



Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

Master's Thesis 2023 60 ECTS

Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Noragric

Nature Park Zlatibor: A political ecology study

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Tropical ecology and Natural Resource Management

Nature Park Zlatibor: A political ecology study

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August 15th, 2023

Declaration

I, Tijana Malesevic, declare that this thesis is the outcome of my research inquiries and discoveries. I have duly recognized and included references to any external sources of information. Furthermore, this work has not been previously presented to any other academic institution for the purpose of obtaining any form of educational qualification.

Acknowledgments

This thesis is the result of twelve months of committed effort, ten of which were spent in the field in the Zlatibor Mountain area. It is important to acknowledge that without the backing, aid, and direction provided by a multitude of individuals I would not be able to successfully complete this undertaking. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to this endeavour.

I am deeply grateful and thankful to all the respondents. Thank you for the time you set aside for me, for the insights given and wisdom shared. Many of you have welcomed me so warmly and earnestly into your homes. I hope to do some justice to the honest and raw conversations we have had.

Thanks are due to all the new friends I made along the way as well. Spending ten months in the area has resulted in many respondents turning into good friends. Thank you for being just a text or phone call away every time I had some additional questions for you.

My good old friends and university colleagues, thanks for the numerous insightful discussions regarding my thesis as well as political ecology in general. In combination with many inspiring professors and mentors' teachings, your comments and ideas have contributed the most to my interest and inspiration to finish this three years master's degree endeavour.

And finally, the warmest thanks to my closest friend and family members. Thanks for all the understanding, love and care you've shown during all my thesis related ups and downs.

Abstract

Set in the Southwestern region of Serbia, Nature Park Zlatibor poses an issue to the local people who reside in the area. The park has been created in 2017 and has since been managed by the state owned enterprise “Serbiaforests”. Local people complain about the lack of participation, consultation, and communication with the park management. Their right to use local environmental resources and to develop have been either restricted or reduced, making many of the local people rather angry. Knowing this, I decided to spend almost a year conducting research and living in the area. This thesis is a result of more than thirty interviews and numerous conversations with these local people. Using a grounded theory approach has led to an application of a classic political ecology lens to the case, which highlight issues such as “accumulation by dispossession” and discourses on “wilderness” and human-nature dichotomy. A realisation is reached by concluding that the management of protected areas as we see it today, does not necessarily work in the humanities benefit. Many would argue that conservation embedded in capitalistic socio-economic environments focused on “economic growth” and “profitability” cannot be sustainable. And in the sea of examples to confirm this claim, we might just also find Nature Park Zlatibor too.

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1. Introduction

Located in Southwestern Serbia, Nature Park “Zlatibor” (NPZ) challenges the ideas of nature, nature protection, conservation, sustainability, and management. In these 42 000 hectares, an interplay of socio-ecological relations, politics, and economics is afoot. This state-managed park was gazetted five years ago, in 2017, and has since then been managed by the state enterprise for forest management “Srbijasume” or in English, “Serbiaforests”. NPZ is located on the territories of four different municipalities, but only one municipality is heavily influenced by the park. The municipality of Cajetina makes up for 80-90% of the park's total area, and all the villages within the park belong under its jurisdiction. Among the larger settlements in the NPZ are villages: Semegnjevo (with its 183 inhabitants), Jablanica (709), Stublo (128), Dobroselica (367), Ljubiš (515), and Gostilje (242). The numbers of inhabitants are the numbers recorded during the last population census in 2011 (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia).

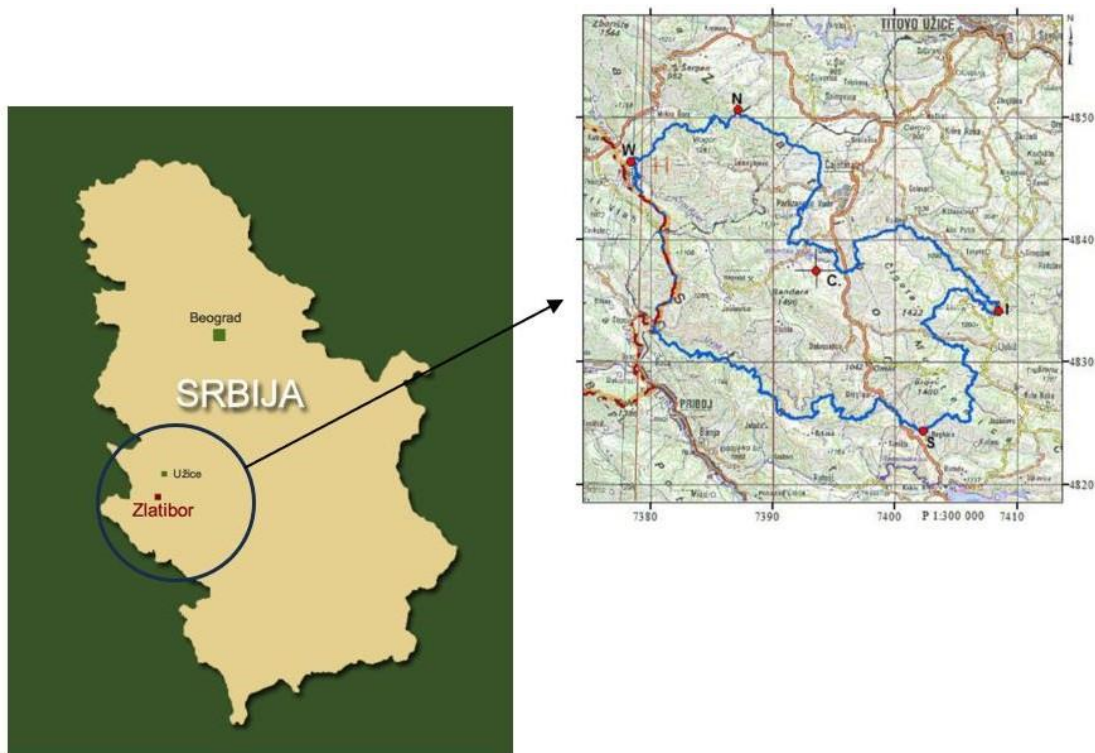


Figure 1 Zlatibor Nature Park location and borders. Photo on the right adapted from INCS (2017).

People who live in the park are predominantly older. Most of them did not have a say during the time the park was being created, and some did not even know they were living in the

park at the time I was conducting the interviews. Many of them live alone, focusing on their sustenance gardens and possibly one or two livestock animals if they can manage to keep them. The existence of the park does not bother them much and the park rangers rarely, if ever, check on them. But the story is quite different for the slightly younger people who reside in the park.

Although the state-owned land covers around 43% of the park, the remaining 56% is made up of privately owned land. On this private land, many people want to develop something, to expand their houses, start up a business, a bed and breakfast for the tourists perhaps, or maybe even an agricultural undertaking. Yet the park and its strict rules and regulations pose an obstacle that presents an end to all undertakings for many of the local people. Since its start in 2017, NPZ has been strictly regulating all construction and development that has been going on in the park. Local people are complaining about having their hands tied and not being able to do anything on their lands anymore. In this rural area, many now talk about the lack of livelihood alternatives.

The Cajetina Municipality employees and representatives complain about the way the park was created, the lack of proper consultation with the local people, and the strictness of the imposed rules. During the one and only consultation meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection in 2017 prior to the park's creation, numerous locals protested loudly against the park, the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia (INCS), and their plans. One local person even remembers someone possibly throwing water at the Ministry and INCS representatives during that meeting. Later, in 2018 and 2019, once the park was already legally established through the "Regulation on the Proclamation of Nature Park Zlatibor" and the spatial plans and regulations had to be developed, the municipality refused to participate in any of the meetings with the spatial planning committee. Instead, they wrote to the Constitutional Court, asking for an assessment of NPZ's constitutionality and legality – to which they never received any answer.

