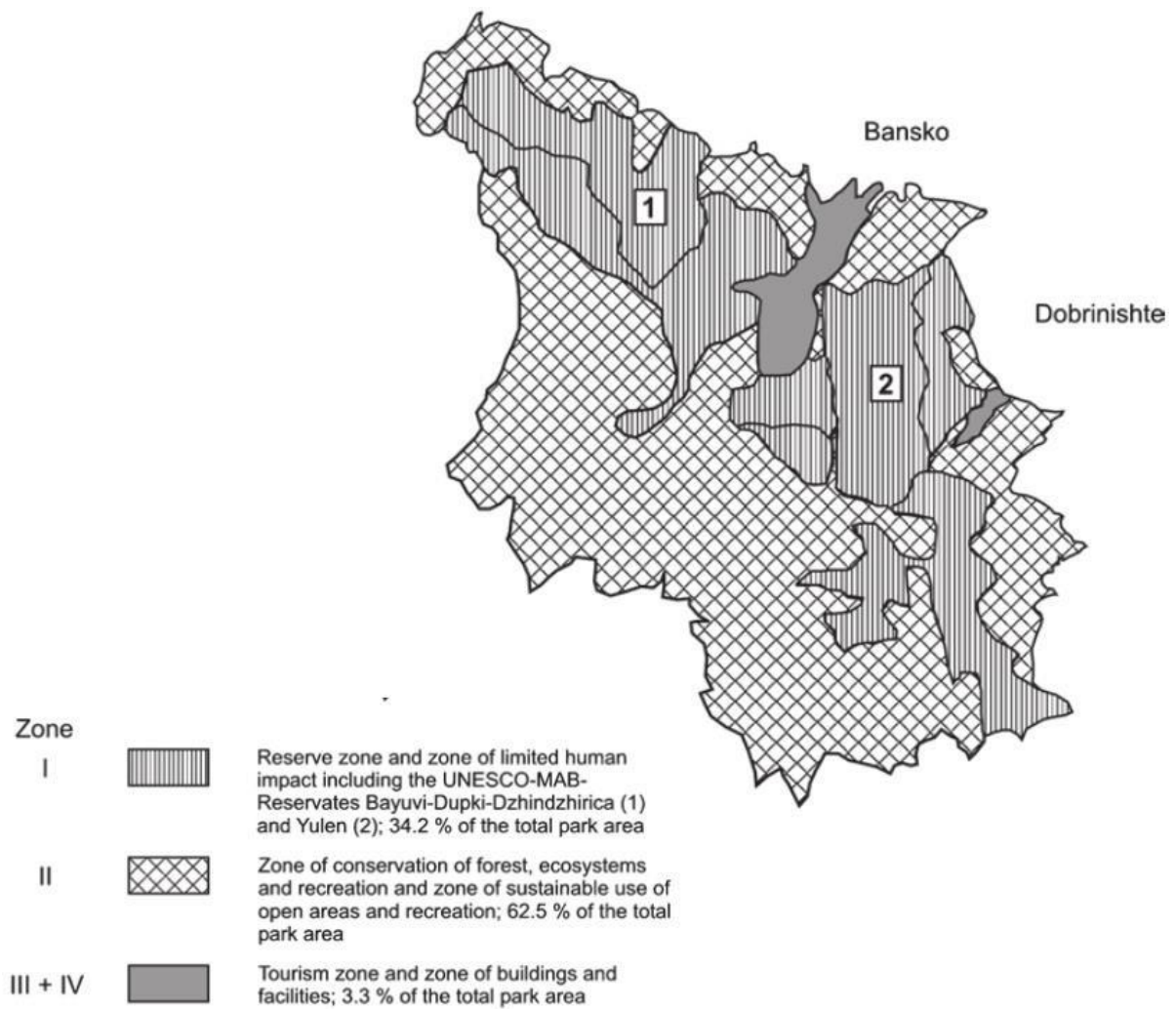


Figure 2. Zoning of Pirin National Park territory. Retrieved from *Landscape development and climate change in Southwest Bulgaria (Pirin Mountains)*. by Grunewald, & Scheithauer, 2010, p. 29

First two zones - Ia and Ib - are under strict protection regimes, because they have high conservation value, thus resulting in extremely limited human access (MEW & BBF, 2004). It is enough for the conservation efforts for these zones, that they are just left alone, without any maintenance work even (MEW & BBF, 2004). Zone Ia is an ecosystem in a natural state, which makes it not only extremely valuable for conservation, but also a model for management of protected areas. Zone IIa and IIb also have as main objective preservation of the natural state of ecosystems and habitats, however, both allow recreational activities and some use of the natural resources for the regional development in harmless way (MEW & BBF, 2004). The ski-zone is designated a special regime, since it is highly distinguished by the others and there human activities have a significant impact of the forest and ecosystems (MEW & BBF, 2004). All the allowed and forbidden activities in the zones are presented below in table 2.

Table 2. Allowed activities on the park territory.

	Nature Reserve	Zone for limiting human influence	Zone for protection of forest ecosystems and recreation	Zone for sustainable use of open areas and recreation	Zone for tourism	Zone of buildings, facilities
Scientific research + trekking	1	1	1	2	3	3
Trekking tourism and recreation	-	-	1	1	1	2
Mushroom picking, fruits, herbs for personal use	-	-	3	3	3	3
Maintenance and recreational activities	-	-	2	2	1	1
Regulatory work on species	-	-	2	2	3	3
fishing	-	-	3	3	3	3
Grazing	-	-	-	1	3	3
Sports	-	-	-	-	1	1
Construction and reconstruction	-	-	-	-	-	1

This table shows the allowed activities in each zone within a scale from “-” till “3”.

1. Primary activities
2. Secondary activities
3. Potential activities
- Forbidden activities

Retrieved from *Management plan*, (table 32), by MEW & BBF, 2004, p. 154.

The most protected areas - nature reserves, and the most used by humans - ski-zone, are all located in the north part of the park (MEW & BBF, 2004). The plan realises the vulnerability and potential negative aspects of such close positioning of these two parts of the park (MEW & BBF, 2004). Thus, recommends creating buffer zones on the boundaries of the park and absolutely forbidding any further construction of any sort of facilities inside the boundaries (MEW & BBF, 2004). Even more, the use of artificial snow in the ski area is also forbidden, making the winter tourism dependent only on natural snowfall (MEW & BBF, 2004)².

The plan clearly recognises and prioritises the value of the mountain park as a hub for biodiversity with regional, national and international importance (MEW & BBF, 2004). Protection of various endemic species and natural unique landscape has been put above other activities and potential use of the mountain (MEW & BBF, 2004). The dangerous trends in development of the ski zone Bansko are firmly noticed as the plan calls for ceasing of any new construction and exploring new ways of utilising the mountain as a source for regional development - evenly distributed and with holistic approach (MEW & BBF, 2004).

5.4. What came after - A decade of management and development

Two consequent reports about conservation work and development in the park have been issued - one in 2008 and one in 2012. Both reports observed a stabilization of the species population and improvement in general of the quality of the park (Grancharov, 2008; Mechev 2013)³. Human influence and negative impact on ecosystems in the whole park is perceived as having no significant consequences in general (Grancharov, 2008; Mechev 2013). That is different of course within areas of concentration of human flow - a few huts high in the mountain and the ski-zones (especially the one in Bansko) (Grancharov, 2008; Mechev 2013). Overall, can be concluded that until 2012, when the last report was issued, the direction of management and prioritising conservation over development has proven to be a sustainable successful model.

The reports also assess the effects of the ski zone on the park. Although, new constructions have been executed, they have all been made according to different laws and regulation (Grancharov, 2008; Mechev 2013). The majority of investments were directed towards increasing and developing the ski-zone and its supporting infrastructure in the city of Bansko, which lead to significant

² Studies on Climate Change patterns in the region have shown that between 2020 and 2050 major winter tourism destinations in Bulgaria will suffer from decrease of snowfall and even increase of winter without any snowfalls. (Demiroglu, Turp, Oztruk, An & Kurnaz, 2016). This Information questions the justification of future development of winter tourism sector in the region.

³ Although, the 2012 one states that in some areas there have not been done any monitoring work due to staff changes or lack of financial support (Mechev, 2013).

expansion of the city boundaries and the emergence of a ghost town - exotropic form of fully independent and functional town that does not have constant population (Assenova et al., 2015). This has also led to unstable distribution of revenues and high dependency of business on the winter tourism (Assenova et al., 2015). The people that use the resort are increasingly from foreign countries, by 2012 they were 58%, up to 7800 a day, the overall numbers of visitors reach 818 700 for 2012 (Grancharov, 2008; Mechev 2013). The data raises strong concerns about overreaching the capacity of the resort to host so many people during the peak of the season and the effects this concentration of people has not only in the ski-zones, but also in the other parts of the park (Grancharov, 2008; Mechev 2013).

All of these indicate a significant increase in risk for the ecosystems in the park resulting from human actions and both reports outline that these development trends are to be taken seriously and that the management plan from 2004 is not sufficient enough to tackle the challenges and needs to be updated according to the current situation and legislation (Grancharov, 2008; Mechev 2013). The government should continue working towards developing policies that support local communities and manage the park in their interest (Grancharov, 2008; Mechev 2013).

5.5. Consequences

These trends in development have led to continuous public unease, resulting into extreme views and opinions on the spectrum between strict conservation and further development, as Assenova et al. (2015) have described.