Following all the concerns raised by the local people, this thesis uses some of the classic political ecology tools and theories to access the situation through this lens. I will investigate the connections between political ecology topics (such as the wilderness discourse, issues regarding protected areas, accumulation by dispossession, ecotourism, knowledge politics, participation, etc.) and the Nature Park Zlatibor. But firstly, a literature review of all these subject matters is required.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Wilderness

The idea of wilderness is a discourse, quite possibly a hegemonic one. Adger et al. (2001) offer some good definitions of discourses and narratives which support them. A discourse is a common understanding, knowledge, belief, or view of a phenomena. However, a hegemonic discourse dominates thought and is frequently translated into institutional systems. Narratives, on the other hand, are stories that may occasionally be used to maintain discourses. They are chronologically built stories with internal arguments and situations, and if dominant, narratives may establish policymakers' foundations and preconceptions. As a result, discourses and narratives play immensely strong roles in how we perceive and address environmental concerns across the world.

The discourse of wilderness and nature so pristine that it is untouched by human foot, has for decades been a core tenant of the environmental movement, particularly in the United States. According to Cronon (1996), for many Americans, wilderness is the only location on Earth where civilization, that “*all-too-human disease*”, has not entirely contaminated the planet. And across the world, a clear boundary between people/civilization and nature/wilderness, a strict human-nature dichotomy prevails (Nash, 1982). The discourse can be traced all the way back to the 1800s, the historian Frederick Jackson Turner and the “American myth of origin” (Cronon, 1996). In 1890s, Turner provocatively claimed that the “American frontier is passing away” and that never again would “such gifts of free land offer themselves” to the American people. Here, he demonstrates the thinking of the time and the way the idea of wilderness was connected to the national American identity. A country rooted in colonialism and imperialism could not stand to lose the idea of a “wild frontier”. Hence, they had to come up with some possible solution to the “problem”, a national park for example.

Furthermore, as Cronon (1996) states it; “*There is nothing natural about the concept of wilderness*”. The massacre and removal of Native Americans is behind the creation of “uninhabited wilderness”, and the idea of “virgin land” erases the history and lives of the original Native American inhabitants who lived there before colonization. For generations, they lived and managed the lands colonizers forcibly relocated them from. Nonetheless, people, policymakers and scientists around the globe still talk of, and many stive towards, wilderness. They remain

unaware of the past erased by the concept, of the people who once roamed and lived in their now “pristine nature gardens”.

Unfortunately, this discourse dominates the world, the story of local and indigenous people’s existence and lives gets forgotten and erased time and time again. Rich tourists visit national parks and marvel at the “pristine” savannas, “wild” jungles and “empty” deserts. Many of them are happy to escape the concrete confines of their everyday lives in the city and experience the wonders of the “untouched natural environments”. Henceforth, protecting nature from people has become the default mode of conservation, emphasizing the boundaries between human and non-human nature (Büscher and Fletcher, 2019).

2.2 Protected areas

Nature parks, protected areas, reserves, etc. have always had a special place in political ecology. With their roots in human-nature dichotomy and capitalism, their story dates all the way back to Yellowstone and its establishment in 1872. The first national park in the USA and in the world. It was created with the sole purpose of nature protection and tourism, “wilderness” for urban recreation and spiritual refreshment (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2021, Chapter 4). After all of the indigenous people got expelled and their use of nature concealed, the park was presented as untouched by human influence and indigenous names were replaced with nature-descriptive place names (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2021, Chapter 4). Indeed, John Muir, a notable figure in the establishment of American conservation principles, expressed the view that all inhabited wilderness areas should be vacated and set aside exclusively for the recreational and spiritual rejuvenation of urban populations (Dowie, 2009).

Protected areas (PAs) are now one of the most widely used conservation measures worldwide (Wuerthner et al., 2015). They are also known as the "cornerstone" or "foundation" of biodiversity conservation (Dinerstein et al., 2017), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines them as "an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, as well as natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means" (Blyth et al., 2003).

Indeed, the idea of nature protection and conservation is so prevalent that in May 2020 EU published its biodiversity strategy for 2030, where they set a target to “*legally protect a minimum of 30% of the EU’s land area and 30% of the EU sea area and integrate ecological corridors, as*

part of a true Trans-European Nature Network” by 2030. This idea stems from two scientific papers by Dinerstein et al., one published in 2017 and the other one in 2019. Dinerstein et al. (2019) call for a Global Deal for Nature (GDN) - a proposal to protect at least 30% of land by 2030, and 50% by 2050. Their idea and slogans “30 by 30” and “50 by 50” have since become catchy phrases in global social media circles and possibly even more importantly, “sustainable future” targets in global scientific and policy circles (Wuerthner et al., 2015), exemplified by the endorsement of the “30 by 30” proposal by the delegates in the recent United Nations Conference of the Parties in Montreal in 2022. The idea traveled so far as to give rise to the Half-Earth Project, a concept led by several prominent conservation scientists, proudly aiming to turn at least 50% of the Earth’s surface into protected areas.

Half Earth supporters use the phrase "Nature Needs Half" to emphasize the necessity to protect half of the Earth's land area in order to sustain ecosystem services "for the benefit of humans" (Dinerstein et al., 2017). Their ideas, however, have been heavily scrutinized and criticized. Schleicher and colleagues (2019), for example, stated that Half Earth might have a number of detrimental social and economic consequences, and they criticized the plan for being "ambiguous" and not being clear enough about the forms and locations of suggested preserved areas. Büscher and colleagues (2017) went so far as to claim that the Half Earth plan would have widespread negative implications for humanity and would fail to accomplish its conservation goals.

Undoubtedly, the effects of current protected areas are diverse, ranging from beneficial socioeconomic outcomes for some towns, individuals, and enterprises to detrimental physical and economic displacements of other groups of people (Oldekop et al., 2016). Conflicts between conservation efforts and local communities are a reoccurring concern in conservation research, emphasizing that PAs can have a disproportionately detrimental impact on marginal groups, typically those that reside near or within protected areas (Lunstrum, 2014). Marginalization and dispossession of people from their land in the name of conservation has not been an uncommon occurrence (Roe, 2008).

2.3 Accumulation by dispossession

Karl Marx stands as one of the pioneering academics to highlight the detrimental impact of capitalism and the associated exploitation of both people and land which comes with it

(Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2021, Chapter 2). In his work "Capital, Volume I" (Marx, 1867), he expands on the concept of "primitive accumulation," delineating the enclosure and privatization of common lands in England, which inevitably led to the dispossession of local inhabitants from their lands and resources. This key element in the birth of capitalism yielded serious consequences, entailing substantial loss of livelihoods for the rural poor and contributing to the labor force provision for the impending industrial revolution era (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2021).

More than a century later, David Harvey (2003) expands on Marx's theory, coining the term "accumulation by dispossession" to refer to primitive accumulation. He cites various examples of how nations, enterprises, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) accumulate capital while smallholders, mostly farmers and pastoralists, get deprived of access to land and resources (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2021, Chapter 2). For example, he discusses the recent privatization and commercialization of rural land in India and Mexico, as well as how these processes have resulted in the displacement of local peasants.

One thing Harvey does not mention in his book, however, is that environmental conservation and protected area creation, also might be considered as a form of accumulation by dispossession. This is what Benjaminsen and Bryceson (2012) emphasize in their work, presenting various examples of "green and blue grabbing". Green grabbing refers to the appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends, which includes land grabs, the privatization of rights to nature, and the creation of new commodities and markets from nature (Fairhead et al., 2012). While blue grabbing applies to all marine dispossession, also led by powerful conservation NGOs, businesses, or the state. Benjaminsen and Bryceson (2012) discuss various situations in which conservation, in the form of such green or blue grabbing, has resulted in the eviction of people and capital accumulation by more powerful players.

Furthermore, Buscher and Fletcher (2015), coin the term "Accumulation by Conservation" and see it as a potential new phase of capitalism. They argue that while conservationists often portray themselves as defenders of natural spaces against industrial destruction, conservation and capitalism have always been intertwined, with conservation being a way to harness 'natural capital'. The global conservation organizations, particularly major NGOs like World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, and Conservation International (also known as 'Big Conservation NGOs' or BINGOs) claim to have significant influence over global conservation funding and that they actively engage with corporations to improve their environmental practices. However, this

narrative has been met with skepticism, with Buscher and Fletcher (2015) arguing that conservation is not a counter to capitalism, but rather another strategy through which capitalism monetizes natural resources. They also note that conservation differs from other efforts to commodify natural capital as it seeks to commodify resources in situ through non-consumptive use, rather than extracting and transforming them into mobile commodities. This perspective views conservation as a tool for preserving 'natural capital' for non-consumptive use, rather than for resource extraction. Like for example, through “nature based” or “eco” tourism.

Lastly, Tania Li (2010), draws a parallel between the people who are dispossessed of their lands due to a protected area and people who were dispossessed in England during the industrial revolution. She says that in comparison to the industrial revolution years, there are no jobs in the cities or in manufacturing waiting to absorb the dispossessed population. She claims those people to be the “surplus” to the needs of capital, and wonders: “*Who, then, would act to keep these people alive, and why would they act?*” (Li, 2010).

Indeed, over the last few decades, an estimated 8.5 million people have been evicted from protected areas and denied access to land and old means of livelihood (Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau, 2006). Conservation requires little or no labor, and the existence of nearby people is often considered a threat to conservation goals. Conservation organizations and the donors who finance them make no commitment to relocating, compensating, or identifying alternative livelihoods for the people displaced by their projects. Rather, they appear to presume that these people will find another place to go and something else to do (Li, 2010).

Her thinking corresponds with Foucault's concept of “make live or let die” central to his analysis of biopolitics and governmentality. It refers to the ways in which modern forms of power exert control over populations by determining who gets to live and who is allowed to die. Foucault introduced the concept of biopolitics to describe the way that modern states and institutions exercise power over populations through the management and regulation of life. This includes measures such as public health policies, demographic controls, and social welfare programs. Li (2010), however, expands the concept on the previously mentioned conservation “surplus” people, and argues that they are being “let to die”. She argues that the “*stealthy violence that consigns large numbers of people to lead short and limited lives*” such as we are seeing occur in many protected areas around the world presents an indication of letting die.

2.4 Ecotourism

Ecotourism, or as it is often called, nature-based tourism, is often promoted as one of the best opportunities for local people who live in or near a protected area to engage in. Thanks to the “wilderness” discourse tourists are usually quite attracted to see and marvel at the beauty of protected areas. Hence, many actors who create PAs like to imagine that the local people will “at least” have the opportunity to develop ecotourism businesses. They will work on promoting and spreading the word about the park, whilst the local people benefit on-site from all the daily visits and possibly even overnight stays. Furthermore, ecotourism has been praised as a solution for funding conservation and scientific research, protecting ecosystems, benefiting rural communities, promoting development in poor countries, and more (Fletcher and Neves, 2012). This story, however, does not always prove to be true.

Ghosh and Ghosh (2019) conducted research in Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve (SBR) and proved how the tourism in the reserve area benefits only a small fraction of the local population. The most marginalized communities in the Sundarbans gain little from ecotourism. Engaging in ecotourism requires significant investment, such as purchasing a boat or building a hotel, which is unaffordable for most locals given their socioeconomic status. Hence, most economic benefits from tourism flow to non-local elites, with local vendors and workers only receiving indirect benefits. Additionally, most of the tourists use package tours from external companies, limiting their expenditure in local shops. In fact, only 36% of the interviewed local people reported direct or indirect benefits from ecotourism. However, one noticeable effect of ecotourism was the increase in land prices, particularly in areas favorable for tourism development. Which, in turn, prompted some locals to sell their land, often leading to outmigration towards urban areas.

Furthermore, Fletcher (2019) identifies ecotourism as a specific form of disaster capitalism, offering an "environmental fix" for ecological damage caused by conventional capitalist development. In addition, there is what Fletcher and Neves (2012) call a 'psychological fix' where the stress, anxiety, and discontent often linked to the disconnecting aspects of most jobs in a capitalist system are tackled through tourism encounters that enable individuals to 'escape from it all,' subsequently revitalizing their vigor for additional work upon their reentry into “real life” (Fletcher and Neves 2012).

2.5 Decentralization and knowledge production

Birkes and Folke (1998) acknowledge that all societies have their own science but define Western science and scientific method as a certain brand of science that is employed as the foundation of resource management by centralized bureaucracies all over the world. They say that the focus is put on the wrong types of sustainability and on narrow kinds of scientific practice, partially due to the “strongly positivist resource management science” ideology. Centralized institutions and command-and-control resource management are the status quo, yet they are based on linear models and mechanistic views of nature. Such models, however, usually reduce natural variations in an attempt to increase ecosystem productivity, predictability, and economic efficiency. This, however, may result in a loss of resilience and in a system more prone to crises (Berkes et al., 2003).

Furthermore, the managerial discourse endorsed by centralized institutions presents one of the core values of modern-day science and policy. Efficiency and effectiveness are highlighted as crucially important for science and policy interfaces, resulting in an almost exclusive focus on “nature” as “ecosystem services” (Turnhout, 2018), and words such as “natural resources”, even though they make us perceive our environment solely in terms of production, yield, harvest and exploitation (Luke, 1995). This quote by the Deputy Head of IUCN’s Species Program, says it all:

“It’s time to recognize that nature is the largest company on Earth working for the benefit of 100 percent of humankind—and it’s doing it for free.”

Jean-Christophe Vié, Deputy Head of IUCN’s Species Program (2009)

To illustrate this point further, Shiva (1993) investigates the idea of 'scientific forestry,' which she sees as a symptom of Western knowledge systems' supremacy and dominance. She claims that the scientific-management method reduces forests to their commercial wood worth while neglecting their biological diversity and the various ways local populations use them for food, grazing, fuel, and other purposes. Furthermore, this reductionist viewpoint leads to the destruction of tropical forests and marginalizes indigenous communities. She emphasizes the need for alternative forestry approaches that show more respect to the ecosystem and local community knowledge networks.

Others would also agree with her and say that we should be promoting systems based on local ecological knowledge and decentralized local institutions run by the resource users themselves (Berkes et al., 2003). Ostrom (1998), for example, proposes polycentric management as management that encompasses both local and higher levels of governance and seeks to strike the correct balance between decentralized and centralized authority. Polycentric management enables choices to be made at multiple levels of society and improves the potential for feedback loops at different scales. Furthermore, Lebel et al. (2006) contend that an organizational structure with various, relatively autonomous centers allows for the evolution of locally relevant institutions. These institutions would be able to fit the diverse social and ecological settings and dynamics of many areas and inform local actions in ways that a single centralized system simply cannot.