With several decisions and in several conventions UNESCO (2010; 2011) have examined the effects of the development of the ski zones in the National park and expressed serious concerns about its negative consequences. Resulting in decision that excluded the ski zone Bansko from the area that was under the protection of UNESCO (UNESCO, 2010). The organisation also recommended ceasing of any future construction plan, otherwise the whole Pirin park might be also excluded from the World Heritage Sites list (UNESCO, 2010).

The government realised the need for a full revision of the Management plan in order to properly address the development of the ski zone. The new plan that was written in 2015 (Proles, 2015) and was supposed to revise the whole management system of the park has not yet been implemented. It will be discussed in section 6.1.2 where it represents the source for one stakeholder's perception about Pirin - Proles.

5.6. Latest changes in the management plan

After several open public discussions about the management plan MEW finally came to a decision and on 29.12.2017 it was officially accepted (Republic of Bulgaria, 2017). The parts of the plan that were changed allow for construction of additional ski infrastructure inside the tourism zone - 2.2% of the whole park (see table 1 and 2) - actions that was forbidden in the previous version of the management plan. The second important change that was made also regards construction, but in the zone for protection of forest ecosystems and recreation - 45.5% of the park area (see table 1 and 2) with the purposes of water capture, for the needs of the population (Republic of Bulgaria, 2017). It was done with the argumentation that it will help alleviate the concentration of tourist queuing in front of the ski lifts by building a second lift and will further improve the international image of the resort, resulting in increased stability of the economy (Dimov, 2017, December 29th).

This decision has led to an outburst of protests from Bulgarian environmental NGOs, activists and citizens in multiple cities in Bulgaria, but also in several European cities where Bulgarian communities live. They predict that it will lead to severe damage on the natural systems due to construction work in 48% of the park (see figure 3) and it is just a pretext for larger expansion of the ski resorts in the area (For the Nature, 2017 December 28th).

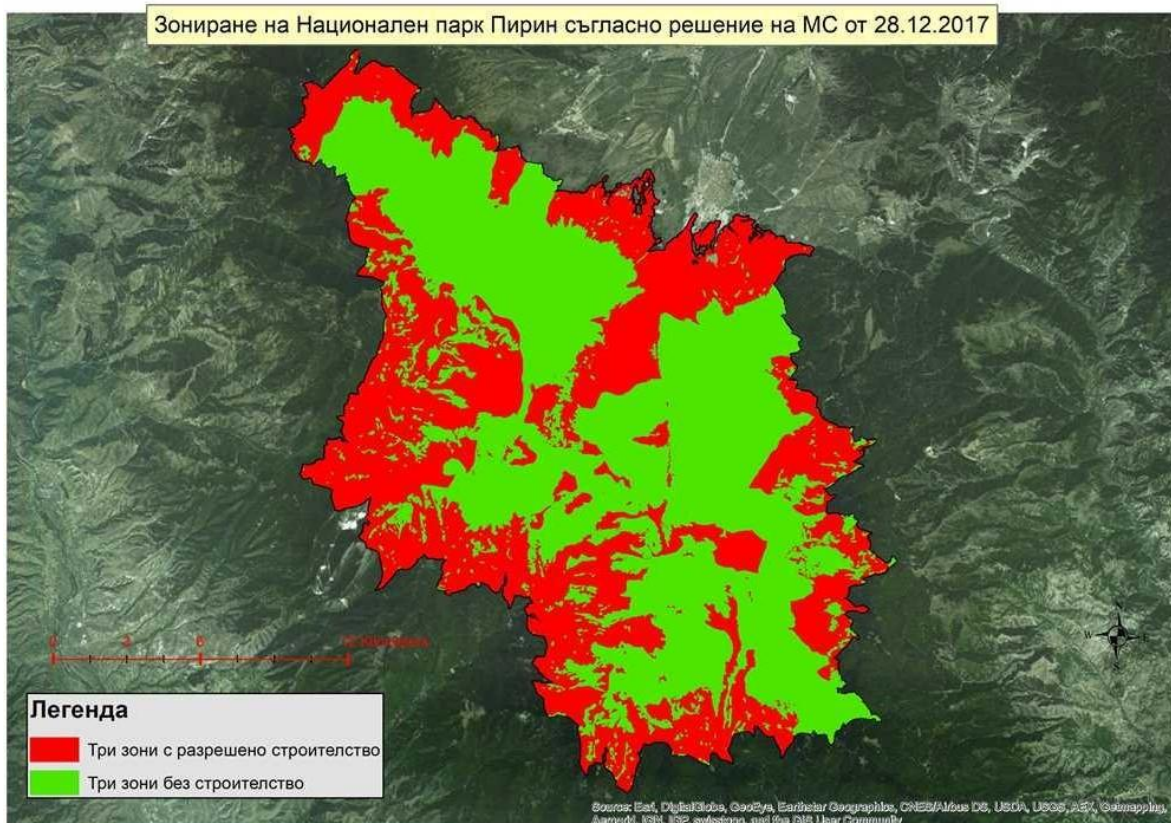


Figure 3. Showing the changes in the regimes in Pirin National Park, after the decision from 2017, December 28th. Red represents zones with allowed actions or possibilities for construction. Green are remaining with strict regulations. Retrieved from: *Cabinetut 'Borisov 3' pregazi nationalnoto i evropeisko zakonodatelstvo i dopusna sech i stroitelstvo na 48% ot teritoriqta na Pirin*. [The government "Borissov 3" ran over national and european laws and allowed for logging and construction in 48% of the territory of Pirin National Park]. "For the nature" Coalition, 2017, December 28th, <http://forthenature.org/news/3872>

Despite the efforts to provide basis for strict conservation, the governance pattern has developed towards enhancing economic potential of use value of the mountain and its resources. The ineffectiveness of this approach has been associated with positions of asymmetrical power distribution in society and even being discriminatory (Jacobs, 2016). Unravelling the normative principles behind politics, shows dominance of economic valuation and even though there is general recognition and understanding of the interdependencies between economy, society and environment, nature remains undervalued in the process (Turnpenny & Russel, 2017). Even more, there is a general lack of recognition of the interconnectedness and the need for a more integrative approach that brings about alternative and non-instrumental values into decision making, which will transform the path of dominance and destructive actions that now dictates human - nature relations (Spash & Aslaksen, 2015).

6. Results

In the following section I will describe my results in two main sections. First one relates to the discourse analysis I applied to the collected documents from various stakeholders. The second section will present the results from the interviews I did.

Before I dive in the specific results, I have identified the main stakeholders, based on their direct involvement or their interest regarding the issue and whether they have given any statements regarding the development of the park (figure 4).

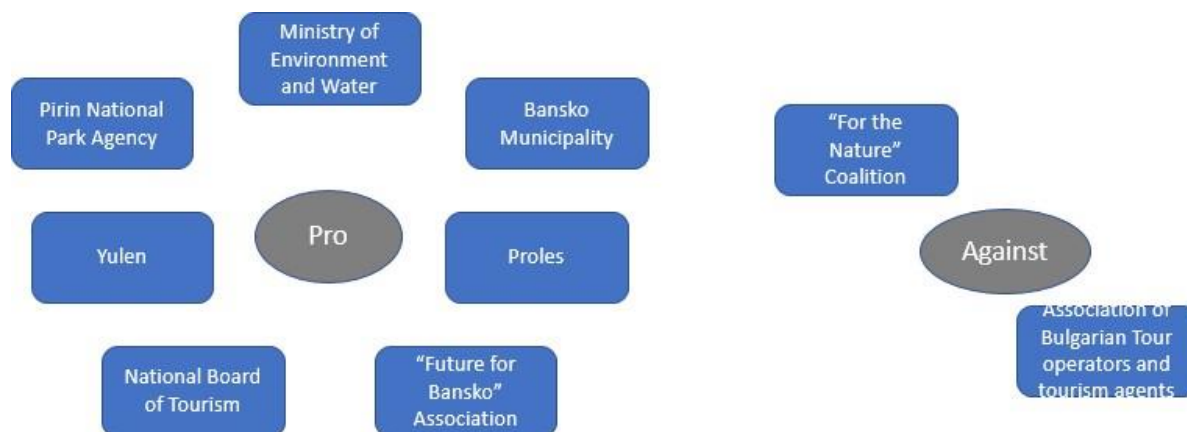


Figure 4. Identified stakeholders. Arranged according to their agreement or disagreement with the governmental changes in the Management plan of Pirin National Park. (Own illustration, 2018.)

6.1. Stakeholders

6.1.1. Ministry of environment and water

The position of the MEW is the one that is most articulated through various channels - media statements and interviews from experts or the minister himself, official documentation published on the website of the ministry, plans for development, round table public discussions, reports, ordinance etc.

According to the minister there are no ecological contradictions in the changes of the management plan that have been put into motion and he as a minister guarantees that all the legal requirements have been met (Dimov, 2018 January 26th). A new lift infrastructure will be even beneficial for the mountain itself, since it will decrease the amount of cars accessing the mountain (Dimov, 2017 November 16th, Dimov, 2017 December 29th) - creating a better state of coexistence between the resort and the national park. He further justifies this decision with examples from different countries in Europe, where the winter tourism is quite developed - like Austria, Switzerland, Czech Republic (Dimov, 2017 November 16th; Dimov, 2017 December 29th). Thus, recognising the unused potential of the mountain to compete on international market for tourist. This potential is also ecologically good for development and should be in the center of public attention (Dimov, 2017 December 29th).