2.6 Participation

Folke et al. (2002) advocate for resilient policies that encourage all stakeholders to participate and incorporate their ecological knowledge into institutional structures in multi-level governance systems. Others, such as Østmo and Law (2018), propose refusing to participate as a mark of defiance and resistance. They argue against translating some Sami words into the English language because they refuse to participate in the intellectual imperialism of the English language and Western science which comes in the same package. As they say, they want to “*throw grit into the well-oiled imperialist practices of that English, and so lay down a marker of epistemological, normative, institutional, and ontological difference.*”

Hence, participation is a broad term, spanning from manipulation and tokenism to people's self-mobilization and citizen control. According to Arnstein (1969) there is a significant difference between meaningless participation just for the sake of participation and possessing the genuine authority required to influence the process's result. She claims that participation without redistribution of power represents a meaningless and frustrating exercise for the powerless. While it allows power holders to preserve the status quo and to claim that all actors and perspectives were considered.

Arnstein created an illustration she calls a “ladder of citizen participation” which contains eight levels of participation with each step of the ladder representing the degree of citizens’ power in deciding the final outcome. The ladder is, of course, a simplification of the real world, but it shows us that there are significant gradations in the participation processes and that not everything

that is called “participation” necessarily empowers local people. From nonparticipation to citizen power the ladder consists of; 1. Manipulation, 2. Therapy, 3. Informing, 4. Consultation, 5. Placation, 6. Partnership, 7. Delegated power and lastly 8. Citizen control.

Furthermore, Pretty (1995), argues that there are two ways of viewing participation. In the first view, participation is seen as a technique for increasing efficiency, with the basic idea being that if people are involved, they are more likely to agree with and support the new invention or service. Whilst the other view sees participation as a basic right, with the primary goal of mobilizing people for collective action, empowerment, and institutional development.

Pretty (1995) divides the ways organizations interpret and use the word “participation” into seven types. Ranging from people being manipulated to people taking initiatives independently of external institutions, the seven types of participation include: manipulative participation, passive participation, participation by consultation, participation for material incentive, functional participation, interactive participation and finally, self-mobilization.

2.7 Tragedy of the commons

In the past, it was widely believed that users of common property resources were perpetually locked in an unending "Tragedy of the Commons" (Hardin, 1968). The concept is illustrating how shared resources, when unregulated, can be overused and depleted due to individuals pursuing their self-interest. It highlights the potential for collective harm as people exploit common resources without considering long-term sustainability. Many scientists today still support this theory, even though there were numerous studies conducted in the mid-1980s and afterward which have revealed that Hardin's generalizations are false (Birkes, 1989). If the resource is publicly accessible to all users, a tragedy of the commons may inevitably occur. However, the majority of resources used by rural communities are not available to the public and are instead protected by communal property rights. Most of the time, there are community regulations governing access and shared usage. The "tragedy of the commons" often arises not primarily due to the inherent inadequacy of shared resources but rather due to the failure of institutions to control resource access and establish effective internal regulations for collective utilization. Hence, this "tragedy" typically manifests in situations with "open access," not when resources are managed as "common property" (Birkes, 1989)

2.8 Convivial Conservation and other alternatives

Long-term conservation efforts should address economic growth, resource exploitation, and overconsumption as the core drivers of biodiversity loss (Büscher et al., 2017). They might support degrowth and ecological economics, with an emphasis on changing the global population groups that consume the most. Furthermore, they should not attribute the biodiversity catastrophe and environmental degradation to population growth or poverty, but instead seek to address increasing global inequality (Picketty, 2014). One proposal for such radical change in conservation practices already exists. It is called convivial conservation.

Convivial conservation (Buscher and Fletcher, 2019) offers an alternative approach to traditional conservation models by focusing on the coexistence of human and non-human nature in ways that are mutually beneficial. Conviviality (literally: “living with”), a central principle in this post-growth conservation strategy, is about promoting spaces in which humans and other species live and co-exist in harmony. Respectful sharing of space is central to this idea. People must learn, and in many cases “re-learn”, how to live together with other species, how to share landscapes, and respect other species’ needs and wants. Unlike some other conventional conservation approaches that seek to isolate humans from nature, convivial conservation promotes human-environment interdependence. It also acknowledges that humans are part of ecosystems and that, when managed properly, their actions may have a positive influence on biodiversity. This thinking being partially inspired by the environmental skills and knowledge of the indigenous and local communities all over the world (Caillon et al., 2017).

Furthermore, Büscher and Fletcher (2019) criticize capitalism's role in conservation efforts. They contend that capitalism and its modern form of neo-liberalism frequently emphasize profit over environmental and social well-being, resulting in detrimental implications for both people and nature. Capitalism, an economic system which relies on endless economic growth on a planet with finite resources, combined with mainstream conservation efforts embedded in the dualistic view of humans vs. nature, presents the root cause of environmental degradation and social injustice we are witnessing all around the world today (Büscher and Fletcher 2019).

3. Research Questions

RQ1 Perceptions of the NPZ

- *RQ1sub1 Lives and land use practices:* What are the local people's lives and land use practices like?
- *RQ1sub2 Municipalities perceptions:* How do the local municipality representatives perceive NPZ?
- *RQ1sub3 Local people's perceptions of NPZ:* How do the local people perceive NPZ?

RQ2 Nature parks impact

- *RQ2sub1 NPZ's impact on local people's lives, practices, and economy:* How did the local people's land use practices and economy change due to the NPZ creation?
- *RQ2sub2 park fees:* How do the local people perceive the "resource users" fees NPZ charges?

RQ3 Power and inequality

- *RQ3sub1 Decision making power:* To which degree were the local people part of the decision-making process regarding NPZ creation in 2017?
- *RQ3sub2 Power, state politics and inequality:* What is the local people's view on the amount of power they have, state politics, and inequality in NPZ and Serbia in general?

RQ4 Power and narratives

- *RQ4sub1 NPZ employee's narrative:* What is the narrative told by the NPZ's employees and management?
- *RQ4sub2 "Serbiaforests" narrative:* What is "Serbiaforests" narrative?
- *RQ4sub3 Institute for nature conservation of Serbia's narrative:* What is the INCS's narrative?

RQ5 Alternatives and Possible Conviviality?

- *RQ5sub1 Local people's proposed alternatives:* What are some of the possible alternatives proposed by the local people?
- *RQ5sub2 Non-human ecology:* How do the local people perceive and talk of ecology and non-human species lives in the area?

4. Background Information

4.1 Authoritarian Serbia

Serbia is a landlocked Southeastern Central European post-socialist transition country in the Balkans which has, unfortunately, in recent years been struggling with democratic backsliding into authoritarianism (De Santo et al., 2023). Various factors have contributed to this, including an increase in state capture (meaning the domination of policymaking by private, often corporate, power), the misuse of power, and the adoption of authoritarian tactics by the president Aleksandar Vucic and his party, Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) since they came to power in 2012 (Freedom House, 2022). The deterioration of governance standards, the justice system, electoral processes, and media freedom are just a few side-effects of the authoritarian rule Serbs have been facing recently. Every day people may witness assaults on the media, inadequate efforts to combat corruption, and a diminishing role for local governments. In 2022 only, there were 132 registered attacks against journalists (Freedom House, 2022). And out of 168 towns and municipalities, there are most likely only seven or six local self-governments in Serbia in which the SNS is not in power (Lazic, 2021). Including the Nature Park Zlatibor municipality, Cajetina.

The 2022 re-election of Aleksandar Vučić as Serbia's president for a second term has raised concerns regarding the fairness of the electoral process. The campaign was tarnished by allegations of misuse of public resources and media bias. Given Vučić's dual roles as both the head of state and the leader of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), he enjoyed extensive media coverage (74% of the total media coverage allocated to all presidential candidates), overshadowing the other candidates (Freedom House, 2022). Furthermore, SNS faced accusations of utilizing proxy donors to evade donation limits and obscure the true origins of funding (Castaldo and Pinna, 2018). Opposition figures have been subjected to an escalation in harassment and violence, while SNS operatives directly intimidated voters, exerting pressure on them to support the party. Consequently, these tactics have resulted in the suppression of political representation for opposition parties across all levels. President Vučić and the SNS government have additionally faced credible accusations from critics, suggesting their connections with organized crime and the widespread prevalence of cronyism (meaning system practice of partiality in awarding jobs and other advantages to friends or trusted colleagues) (Freedom House, 2022). Which is something

that extends beyond party politics, infiltrating all government sectors and offices, including Nature Park Zlatibor.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the following dissolution of the Iron Curtain marked a huge worldwide political and ideological shift, with many communist nations transitioning to neoliberal capitalism. While many nations witnessed quick globalization transformations, Yugoslavia encountered the upheaval of a civil war, which hampered its own transition process until the 2000s, when the private and civil sectors took on increasingly major roles in numerous facets of social life (De Santo et al., 2023). Between 2001 and 2008, a privatization program was implemented, resulting in an increase in foreign investment in the region (Pavlovic and Arandarenko, 2011).

Furthermore, since 2014, Serbia has been engaged in negotiations for its accession to the European Union (EU) with the goal of becoming a member country by 2025. The official application for the EU membership was submitted all the way back in 2009, and the country was granted candidate status in 2012. In June 2013, the European Commission and European Council provided a favourable recommendation, leading to the initiation of accession negotiations in January 2014. Since then, one could notice an increase in the “Europeanization” of policies, state-society relations and civil society discourses, as well as EU’s pre-accession conditionality in the region (Fagan and Buzogány, 2022). For example, implementation of Natura2000 (a network of nature protection areas in the territory of the European Union) values and standards in the Serbian nature conservation agenda.

4.2 Nature protection in Serbia

The story of nature protection in Serbia starts with the Obedska marsh, a wetland habitat and an abandoned meander of River Sava in Northern Serbia spanning across 9820 hectares. Currently, it is designated as a Special Nature Reserve and listed on UNESCO's list of Ramsar areas. Obedska marsh is one of the oldest protected areas in Europe and the first protected area in Serbia. Dating back to 1874, when the northern region (including the marsh) of Serbia was occupied by the Habsburg Empire, this Austro – Hungarian monarchy “protected” the area and declared it a hunting ground for the royal family (Kraljic et al., 2012). Later on, once Serbia regained its independence from the Habsburg Empire, a Serbian royal Karadordevic dynasty takes over the hunting ground in 1919. Possibly continuing the same practice of excluding locals and

keeping the area people-free as the previous royal family did. In 1951 Institute for Nature Conservation gazettes the area as a “nature reserve under strict protection” and in 1968 as a “special nature reserve”. Since 1993, Obedska marsh has held a first-category legal protection status (Pavic and Krajic, 2016)

Over the course of seven decades, the implementation of institutional nature conservation measures by the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia (INCS) has resulted in a total protected area of 724663 hectares, which is equivalent to 8,18% of the territory of Serbia. Currently, there are 466 protected areas, including 5 national parks, 18 nature parks, 21 outstanding natural landscapes, 69 nature reserves, 6 protected habitats, 314 monuments of nature, and 36 sites of cultural and historical importance, all protected under the Law on the Protection of Environment and the Law on the Protection of Cultural Monuments. Moreover, there are 1784 strictly protected wild species and 865 protected wild species of plants, animals, and fungi.

Nature Park Zlatibor has been designated as a Nature Park, defined in the Law on Nature Protection as an: *“area of well-preserved natural values with predominantly preserved natural ecosystems and picturesque landscapes, intended to preserve the overall geological, biological and landscape diversity, as well as to meet the scientific, educational, spiritual, aesthetic, cultural, tourist, health and recreational needs and other activities in harmony with the traditional way of life and the principles of sustainable development”*

The history of forest use and forest protection is one that can tell us many things about the use of natural resources in Serbia. At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, Serbia was almost 80% covered by forests, and the forest cover was at its highest (Serbiaforests, n.d.). According to Popovic and Lucic (2017) approximately fifty years after Serbia re-gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire’s four hundred yearlong rule and occupation of the area, in 1861, private and state ownership of the forest was legally regulated for the first time. And in 1891, a turning point in forest use arrived with the Forest Law of 1891 prescribing that all forests should first be measured and limited according to ownership (state, municipal, village, monastery, church, and private forests were separated by law), only to then establish forest districts administrations which became the basic unit of forest management. Also, at the end of the 19th century, a new Law on Forests was passed, as "the first legislative act that treats forests as a production good, and forest economy as an economic branch." With the introduction of this managerial approach to forestry,

forest guards were introduced to curb illegal logging and forest use as well. Followingly, all of this resulted in more intensive afforestation and processing of wood on sawmills (Serbiaforests, n.d.)

From 1973 to 1977, a large number of forest management units were integrated with timber industry enterprises. And in the 1990s, community forests, which were managed by 53 separate enterprises, were declared state forests by law. 27 forest areas were established, which have been managed by the “Public Enterprise for Forest Management Serbiaforests” since October 1, 1991. All assets, rights, obligations and employees (10 470 workers) of these 53 public and social enterprises got taken over by Serbiaforests. Today, the state-owned Serbiaforests is both the largest forest manager and the largest timber producer in Serbia (Serbiaforests, n.d.) Hence, the integration of forest management units and timber industry enterprises from the 70s remains in place even today.

Public enterprise (PE) Serbiaforests is also the largest manager of protected areas in Serbia. Currently they are overseeing protected regions spanning a land area of 365,035.87 hectares, accounting for 52.8% of the total protected area in the Republic of Serbia (Serbiaforests, n.d.). According to the Law on Nature Protection “Serbiaforests” has an obligation to ensure the implementation of prescribed protection regimes, control their compliance by all users of the protected area, harmonize planning documents with the protection acts and laws and advance the management of protected areas.

In general, fishing, grazing and hunting is allowed in most of the protected areas in Serbia, but there are strict restrictions regarding some species and areas. As it will be explained later, most protected areas in Serbia are divided into protection regimes with varying degrees of protection. However, access to fishing and hunting rights can be something that only the privileged and rich can afford, due to the expensive hunting licenses and memberships in the hunting organizations.

4.3 State enterprise for forest management “Serbiaforests”

In addition to managing Nature Park Zlatibor, the state-owned organization Serbiaforests manages a surface area of 893,204 hectares of state-owned forest lands (Serbiaforests, n.d.). The enterprise began its operations on October 1st, 1991, in accordance with the Law on Forests, with the aim of “*managing forests, protected natural assets, and hunting grounds in an integrated and sustainable manner*”. They claim that their forest management is based on “*principles of sustainable forest management, where sustainable yield, production, and revenue are ensured,*

and in the end, sustainability as a balance of use and production is achieved while preserving and improving biodiversity.” (Serbiaforests, n.d.)

According to their official documents, the activities of the enterprise include cultivating and maintaining forests, reforestation and restoration of degraded forests, and management of state forests and special-purpose hunting grounds. The enterprise also provides professional advisory services in forest-related matters, manages protected areas and fishery areas, designs and constructs forest roads, develops programs, projects, and forest management plans, engages in wholesale and retail, conducts research and promotes hunting, fishing, and rural eco-tourism.

They define their mission plan for 2017-2026 as such: *“The company implements the concept of integrated natural resource management, with the aim of providing sustainable use of the natural potential of forest areas and the business capacity of the company, to ensure profits that will enable the implementation of measures for the protection and improvement of the state of forests, as well as the development of the company's business capacity. The economic function of forests implies the use of forest products and the valorisation of the general beneficial functions of forests to achieve positive business results.”* (Public Enterprise for Forest Management Serbiaforests, n.d.)