The minister points out that the protests are not concerned with the protection of the national park, but they are about political interest and competing paradigms of political governance (Dimov, 2018 January 26th; Dimov, 2018 February 17th; Dimov, 2018 February 9th). The environmentalist groups that are strongly against the project are coming from an internationalised left political paradigm, according to which only their perspective of absolute right and none other can be accepted (Dimov,

2018 February 17th), which results in them acting thoroughly against socio-economic development (Dimov, 2018. February 6th). The elected power has to follow the principles and ideology it has been elected for, which supports for the social and economic development of regions and protecting national interest (Dimov, 2018 February 17th).

The purpose of this ministry is to protect the nature, but not for the sake of regional development - both can be achieved with the right balance between regional economic development and conservation (Dimov, 2018. February 6th). Therefore the role of the ministry is not to seek consensus. Economic growth and environmental protection could coexist for the sake of protecting european values and interest of citizens, for the sake of healthy people and healthy environment (Dimov, 2018, January 24th). These two pillars, supporting the human in center, are inseparable from one another and can bring only positive development (Dimov, 2017, November 1st). Understanding that the mountain is a highly attractive place for tourists and that it has to be developed accommodating that specific increasing interest for winter sports activities, for the sake of sacrificing insignificant parts of the park, while still complying with domestic and international laws for protection (Dimov, 2017, November 1st).

6.1.2. Proles

Proles is a company that developed during 2014 and consequently in 2015 and 2016 a new Plan for Management of the Pirin National Park. During a protest wave in 2016 they made an official statement (Proles, 2016 August 10th).

The statement is aiming to convey two main ideas against accusations from environmental organisations. First one being that the statements from the environmental coalition aren't true and second one being that their own work is legally sound (Proles, 2016 August 10th). Words like "lies" and "so called" are used several times to refer to the coalition in order to disregard their claims and to present them as only provocative and not based on true facts (Proles, 2016 August 10th). The opposing coalition of environmental organisations is presented as unprofessional and uneducated enough to even participate in a debate. Coming from a position with expert knowledge (about legal requirements for preservation and management of natural resources) and working with the government, gives Proles the right argumentation (Proles, 2016 August 10th). The legitimacy of their visions plans for the park are based on the legal regulations, thus anyone that doesn't take into account them and anyone who doesn't have expert knowledge, falls into a category that is usually seen as simply not being true. On the contrary the environmental coalition are basing their claims on broad and abstract ideas, that cannot contribute to the debate and cannot compliment the policies in any way (Proles, 2016 August 10th).

Proles sees the positions of the environmentalist as less concerned with the conservation of the nature, but rather being protective of their own economic right. With strict protectionist laws and regulations only they will benefit. Thus, an argument for opening up the park is perceived as more inclusive and democratic.

The latest version of the management plan Proles has developed gives an insight of their vision of nature (Proles, 2015). The document outlines the national and international importance of this specific park and the needed actions for its preservation. It recognises its uniqueness and specific value as a irreplaceable entity (Proles, 2015). However, this recognition, leads to increased attractiveness for tourists (Proles, 2015). The more diverse and unique the park is, the more tourists are going to appreciate it. Therefore, it is an important resource for various kinds of tourism and consequently for local businesses and socio-economic growth and stability (Proles, 2015). The plan doesn't emphasize on mass tourism or concentration of tourist flow in one place - for example Bansko ski resort, since it is the most developed one - but rather talks about alternative forms of tourism and adventure experiences, and the developing of local small-scale businesses that allocate benefits better (Proles, 2015). However, it does propose plans for further expansion of the tourist area west and east from Bansko resulting into more than 300 km of new ski slopes, trekking paths, golf resorts and other alternative tourism products (Proles, 2015).

6.1.3. Yulen

Yulen is the consortium structure that is managing the ski zone Bansko. In 2014 they wrote a statement regarding a discussion of the new management plan for Pirin National Park. The focus of the statement is concentrated in providing arguments for the benefits that will come from a possible expansion and further development (Yulen, 2014, November 27th). There is a prognosed increase of tourist flow and demand for winter sports infrastructure, so the development work should follow the trends (Yulen, 2014, November 27th). Therefore, the mountain is seen as attractive place that will be increasingly visited in the upcoming decades (Yulen, 2014, November 27th). The document also mentions the conservation and environmental restoration actions that Yulen has taken, but all are in favor of supporting the winter tourism (Yulen, 2014, November 27th).

Yulen has also given written official answers to questions from representatives of ecological organisations part of the "For the nature" Coalition (Yulen, 2017, November 24th). The benefits from a second lift in the mountain are exceeding any possible environmental negative effects (Yulen, 2017, November 24th). Even more, a second lift won't harm any endangered species and will help redistributing people skiing evenly, not increase them (Yulen, 2017, November 24th).

6.1.4. "Future for Bansko" Association

"Future for Bansko" Association includes local and regional organisations with various agendas, that aim to work together for the benefit of the city. In a statement published online they expressed their demands.

For them developing the winter sport infrastructure should be the highest priority in policies for growth of the region ("Future for Bansko" Association, 2018, January 5th). Even more so, sustainable development of the locals and a sustainable management of the mountain are inseparable from the winter tourism ("Future for Bansko" Association, 2018, January 5th). The mountain somewhat is in their right to manage and is seen as a resource for growth and stability ("Future for Bansko" Association, 2018, January 5th). The winter sport tourism is proclaimed to be the only possible way for local communities to have stability, but also an important source for them to develop a certain affection towards nature ("Future for Bansko" Association, 2018, January 5th). A certain emphasis is put on creating a consciousness in the locals that appreciates and respects nature, in a more intrinsic way, however that comes after a instrumental perceptions that focuses only on development of the winter ski resort and nothing else ("Future for Bansko" Association, 2018, January 5th).

For the association, developing the mountain in this way is crucial for achieving a national and international reputation, for attracting more investments and people and for help maintain an image of the whole nation - Pirin mountain is the stepping stone from which the local and national image will develop to be an example for others ("Future for Bansko" Association, 2018, January 5th).

The opposing side is described as liars and self-proclaimed ecologists, who are only acting for the sake of being an opposing party and don't really care for the mountain and the local people ("Future for Bansko" Association, 2018, January 5th).

6.1.5. "For the nature" coalition

"For the nature" is a coalition of several NGO organisations and other stakeholders that have interest in or believe that environmental conservation should be a priority.

Some of the organisations that are part of the coalition have issued statement of their own, demanding for their specific needs. Such is the Bulgarian Association for alternative tourism (BAAT). In their statement towards Proles (2015, January 24th) they urge for a revision of the project for management plan that will be more inclusive and set the grounds for alternative types of tourism. They also criticise the portrait position that the development of the Pirin National Park has to be inevitably related to the development of the ski zone Bansko (BAAT, 2015, January 24th). Further,

they have reached to the MEW with a suggestion to form a working group for finding a consensus solution (BAAT, 2018, January 2nd). Working towards a more democratic solution for a more sustainable management won't only benefit multiple sides of the conflict, but will also improve Bulgaria's international image (BAAT, 2018, January 2nd).

BBF have also submitted a statement with suggestions how the plan should be improved (2015, July 27th). They express concerns about the legal justification of the project for management plan and draw conclusions that it will further damage the nature in the park based on UNESCO reports (BBF, 2015, July 27th).

"For the nature" Coalition (2017, December 11th), have also issued publicly a statement that in details raises 100 questions about the changes in the management plan and the overall direction the government wants to take with development of the park. Most of the questions are based on different legal discrepancies that the changes could lead to ("For the nature" Coalition, 2017, December 11th). Supporting their arguments for serious reconsideration of the new management plans with the legitimacy of the law is the best way for them to argue. They see the actions of the government as manipulative, mafiotic, twisted and will lead to enormous expansion of human interference in the natural systems ("For the nature" Coalition, 2017, December 28b). The public attention is drawn only towards the lift and thus the real intentions remain hidden, i.e. a massive opening of the park for allowed construction and logging of century old forest ("For the nature" Coalition, 2017, December 28b). WWF also has express the positions of the coalition. Again, they also emphasize of the legal side of the conflict, where the changes are illegal, the governance so far has been partly illegal (WWF, n.d.). Which also is seen as violation of nature's integrity, but also a violation of citizens' constitutional rights.

6.1.6. Bansko municipality

The position of Bansko municipality is derived from the statements and announcement of the major and the municipality that I have found published online.

They support fully the decision of the MEW regarding the changes in the management plan of the park, claiming that they follow normal trend of the local development (Bansko Municipality, 2018, January 4th). Normal in the sense that avoiding the human influence and use of the mountain for the local and regional growth is unreasonable (Bansko Municipality, 2018, March 9th; Bansko Municipality, 2018, January 4th). What the developers can do is to make sure to choose a less harmful way - thus building new lift is understandingly a part of that decision. The future of the ski resort is not questionable at all. For the locals, and their right to the mountain and decision about

this resource, the winter ski economy is the only option they have (Bansko Municipality, 2018, March 9th; Bansko Municipality, 2018, January 4th). Policies and interest should come from the locals themselves, since they are taking care of this resource and they can utilise it best (Bansko Municipality, 2017, December 31st). This internalisation of responsibility and pride will also be useful on a national level - the case of Bansko ski resort and Pirin National park is important, since it will set the tone for every other ski resort in the country (Bansko Municipality, 2017, December 28th).