State Enterprise "Serbiaforests" has a three-tiered organizational structure, which includes the general directorate, forests estates and working units. The General Directorate is located and headquartered in Belgrade. It is responsible for strategic affairs, such as developing enterprise policies as well as operational, management and financial plans. There are 17 forest estates throughout Serbia. And they are managing in 67 forest administrations in total, which are the basic units for planning and organizing forest management activities. Nature Park Zlatibor is one of the 67 forest administrations, whilst the park and much of areas in the surrounding region belong to the forest estate “Uzice” (the nearest big town to Zlatibor).

In economic terms, the production of wood and wooden products represents the most important core activity of the Enterprise (79% to be exact) (Public Enterprise for Forest Management Serbiaforests, n.d.). Production levels have been increasing year by year and the current level of production amounts to just over 1,450,000 m³ of net wood assortments annually according to the 2017-2026 business strategy of Serbiaforests. The annual volume production is planned based on the ten-year-long forest management plans which the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management has to approve.

4.4 Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia (INCS)

The Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia was formed in 1948. Back then it was called “the Institute for Protection and Scientific Research in Natural Rarities of the People's Republic of Serbia” and it was the first time conservation and nature protection became part of the state agenda. The activities of the Institute are primarily regulated by the Law on Nature Protection, international obligations of the Republic of Serbia undertaken by ratified conventions, existing strategic documents, and general acts of the Institute.

According to their website, INCS’s duties are related to the collection and processing of data on nature and natural values, monitoring and evaluating the conservation of nature, preparing protection studies, proposing acts on the termination or protection of areas, and providing professional assistance in the protection of nature, landscapes, and natural goods. Additionally, the Institute determines the conditions and measures for the protection of nature and natural values in various activities, such as preparing spatial and urban plans, project documentation, and programs that affect nature. They also keep records of the manner and extent of use, as well as factors endangering protected and strictly protected wild species, and participate in the public inquiry process for declaring protected areas. Finally, the Institute organizes and implements educational and promotional activities. (INCS, n.d.)

Importantly, INCS issues official decisions on the conditions and requirements pertaining to nature conservation as well as official opinions on the incorporation or compliance of documents (development plans, bases, programs, projects) with the issued conditions of nature protection. Meaning that everybody who wants to develop or do something within any of the protected areas has to apply for a permit from INCS first.

In their "Annual Plan for the Protection of Natural Resources for the Year 2022" they state that the Institute's professional activities in the coming period will be focused on increasing the percentage of protected areas, as well as on the development of an ecological network on an international level (INCS, 2022).

4.5 Zlatibor: a socio-ecological mountain region

The Zlatibor Nature Park encompasses a part of the mountainous area in southwestern Serbia, the Zlatibor Mountain and its surrounding cliffs and gorges. Two distinct areas can be distinguished on this territory based on their natural values and landscape characteristics: a gentle, hilly landscape covered in grass vegetation (the Zlatibor plateau, with an average height of 950-1200 meters above sea level), and an area of sharp, rugged terrain with deep valleys and steep slopes mostly covered in forest vegetation (with peaks rising up to 1497 meters above sea level) (INCS, 2017).

The grassy plateau, what is known as the typical Zlatibor to most Serbs, is characterized by a gently undulating surface with vast pastures dotted with individual or small groups of white and black pine trees. It is dissected by shallow river valleys, which often meander on larger stretches and create unique landscapes typical of Zlatibor. The harsh and less favourable climate (lower temperatures, winds) did not favour agricultural production, which is why massive settlement of this area did not occur.

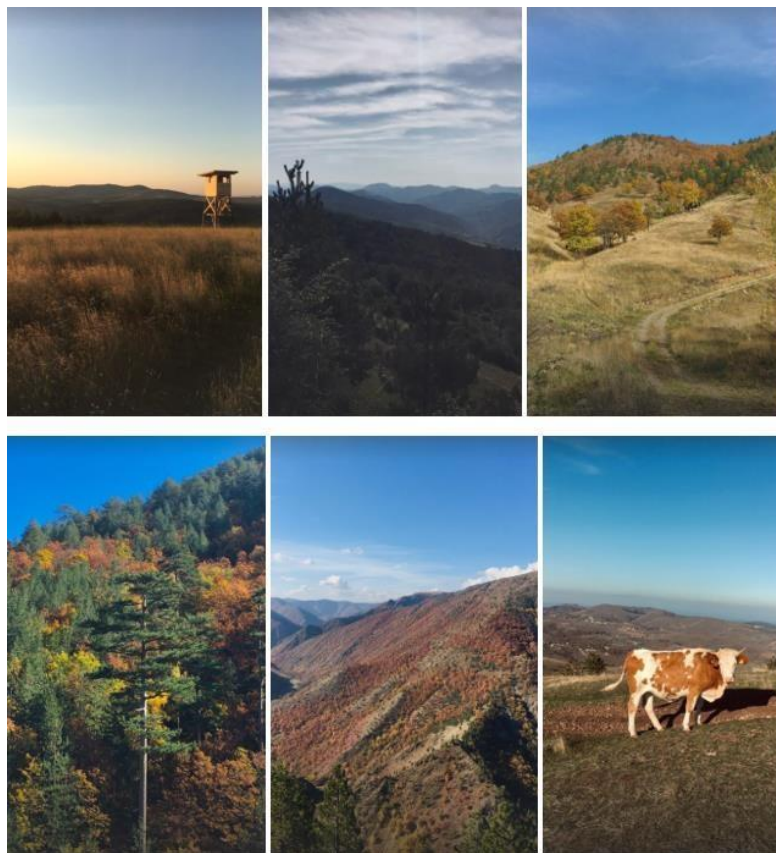


Figure 2. A small photo selection presenting some of the non-human nature of Zlatibor. (Taken by the thesis author)

The climate of this region belongs to a moderately continental type, with the influence of mountain climate, which is characterized by harsh winters and cool summers. Precipitation amounts are relatively low, with an annual average of about 990mm. Main types of vegetation types are forests (oak, beech, pine, and mixed forest), meadows and pastures, as well as rocky areas and cliffs. Whilst the hydrological richness and diversity of the area are evidenced by many rivers, lakes, waterfalls, cascades, and springs.

4.5.1 Flora and Fauna

The specificity of flora and vegetation in the area is primarily conditioned by the serpentinite geological substrate, so numerous rare and endangered plant species habitats can be found in this area – around 1,044 to be exact, out of which 226 have “national and international importance”, 34 species are “strictly protected”, and 112 taxa are “protected” species (INCS, 2017). This exceptional floristic richness of Zlatibor is confirmed by the fact that 5% of the entire European flora, 15% of the Balkan flora, and almost one-third of the entire flora of Serbia can be found in this area (Tomovic, 2007). Internationally significant species overlap with nationally significant ones, so that three species are listed on the Habitat Directive, while all representatives of the orchid and violet family (29 species) are also listed on the international CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) list.

From all the forest types present in Zlatibor, the pine forest is the most widespread and significant forest type. On the territory of Zlatibor Mountain, autochthonous black pine forests and mixed forests of black and white pine dominate, which are classified as priority Natura 2000 habitats. Despite certain differences in ecological requirements between white and black pine, all the pine forests in Zlatibor belong to the same type of pine forest: *Pinetum nigrae-silvestris* (INCS, 2017).

Much fauna diversity has been observed in the area as well. According to the INCS study conducted in 2015, in the protected area, the presence of about 154 bird species has been recorded so far, and the Zlatibor area is classified as an area of exceptional national importance for birds. Zlatibor is home to 42% of all registered bird species in Serbia, including 127 strictly protected species and 27 protected species (Puzovic, 1996) The presence of a total of 18 species of amphibians and reptiles has been recorded, which makes up 38.30% of the total number of species inhabiting the territory of the Republic of Serbia. The protected area is inhabited by 38 mammal

species, either permanently or periodically, which currently represents 40% of all species registered in any way on the territory of Serbia. (INCS, 2017)

The wolf (*Canis lupus*) can be marked as constantly present, where Zlatibor, besides being a place of permanent residence, also represents a part of an important migratory corridor.

In recent years, the presence and spread of the golden jackal (*Canis aureus*) have been noticed, first on the northern outskirts of Zlatibor, and then in higher areas of the central plateau. The situation is similar with the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*). Although it was previously generally believed that this species mainly uses the Zlatibor area as an important migratory corridor (similarly to the wolf), in recent times, with an evident increase in population numbers in the western and southwestern parts of Serbia, breeding sites have also been registered in the Zlatibor mountains. (INCS, 2017)



Figure 3. A couple photos representing some of the local flora and fauna. (Taken by the author)

4.5.2 Settlements and villages

The first houses in Zlatibor were formed in the river valleys and at intersections of roads in the Middle Ages. On higher terrain, wooden huts (called “kolibe”) were built where shepherds lived and brought their livestock for grazing during the warmer months of the year. The huts were made of black pine wood, which is strong and full of resin, making the houses durable and resistant to moisture. In addition to the cabins, there were also "movable" structures on sleds (called "kućeri") which the herders pulled with them when moving their livestock from one area to another.

Today, however, among the larger settlements in the NPZ area are: Semegnjevo, Jablanica, Stublo, Dobroselica, Ljubiš, and Gostilje. All of them are rural in character and belong to the so-called "broken" or old Vlach type of villages. The basic feature of these settlements, in terms of spatial-functional organization, is the relatively large distance between individual households (INCS, 2017).



Figure 4. The traditional and old wooden houses made of pinewood. Some are abandoned, some are still lived in and some are modernized. (Taken by the author)

4.5.3 Demography

In settlements within the protected area, the number of residents has decreased by 23% in the past half-century (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2014). During the last couple of decades, the process of abandonment of Zlatibor villages took place, with the departure of people to larger urban centres such as Belgrade, Novi Sad and more locally, Uzice.

In the NPZ area, in addition to a constant decrease in the number of inhabitants, a pronounced aging process is also characteristic. According to data from the Republic Statistical Office from the 2011 census, the average age of the population in the park is 50.5 years, which is significantly above the national average (42.21). The average age of residents in some villages in the protected area is as follows: Semegnjevo 61.9, Stublo 60.5, and Dobroselica 54.6. This means that this is an area of deep demographic aging. Out of the total number of inhabitants, only one-third are working-employed. In addition to age, the educational structure is also negative. More than a third of the population, 34.66%, has either no formal education or a low level of it.

In the area, the population is mainly engaged in agriculture (producing enough to meet their own needs), forestry, processing activities, and trade. One-fifth is employed in various government institutions (administration, health care, social and educational institutions)

The municipality identifies the “lack of stimulating factors for the survival and development of villages” as the main constraint for the planned development of settlement network which could “ensure economic prosperity and demographic stability of rural population” (Cajetina municipality, 2015)

4.5.4 Magnesium mining

The deposits and occurrences of magnesite (a mineral from which magnesium is obtained) scattered throughout the Zlatibor mountain and are among the most significant deposits of this material in the Republic of Serbia.

The mining organization "Magnesite" was founded in 1956 by merging the Mineral and Mining Cooperative from Tito's Užice and the Magnesite and Chromite Mine "Zlatibor" from Cajetina (INCS, 2017). The basic activity of this company at the time of its founding was exploration, exploitation, and processing of magnesite, chromite, and other mineral raw materials. In the early sixties of the last century, this company merged with the "Magnohrom" company from Kraljevo town, which led to intensified investments in exploration, exploitation, and the construction of large-capacity facilities for magnetic separation of magnesite and serpentine in Zlatibor. The trend of intensive investment in the production and processing of magnesite lasted from 1960 to 1990. However, the last decade has been marked by smaller investments in mining, which has led to a drastic decline in mining production. Today, the exploitation, or production of magnesite, is practically halted. And the reason is the existing ownership transformations in the magnesite industry company Magnohrom. However, in 2018, Finnish mining company “Afarak” bought Magnohrom and the mining rights on their magnesite mines, including the ones in Zlatibor area (Ralev, 2018)

INCS (2017) writes that *“the area of the NPZ has a very significant mineral potential for discovering new deposits of this mineral. Based on previous geological research, potential magnesite resources in the Zlatibor region are around 2 Mt.* And Magnohrom writes that *“For the mine locations Masnice and Cavlovac in Zlatibor and for the other locations Magnohrom has exploitation rights. Yet, the most attractive locality is mine Ribnica (Čalovac, Masnice) in Zlatibor*

with the proven reserves of over 3.2 million tonnes of magnesite.” (Magnohrom, n.d.) Furthermore, in their 2017 report INCS suggests that there are indications that underground mining in Ribnica village area, which is a part of NPZ, and has one of the largest deposits of magnesite in Zlatibor, will be restarted.

4.5.5 Agriculture, Foraging and Hunting

On the territory of nature park, there are almost no large scale or organised agricultural activities. The local population is engaged in individual agricultural production, mainly for their own needs.

The structure and chemical composition of the soil play a crucial role in determining the level of development and prevalence of various agricultural activities in the Zlatibor region. Here, the dominant soil type is ranker, a humus-silicate soil typical of mountainous areas above 800 meters above sea level. This soil was formed due to deforestation and continuous erosion, resulting in a pH range from 3.8 to 7, indicating high acidity to neutrality (Dugalic and Gajic, 2012). With these acidic soils unsuitable for intensive plant production, the landscape is primarily covered by pastures and meadows. Apart from ranker soil, occasional occurrences of podzols, also known as ashy soils, are noticeable. These shallow, lightweight soils have high water permeability, but their fertility is weak due to significant leaching of mineral materials. As a result, podzols are deficient in essential nutrients such as phosphorus, calcium, and nitrogen, and their extreme acidity limits the diversity of plant crops (INCS, 2017)

According to the natural characteristics of the soil that favour the development of meadows and pastures, livestock farming is traditionally the most significant agricultural branch in Zlatibor. The most suitable and economically viable livestock breeding in this region is the breeding of cattle and sheep, whilst very few households also have some goats as well.

The most significant crop among vegetable crops is potato, which is experiencing a trend of gradual decline in production due to the lack of organized purchase (INCS, 2017). The cultivation of other vegetable crops is prevalent only at the level of household needs. Vegetables are grown within households in small gardens and greenhouses that are set up next to the yard or in its immediate surroundings. Fruit cultivation in this area refers to plum, apple, and raspberry crops, as well as some cherry, sour cherry, and pear trees.

The rich vegetation and variety of flora of this area are a true treasure trove of various medicinal herbs and forest fruits. Foraging for medicinal herbs and forest fruits by the residents of this area is present and serves their own needs and the needs of the local market. Many locals know the plants around them well and forage for mushrooms, berries and other plants throughout the entire year. Whilst the main fauna species to hunt in the local hunting grounds include roe deer, wild boar, hare and grey partridge.