All the changes in the management should and will be good for the community, little is mentioned how they will affect the mountain (Bansko Municipality, 2017, November 20th). The emphasis is that the current plans are too restrictive for the people and thus they are not good for their prosperity. Nature protection is the way of human development. Thus everyone else, from the ecological NGOs and eco-activist groups are telling only lies and untrue statements in order to achieve other hidden goals (Bansko Municipality, 2018, January 4th; Bansko Municipality, 2017, December 6th).

6.1.7 National board of tourism

This is non-governmental organisation that is formed by actors in the tourism industry and seeks to protect their interest. They have issued a declaration (NBT, 2018, January 11th) to express their position in support with the governmental decision the previous month. Again, the winter tourism is the development of the ski resort are seen as a step in the right direction and will bring economic stability of the region (NBT, 2018, January 11th). This case is also seen as a stepping stone for setting the future direction of mountain tourism policies and winter sport tourism management, especially important for local communities and industries (NBT, 2018, January 11th). There is no mention of the groups that are against the changes in the management plan.

6.1.8. Pirin National Park Agency

PNPA is responsible for implementing the policies from the Ministry of Environment and Water. As such they are part of the governmental body taking care of the park. They have not issued an official statement regarding the debates; however, they are an important stakeholder since their work is directly related with everyday management and maintenance of the park.

Beside everything said before for the position of the government, this agency has developed a particular strategy for sustainable management of the natural resources through encouragement of sustainable tourism (PNPA, 2011, May). The purpose of this strategy and its main goal is to generate revenues that will support the growth and stability of the local communities (PNPA, 2011, May).

6.1.9. Association of Bulgarian tour operators and tourism agents

This association is also mainly concerned about the tourism sector. However, in their open letter (ABTOTA, 2018, January 31st) are strictly against the governmental decision regarding the changes in the management plan. The direction of developing only mass winter tourism facilities is not going to benefit anyone and that is why they try to advocate for a position which is focused on variety and alternative tourism experiences, that deserve the same attention as the winter sports (ABTOTA, 2018, January 31st).

A special focus is put on the value of Pirin as unique site, that is included in UNESCO and is recognised for its world importance. Intrinsic value is recognised, although the emphasis is put on sustainable development - in the sense that management of park should minimize the negative effects of human actions and maximise the benefits human can get from the park as it is a unique resource (ABTOTA, 2018, January 31st).

6.1.10. Summary

So far I have presented the position of all the stakeholders, previously identified, regarding the changes in the management plan of Pirin National Park. All of the stakeholders have different interests and perceptions of nature, which I don't believe can be simplified easily. From Pirin being perceived as biodiversity hub of endemic species to a resource for local development and economic growth, opinions vary significantly and can be observed in most of the stakeholder's position. In figure 5 below, I have portrait each of them and how do they relate to intrinsic or instrumental value, thus aiming at answering my RQ1 and RQ1.1. The thickness of the lines represents whether each stakeholder focuses more or less on placing intrinsic or instrumental value.

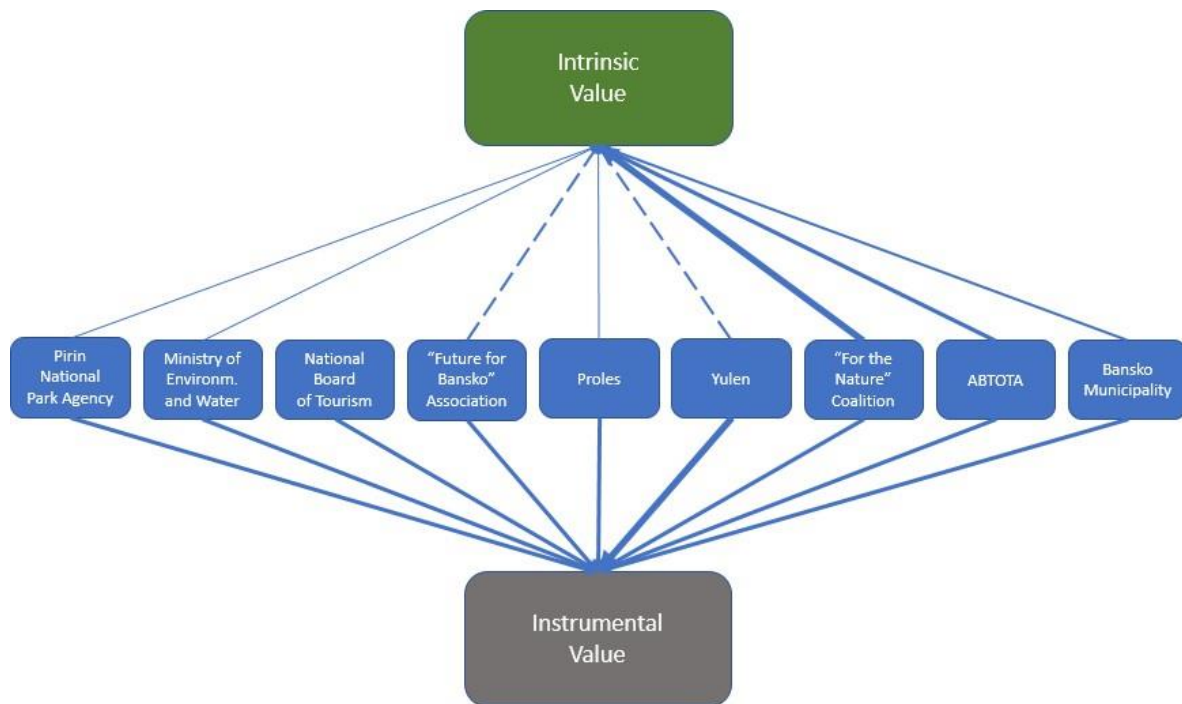
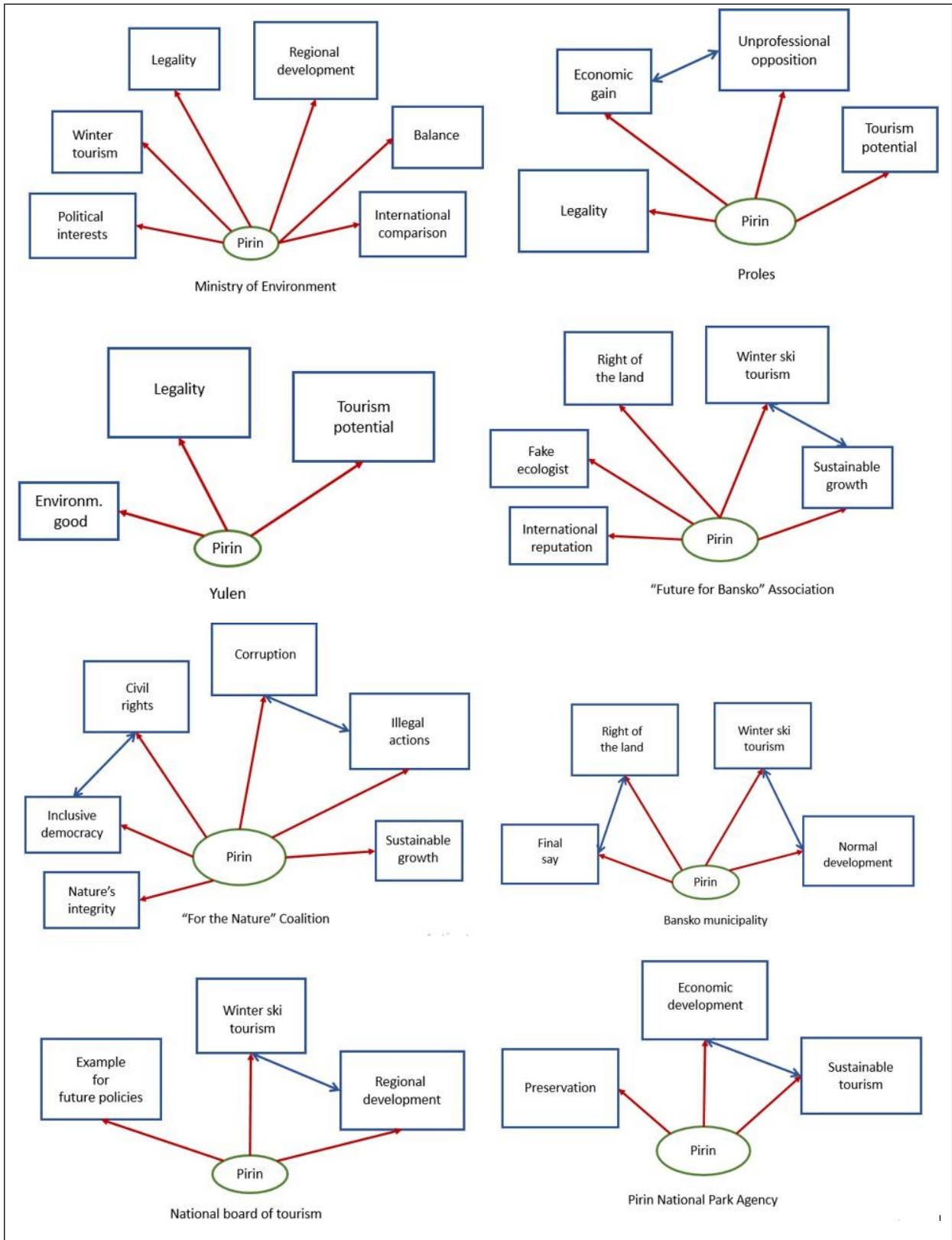


Figure 5. Stakeholders involved in the debate around Pirin National Park and ski zone Bansko and how are their position relating to instrumental and intrinsic value. (Own illustration, 2018). The thickness of the lines represents the emphasis or assigned importance each stakeholder does or does not place on value. Intrinsic value is clearly cared for less than instrumental, which all the stakeholders have.

In figure 6 seek to provide an overview of the different topics or issues each of the stakeholders talk about when they comment of the debate around the park. With this I attempt to answer my RQ2 where I asked what direction the debates take and are they focus on nature per se. Rarely, nature is mentioned as an important part of the debate. Rather arguments tend to turn to economic, social, political problems.



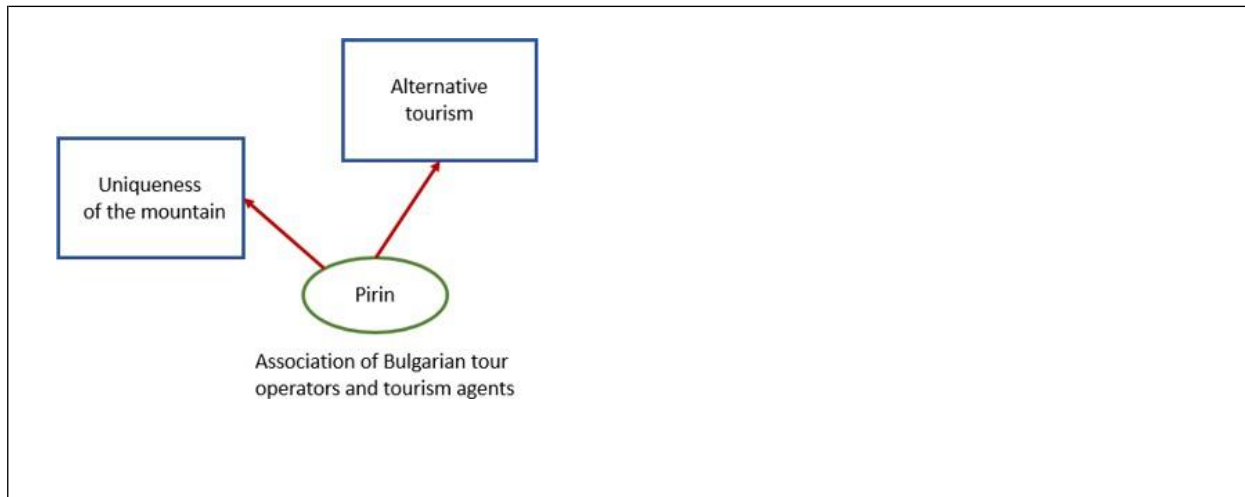


Figure 6. Stakeholders and different issues and problems, connected to the case. (Own illustration, 2018).

Each of the 9 stakeholders has been described with the different topics or issues it refers to, when talking about the mountain. Size of the boxes is determined by the emphasis put on the specific issue. Rarely can be observed topics directly related to nature itself.

6.2. Interview data

All, but one of, the respondents are part of organisations supporting the environmental coalition “For the nature” - R1, R2, R3 and R4. The last interviewee is part of NBT - R5. I am going to present the data in a combined way in order to understand if there are any discrepancies between individual and group perceptions per se. As a summary I will attempt to compare the individual perceptions with their particular stakeholder i.e.: R1, R2, R3 and R4 with the “For the nature” Coalition and R5 with the NBT based on the different topics or issues that come out of the statements.

6.2.1. Motivations

In the answers of the respondents can be observed variety of reasons that motivated them to express openly position and choose a side. R1 stated that moral reasons and professional interest are what drove him, as being part of a mountain guide association. The nature in the mountain, preferably untouched and wild is the working place for such kind of professions - an instrumental reason, interconnected with their love for the nature. R2 also mentioned a professional interest, that is related to benefits from alternative tourism development paths, but also emphasize on the unequal influence big lobbyism tourism industry has over the direction of development. Mistrust and suspicion are a big part of motivation of people to express opposition. R4 and R5 both express concern that the government has hidden agendas supporting the one-sided development. R3 said that being an ecologist is part of his calling in life and he believes that the governmental plans are going to be extremely bad for the park. R5 talks further about civil rights and how the changes in the management plan are a violation of his constitutional rights - since Pirin is under a category of a National property and as such belongs to every citizens in the country.

6.2.2. *The face of the government and the consortium*

All of the respondents said that they think behind the governmental decisions corruption and lobbyism are the main drivers. Neither the government, nor the consortium have fully disclosed to the public their intentions and even more, so they are not following the law correctly. Thus, the tension in the public exists because there is a serious lack of communication. R3 also talks about the language that is used by the government, concerning the legal sides of the changes in the plan. Mainly how it is aimed at confusing the broad public with technicalities and thus compromising demands that are against the changes. Beside this general mistrust, the government and the other higher institutions are seen by the respondents as the stakeholder that can resolve the conflict. R5 has mentioned that the resolution must come from the broader public, though. Everyone agrees that following the law will lead to better conservation and less harmful development policies.

6.2.3. *How will the conflict be resolved?*

All but one respondent agree that the best way to continue manage the mountain is some sort of sustainable tourism strategy - one that will involve the public as an active contributor and will protect local communities and their economic interest from a monopoly. Only R3 firmly states that any further development of the mountain in any way should be forbidden - in his words, there is no need to provide access for everyone. However, he also proposes a balanced development of alternative forms of tourism in the least harmful way possible. With this more inclusive pathway more sides of the conflict will be satisfied, opposite of the current situation where just a few stakeholders are benefiting.

6.2.4. *Role of nature*

When asked how they view the relationship between nature and society and how they value nature, the answers were quite different. R2 and R3 talked about nature as the basis of our existence and how it is absolutely essential for sustaining life. R1 expressed concerns that this relationship is wrongfully understood as connecting two separate things. Humans are part of nature and should not forget that, thus the term "environment" is wrong and something like "home" should be used. The answer of R4 also had the same notions, however it also expresses the idea of obligation and fear that when no one is taking care of the environment, people will suffer.

For R5 nature and the park specifically are connected to childhood memories and have built a certain kind of respect and admiration. Even more so, a sense of ownership connected to the idea of Pirin being a national symbol and an important asset for everyone in Bulgaria, not only for the locals. R3 talks about the right of existence of every species and the complete lack of superiority of humans in

deciding the fate of other species. Being part of nature makes us equal with other non-human living creature, but also with the abiotic nature. For R4 nature is important since it provides him with experience and feelings that nothing else can.

Specifically, the park is important since it provides multiple benefits to various types of social groups - ecological, social and also relates to the nation identity, as R2 states. The image of Pirin is embedded in the folklore and is irreplaceable structure in the identity of the whole nation. R1 emphasize that the case with Pirin is an important crossroad for the future policies and in general the direction of conservation and tourism development the country is going to take. R3 talks about the importance of the status the park has for decades. Only 3% of the Bulgarian territory is under this kind of protection and there are serious ecological reasons for that. Although they might be too complex to explain to the general public, they should trust that this status means something truly important and thus is worth preserving. R4 had a different opinion and answered the question in a more general sense. For them the importance of nature is not about a park specifically, but rather about nature itself and whether the case is about mountain park or a green space in a city neighbourhood it does not matter.

6.2.5. Summary

Intrinsic and instrumental value can be observed in the answers of every respondent and it is quite difficult to differentiate which is dominate. Figure 7 below shows again an abstraction of these two concepts and how they can be related to each of the interviewees. Interestingly in one of the answers a different concept emerged - relational value. This will be discussed later on in Discussion. As before the thickness of the arrows indicates the importance each interviewees place on either concept. Compared to figure 5, individuals place a higher importance on intrinsic value.

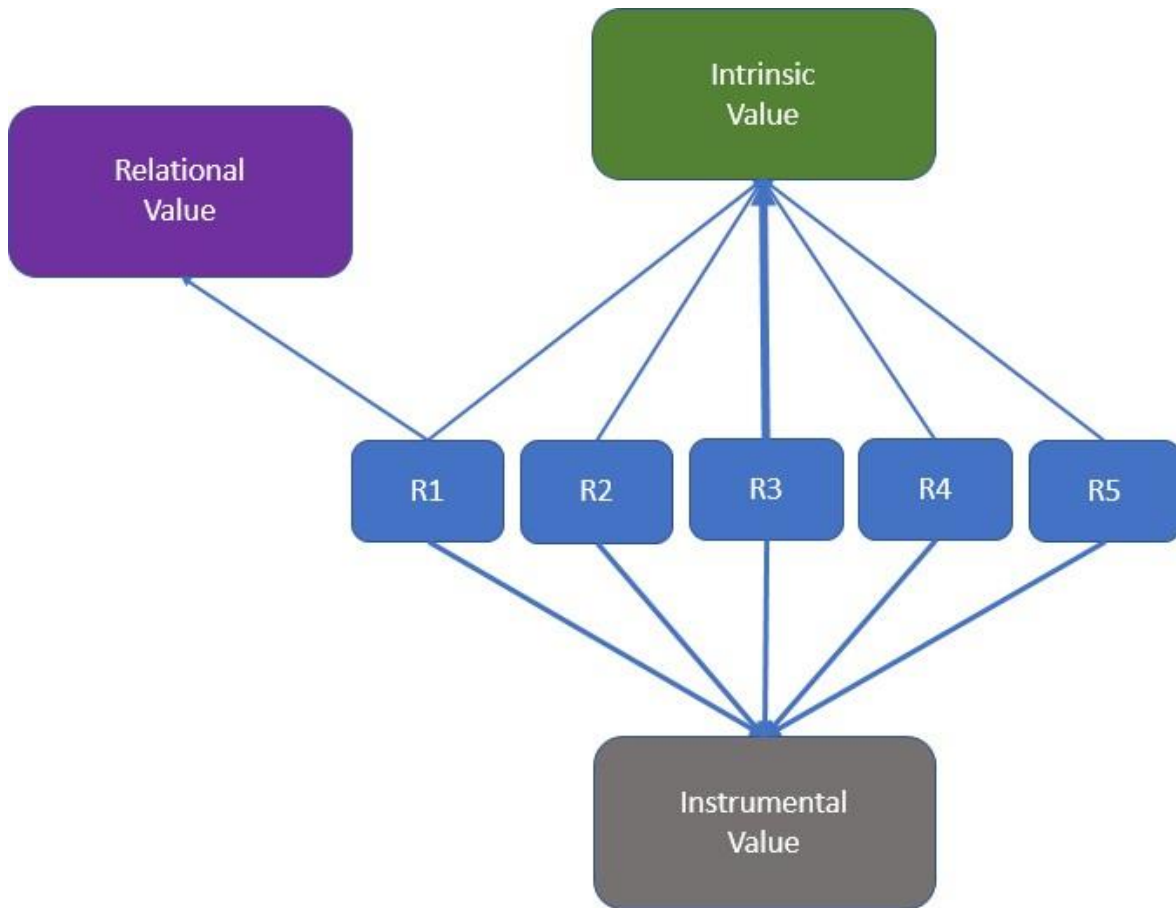


Figure 7. Interviewees with their instrumental, intrinsic and relational value. (Own illustration, 2018). Interviewees are related to how they perceive and emphasis intrinsic and instrumental value. Both are more evenly distributed than figure 5. Also, relational value as a concept has emerged. This balanced and diverse assigned values is probably due to the individual perspectives.

With figure 8 and 9 I compare the emerging topics from the individual answered to those of the organisations, the respondent belongs to. This is done to undercover differences in perceptions - RQ3, but also is in favour of answering RQ2. Clearly on individual level can be observed a greater variety of topics and issues that come from the case of Pirin. Further, can also be seen that nature per se is considered a lot more on the individual level than the organisational one. In figure 9 it actually can be considered as contradictory towards the organisation the interviewee is part.

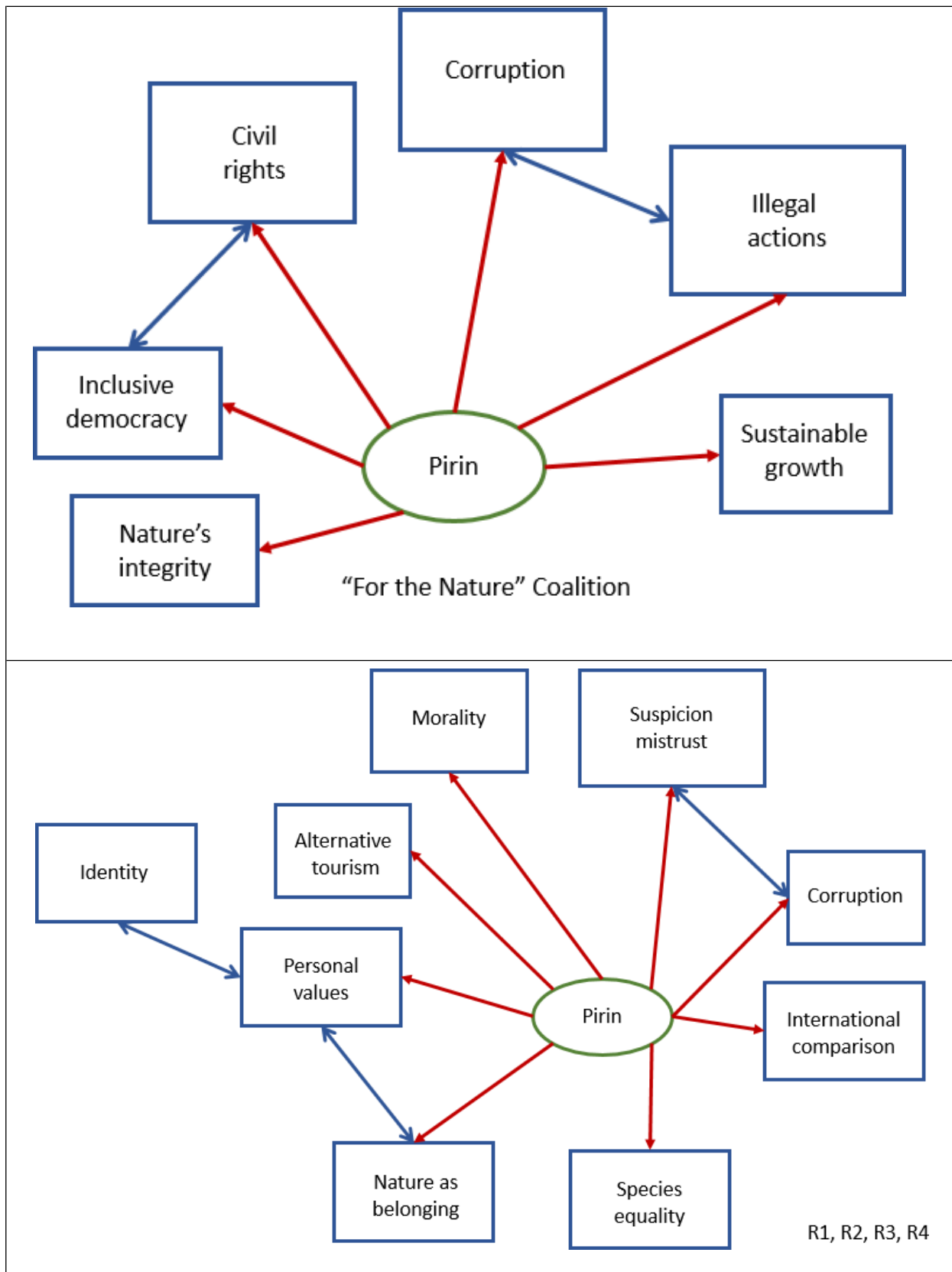


Figure 8. Comparison on emerging topics related to the case of "For the nature" Coalition and individual respondent in support of this stakeholder. (Own illustration, 2018). Higher diversity and regards for nature can be observed on individual level. A lot of topic are covered by both individual and organisational entities.

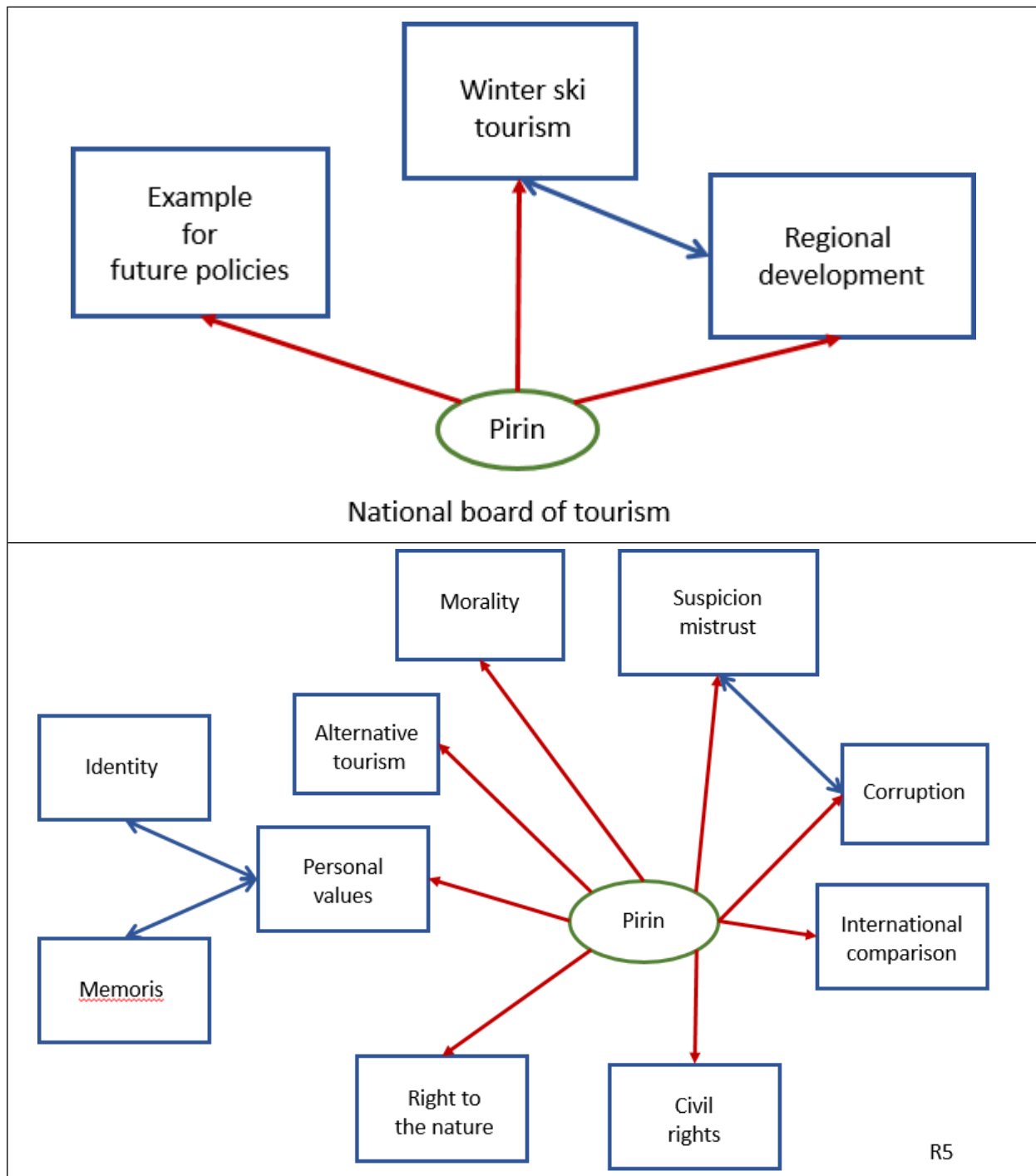


Figure 9 Comparison on emerging topics related to the case of “For the nature” Coalition and individual respondent in support of this stakeholder. (Own illustration, 2018). Higher diversity of connections and meanings can be observed on individual level. Between both there are even contradictions of topics.

7. Discussion

7.1. Intrinsic vs Instrumental value

Recognition of intrinsic value is the most common way I observe stakeholders addressing it. The policies for protection of the park during the past decade and a half have been strict. Thus, in a way operationalizing intrinsic value. With the current changes of the management plan MEW has changed its position towards an instrumental view of the mountain. The balance that the minister wants to achieve is in favour of maximum utilization of the mountain for economic development. While, still stating that protecting of nature is the goal of this ministry, sacrificing the nature isn't a problem if it is used for development. However, the other way around doesn't seem to be a viable possibility. Thus, the MEW changes its role from an institution that was protecting the park - due to its intrinsic value - to one that is using nature as a resource for economic development. Considering that intrinsic value is quite difficult to operationalise (see 4.3.2) actions deriving from instrumental value can also strive to have minimal negative effects on nature. For example, the direction of developing alternative tourism or local small-scale businesses - as are the position of other stakeholders - mainly, some of the organisations in the environmental coalition "For the nature", but also the ABTOTA, which represent part of the business sector.

The argument thus takes a direction of what type of use shall Pirin be under. The intrinsic value of the mountain is seen by the majority of stakeholders as a premise for the importance of the park towards tourism development. The higher biodiverse and unique the ecosystems in the mountain are, the stronger becomes the tourism potential. Leading to one important question: what kind of direction the Bulgarian society wants to take in its socio-environmental policies. On the one hand is the mass tourism that is happening currently with the focus on winter sports and is spatially concentrated in one big tourism hub. On the other hand, the sustainable development implies support of local initiatives, alternative tourism, strong restriction for some areas at the expense of others that provide easy access and opportunities.

Intrinsic and instrumental value can also be observed on different levels of governance structures. The Management plans for example does not give any specific practical direction of how the park should be managed, it is created as a guiding document and is more abstract. There the intrinsic value of Pirin is emphasized quite thoroughly. The next level is, as I understand to be, the Strategy for development that is created by the Park Agency. The focus in that document are the various ways the mountain can be develop, so that it is in for the local community. Finally, the decision the government took for specific changes in the Management plan allows for direct actions - implying a

clear utilitarian approach. Intrinsic value can be implemented on a more general, abstract level, but when it comes to specific detail and action - instrumental one is inevitable.

In the interviews the intrinsic and instrumental value are also not clearly defined and can both be observed in personal perceptions and are more evenly distributed by importance. This shows that intrinsic is inseparable from instrumental and both can be perceived without any controversies. Regarding decision about the park there are only two options - sustainable development and strict conservations. Both in a way seek to utilise the mountain in the least harmful way, because they do realise the intrinsic value of it.

The idea of relational value is quite new in the scientific circles, which seeks a new way of diffusing the discrepancies between intrinsic and instrumental value for more encompassing policy decision (Piccolo, 2017). The definition given by the interviewee correlates with the theoretical one that describes values arising from positioning the human within the natural world and realising that natural, social and cultural spheres are connected in dynamic relational way (Arias-Arévalo et al., 2018). It is not clear though how will practically this new type value can orient better policies and alleviate tensions between necessary conservation actions and economic development of regions.

7.2. Where did the nature go?

All of the stakeholders have shown that Pirin and nature in general are not in the main focus of the debates. The arguments are revolving around economic, political, social issues that are related to the environment, however are portrait as being of higher importance than nature. After all, the conflict is about a protected natural area and the debate should be interested in the environment. Further, as much as the environmental coalition wants to *talk about the park* they also pay more attention to violation of rights and illegal actions that the government takes. The Constitutional rights is the highest level of abstraction that the coalition allows themselves to argue with. There are no mentions of environmental land ethical consideration explicitly, which undermines the position about protectionism and questions the existence of hidden motives. Organisations from Bansko municipality also emphasize the most about their rights as locals. For the developers, Yulen, Proles, "Future for Bansko" Association, the park is only the stepping stone for increases development rates, improved economic stability, growth.

Instead of raising more fundamental question related to ethics and human-nature relationship, the conflict seems to stay on a rather superficial level. Although, asking more abstract questions can be easily portrayed as a weakness of an argument, it does not mean that it is completely useless for the broader society and for a general direction of development.

From individual point of view, there is a higher emphasis on nature and more specifically on the value it has been placed on it. From figure 8 and 9 can be observed these differences. Questions remain about whether there is a correlation between the individual variety and greater appreciation of nature and its intrinsic value and organisational discourses, which revolve other issues more than they discuss nature. Thus, I think this variety of understandings should be brought to organisation level where questions about environmental ethics should be discussed, rather than discarded.

7.3. Power of the law

Most of the stakeholders mention in one way or another the legality of their own positions and actions. Following the law is the main justification for most of the stakeholder's position, it provides strong and rational foundations for argument, from all sides. Everyone say they possess the specialist knowledge required to understand correctly the law, but when opposing opinions use the same justification it becomes difficult to judge who is right. The broader public does not have this specialist knowledge and can be manipulated by everyone, since it only understands an already transformed meanings. I think that also undermines the rational objectiveness, that most stakeholders use to justify their positions. The laws and regulations use strictly specific and technical language, which usually require interpretations and from those come the misunderstanding and confusion. When it is difficult to decide who has the right interpretation it is easier to get into debates, that doesn't seek resolving the conflicts.

7.4. Role of the government

Four out of five interviewees pointed out that the government has a decisive role and that it has to be responsible for resolving the conflict. Since this ministry has as a main objective the environment, I think its main goal should be taking care of the environment. Seeking a balanced way between conservation and economic development can imply that both are equally important. However, from the position of the MEW seems that economic development is an absolute must and nature will be sacrificed to some extent. Thus, the role of this particular ministry shifts towards regional development and economic growth, utilizing the resources, coming from the nature. This make the position of the MEW not neutral in any way, as they try to portray it. A question then follows, why are they not explicit enough about their position. Further should the government strive to be objective at all times or explicitly state its preferences and related perceptions.

8. Conclusion

In this thesis I set out to investigate a controversial debate in Bulgaria about development of a ski zone, located in Pirin National park. The focus of my inquiry was the perceptions of nature various

stakeholders involved in the debate have and what value they attribute to the mountain. I have found out that the differences between perceptions and values of stakeholders are focused more different interpretations about instrumental and intrinsic value, rather than strict differentiation between the two. I think that decision makers should strive to incorporate various perceptions of instrumental value from different stakeholders in management decisions. Intrinsic value, despite my belief that it is crucially important, can only be used additionally in this context. As far as the individual perceptions, from the limited data I have obtain can be concluded that at least a bigger variety of values and ideas are attributed to the mountain and intrinsic and instrumental value are evenly distributed. Whereas, in the stakeholders' perceptions the instrumental one clearly has the lead.

Sadly, the mountain will stand alone.

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10. Appendix

App. 1 Discourse Analysis data

Stakeholder	Source	
Minister of Environment and Water	Interview with the minister in “Sedmicata” on Darik Radio, February 17th, 2018	http://www.moew.government.bg/bg/razgovor-s-neno-dimov-ministur-na-okolnata-sreda-i-vodite-v-predavaneto-sedmicata-na-darik-radio-17-fevruari-2018-g/
	Interview with the minister in “Svobodna zona” on tv channel “Europe”, February 9th, 2018	http://www.moew.government.bg/bg/intervyu-s-ministur-neno-dimov-v-predavaneto-svobodna-zona-s-georgi-koritarov-tv-evropa-9-fevruari-2018-g/
	Interview with the minister in “Bulgaria Sutrin” on tv channel “Bulgaria On air”, February 6th, 2018	https://www.investor.bg/bulgaria-on-air/462/a/neno-dimov-tyrsia-balans-a-ne-konsensus-za-pirin-255260/
	Interview with the minister on tv channel “Nova Televisia”, January 26th, 2018	http://www.moew.government.bg/bg/intervyu-s-ministur-na-okolnata-sreda-i-vodite-neno-dimov-po-nova-televiziya-26-yanuari-2018-g/
	Statement of the minister in front of the European commission of the Environment, January 24th, 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GU_aCu7CvRg
	Short statement of the Ministry of environment and water about meeting between the minister and the Consortium of	http://www.moew.government.bg/bg/ministur-dimov-se-srestna-s-predstaviteli-na-

	Ski-zone Bansko, January 4th, 2018	koncesionera-na-ski-zona-bansko/
	Interview with the minister in “Denqt zapochva” on tv channel BNT, January 3rd, 2018	http://www.moew.government.bg/bg/razgovor-s-ministura-na-okolnata-sreda-i-voditeneno-dimov-v-denyat-zapochva-na-bnt-3-yanuari-2018-g/
	Short statement of the Ministry of environment and water about meeting between the minister and Bansko municipality, December 30th, 2017	http://www.moew.government.bg/bg/ministur-dimov-hoteli-i-restoranti-nyama-da-se-stroyat-v-nacionalen-park-pirin/
	Interview with the minister in “Zdravei Bulgaria” on tv channel Nova Televisia, December 29th, 2017	http://www.moew.government.bg/bg/razgovor-s-ministur-dimov-na-29-dekemvri-2017-g-v-predavaneto-zdravej-bulgariya-na-nova-televiziya/
	Round table public debate regarding the projects about Management plan for Pirin National park and Ski zone Bansko, December 11th, 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVkEOvAxUdY&t=645s
	Interview with the minister in “Oshte ot denya” on tv channel BNT1, November 24th, 2017	http://www.moew.government.bg/bg/intervyu-s-ministurneno-dimov-v-predavaneto-oste-ot-denya-na-bnt1-na-24-noemvri-2017-g/
	Interview with the minister in “Zdravei Bulgaria” on tv channel Nova Televisia, November 15th, 2017	http://www.moew.government.bg/bg/razgovor-s-ministurneno-dimov-na-15-noemvri-2017-g/

		2017-g-v-predavaneto-zdravej-bulgariya-po-nova-tv/
	Interview with the minister in “Europe sutrin” on tv channel Europe, October 31st, 2017	http://www.moew.government.bg/bg/razgovor-s-ministur-veno-dimov-v-predavaneto-evropa-sutrin-na-tv-evropa-na-31-oktomvri-2017-g/
	Pirin National Park, management plan, 2003	
	Report from Minister of Environment and Water Neno Dimov, regarding project for decision of Council of Ministries for changes in Pirin National Parks’s Management plan, accepted with Ord. № 646 from 2004	
	Ord. № 821, December 29th, 2017	
	Ord. № 823, December 29th, 2017	
	Ord. № 738, November 9th, 2001	
Pirin National Park Agency	Report, Four year cycle of executing Pirin National Park Management plan, July, 2008	http://pirin.bg/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/pregled.pdf
	Report, Four year cycle of executing Pirin National Park Management plan, January, 2013	http://pirin.bg/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/PU_2008_2013.pdf
	Strategy for sustainable management of natural resources through fostering sustainable tourism in Pirin National Park	http://pirin.bg/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/strategia.pdf
Bansko Municipality	Statement of the major of Bansko, January 4th, 2018	https://bit.ly/2FxWzsZ

	Major of Bansko, statement on the role of local governance in the development of the region, March 9th, 2018	https://bit.ly/2HEGTdq
	Major of Bansko, statement about talks for urban expansion of the city, January 5th, 2018	https://bit.ly/2JE5LyD
	Bansko municipality organises contra protest, supporting the Ministry of Environment and Water, January 4th, 2018	https://bit.ly/2rc3za0
	Minister of Environment and Water meeting the Major of Bansko, December 31st, 2017	https://bit.ly/2HEI5xr
	Major of Bansko about the decision of the Ministry of Environment and Water for new Management plan of Pirin National Park, December 28th, 2017	https://bit.ly/2retwFJ
	Press release, December 6th, 2017	https://bit.ly/2FxZhyM
	Major of bansko participate in round table, November 20th, 2017	https://bit.ly/2Kr5kZT
Proles Ing	Project plan for Management of Pirin National Park, May 16th, 2016	http://www.pu-pirin.pirin.bg/images/Sreshti/25-26.02.2015_Proekt_PU_Pirin/Proekt_PUPirin_25.02.2015.pdf
	Statement - Regarding the lies told about the management plans for Pirin National Park and Vitosha Natural Park”, August 10th, 2016	http://www.pu-pirin.pirin.bg/news/136-pressaobshtenie
Consortium Yulen	Information from Consortium Yulen after round table of debates, November 20th,	http://forthenature.org/upload/documents/2017/12/infromac

	2017	iya%20ot%20Yulen%20sled%20krugla%20masa%20Pirin.pdf
	Statement - Regarding working meeting and seminar between interested parties for presenting of part 1 from "Description and assessment of National Park Pirin", November 27th, 2014	http://forthenature.org/upload/documents/2017/11/Yulen_Stanovishte_APU.pdf
"Future for Bansko" Association	Statement in support of winter sports, January 5th, 2018	https://bit.ly/2HOaVr9
"For the nature" Coalition	History of the issue around Pirin National Park, Foundation "Biodiversity" April 2016	http://forthenature.org/upload/documents/2016/05/Pirin_istoriya2.pdf
	Information about the disturbing increase of construction allowed and logging	
	Statement and suggestion for working group about achieving consensus, Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism,	http://planini.eu/planini/news.php#126
	Statement, Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism, 2015 January 24th	https://prozrachniplanini.org/f/0/2015-pu-pirin-stanovishte-baat-201502101133.pdf
	Statement, "For the nature", 2017, December 11th	http://forthenature.org/documents/867
	Statement of Bulgarian Biodiversity Association, 2015, July 25th	http://bbf.biodiversity.bg/bg/BFB-vnese-otritsatelno-stanovishte-po-proekt-na-Plan-za-upravlenie-na-Natsionalen-park-Pirin-2014-2023.p1440
National board	Declaration, 2018 January 11th	http://tourismboard.bg/news/

of tourism		deklaratsiya-na-us-na-nbt/
Association of Bulgarian Tour operators and Tourism Agents	Open letter to the government of Bulgaria, 2018, January 31st	http://abtta.com/news_profile.php?news_id=163&lang_id=1&ldata=

App. 2 Guide Question for discourse data analysis

Guide Question for discourse data analysis.	
	Does this piece of information (speech, talk, document, law,) mention nature at all?
	Does it mention economy/ economic growth/ green development/ sustainable development - etc.
	Does it refer to connection with people?
	In what way is this connection described, referred to?
	Does it talk about political stands?
	Does it recognise the conflict?
	What is the reason for the conflict it points out?
	Is the mountain specific/ important? For each group?
	In what way?
	Does it have a moral ground?
	Does it defend one?
	Is this conflict used for other conflicts and other protests?
	What do the sides say for each other.
	How does each side see themselves?
	Is it an individual perspective or an institutional one/ communal one?

How does it sound in the text?

App. 3 Interview guide

Interview guide	
Introduction - aim and scope of the study	<p>The aim of this project is to investigate whether different perceptions of nature can be understood as one of the fundamental reasons for the existence of ecological conflicts. As a representative case I have chosen Pirin National Park - a mountain protected area in Bulgaria that has been subject of public debates for more than a decade. By understanding the different perceptions stakeholders have about the value of nature might help decision makers to develop a more balanced and inclusive plan.</p> <p>For the purposes of the study, your individual perspective is of high importance. The answers should be regarding your personal perceptions and understandings. The results will be used only for scientific purposes - in my master thesis and possibly in a publication on a later stage.</p>
The ski resort case	Can you describe to me the conflict in a few sentences?
	What are the main reasons for your organisation to join the dialogue?
	Why did you personally get involved in the conflict?
	What do you think about the current plans of the Ministry of environment and water regarding the changes in the law about the regime of management?
	In your opinion, what is foundation of the conflict, the main reason for it to be so contentious?
	What do you think has to be done so that the conflict can be resolved? And can the problem be resolved in a way that benefits more

	stakeholders?
	What can you tell me about the positions and demands of the other stakeholders involved? The ministry, the developing coalition, the environmental organisations, the locals, the other NGOs that support the new plan.
	What is the best way to manage and develop the mountain?
	How will the current project benefit different groups? How will it harm them?
	Is there an actor that should act towards the conflict resolution?
Nature questions	What is role/function of nature in society? How do you value the environment/what is your perception about the environment, in general?
	Can you tell me why is the mountain Pirin important? What do you consider valuable about it?
	Do you think the other stakeholders in the conflict have different opinion about the value of Pirin? The government, the locals, the developers, the environmentalist - what do you think are their visions.
	What do you perceive as the best way to assess the value of the mountain?
	Do you think values and moral have a role in this conflict? Why? From what moral standpoint should different stakeholders make decisions?
	How do you describe your moral position, if your actions and decision are based on one?
	What do you think about off-setting the negative effects of a potential expansion of the resort?
	Does conservation require limitations and deprivations of some sort?

	Is there a need for a balance between nature conservation and economic development?
General Information Question	Name, age, organisation, position.