4.5.6 Cajetina municipality and tourism

The municipality of Cajetina is located in the southwestern part of the Republic of Serbia, covers an area of 647 square kilometres, and includes 21 local communities/villages. According to the 2011 census, the municipality has 14,745 inhabitants. Approximately two thirds of the municipality have since 2017 been a part of the Nature Park “Zlatibor” (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2014)

The morphology of the terrain of the municipality, as well as its historical heritage, have resulted in a fragmented network of settlements connected by the municipal road network. All settlements are rural and based on livestock farming, except for Cajetina and Zlatibor Town, which are urban settlements. Cajetina is the municipal, administrative and economic center whilst Zlatibor Town is the tourist center. Neither of the two are a part of NPZ, but they do stand at its outskirts and Zlatibor Town houses tourists who visit the park on a daily basis.



Figure 5. An image of Zlatibor Town, a tourist center in constant development. (Taken by the author)

Tourism is the most developed and important economic sector of the municipality. With its long tradition since 1893, Zlatibor is one of the, if not the most developed tourist destination, in Serbia, with an annual archive of 1,200,000 overnight stays with around 250,000 visitors. (Municipality of Cajetina, n.d.). The most common type of tourist offers in the Zlatibor region are health, sport and recreation, congress and business tourism, as well as rural, transit, hunting, and fishing tourism.

A significant number of interesting tourist sites are located in the park, which can attract a larger number of visitors and keep them in the area as a whole or in its individual parts: the waterfall in Gostilje, gorges (Uvac, Kravac, Griza, etc.), cave formations in Dobroselica, Rshum and Rakovacka Cave, Uvac and Dubrava monasteries, wooden churches, etc. Yet, in the nature park itself, there are almost no tourist and hospitality facilities suitable for longer stays of visitors. Almost exclusively all of them are located in the Zlatibor Town.

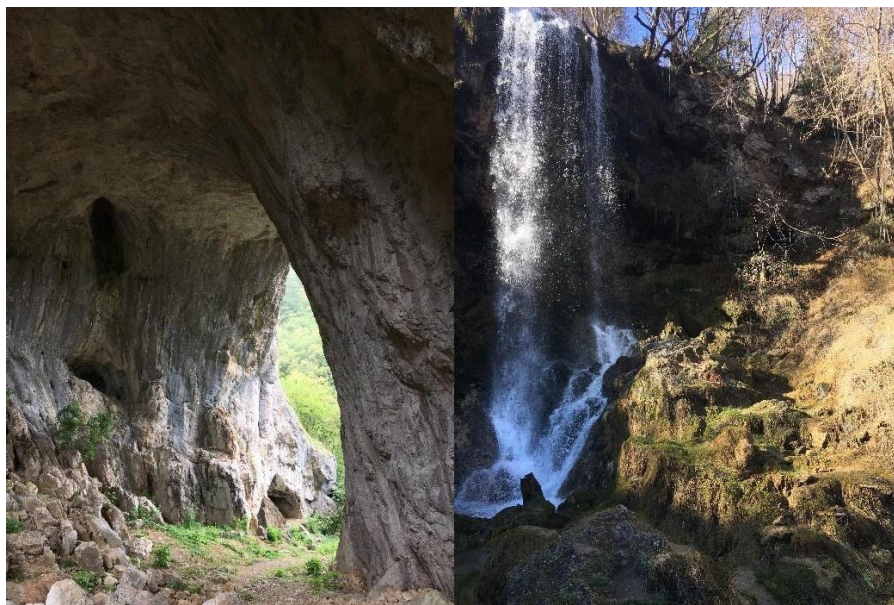


Figure 6. The cave in Dobroselica and waterfall in Gostilje are famous tourist attractions in the NPZ. (Taken by the author)

INCS promotes development of hiking trails, cultural historic sites, info boards, cycling trails, orienteering competitions, but not development of overnight stays in the park or rental huts. In their study of the area, INCS (2017) discourages tourism and development related to it inside the park and writes;

Given that natural resources are a sensitive area, the future development of tourist capacities should be based on raising the quality of existing units in accordance with ecological principles. The emphasis should be on marking and fully arranging hiking and cycling trails that lead to interesting natural and cultural-historical sites, setting up educational and informative boards, etc. [...] Although we cannot talk about tourism in natural areas, this region has numerous potentials for sustainable tourism development, primarily of the sport and recreational type (cycling, hiking, orienteering competitions, etc.). It is related to excursion movements, including half-day, full-day, and weekend trips.

The municipality of Cajetina, on the other hand, wants to develop more serious tourism (in the shape of nature based ecotourism) in the park, and let the locals benefit from the all the tourists who come and visit Zlatibor. However, they highlight that a precondition for more effective utilization of tourism potentials and further development of tourism is the “*decentralization of the tourist offers by promoting existing and future tourist sites outside the settlements of Cajetina and Zlatibor*”- referring to the rural areas and sites in the villages, most of them located inside the nature park “Zlatibor” (Cajetina Municipality, 2015).

4.6 Nature Park Zlatibor (NPZ)

Based on the programs for the protection of natural resources of the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, the process of protection of Zlatibor was initiated as early as 2005, when the first study on the protection of the Nature Park Zlatibor was prepared. However, at that time, formal protection was not established, because the legal regulations were changed in the meantime and the first Law on Nature Protection arrived in 2009. Field research in Zlatibor was renewed from 2015 to 2017 in order to revise the data. Followingly, the proposed boundary of the park was expanded compared to the 2005 study boundary by 1/3. Once the study was finished, INCS sent it to the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, which approved the commencing of protection. INCS justifies their conservation efforts with this text;

Through the valorisation of the natural area of Zlatibor Mountain, it has been determined that it possesses the characteristics of a nature park. It is proposed for protection in order to preserve the geomorphological and hydrological phenomena of highly dissected terrain, with remarkable valleys of canyon and gorge types, preserved ecosystems - especially diverse and specific

vegetation of rocky areas and serpentinite gorge walls, pine forests, rare and endangered animal species, as well as extremely important and well-preserved cultural and ethnic heritage. The legal basis for the adoption of an act on the protection of natural resources is contained in Article 42, paragraph 3 of the Law on Nature Protection ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 36/09, 88/10 and 91/10), which stipulates that natural resources are placed under protection by the act of the competent authority based on a proposal by a nature protection organization.

Belgrade, 2017 Director of the Institute (INCS, 2017)

Followingly, on March 2nd 2017, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection published the official notice of the protection initiation on their website, and writes that Serbiaforests have been entrusted with management;

Taking into account the existing state of natural values and expected activities in the protected area, as well as property-law relations, the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia proposes that the management of NP "Zlatibor" be entrusted to the Public Enterprise "Srbijašume", Belgrade. The procedure for protecting the natural area was initiated on January 14, 2016, when the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia submitted a protection study to the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection as the competent authority. (Notice regarding the initiation of the protection procedure for the "Zlatibor" Nature Park, March 2nd 2017)

Officially, the decision to designate NP "Zlatibor" was based on the Strategy of Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2007 to 2012, the National Strategy of Sustainable Development, the Law on Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia from 2010 to 2020, the Law on Nature Protection, INCS's midterm and annual programs for the protection of natural resources, and other strategies and legal documents.

Once the Regulation on the Proclamation of Nature Park "Zlatibor" came into power 10the of October 2017 date, the state officials could then start working on the implementation of the spatial plan for the NPZ area (its full legal name being: "Regulation on the Determination of the Special Purpose Spatial Plan for the Nature Park "Zlatibor"). The spatial plan was created in order to provide spatial conditions and regulations for the realization of the nature park. It contains detailed elaborations, as well as rules for the organization of- and construction in- the established protection regimes. As it happens, Cajetina Municipality decided to boycott all of the spatial plan meetings and public consultations and never showed up for any of them. Instead, wrote to the

constitutional court asking for an assessment of the legality of the NPZ regulation. But more about this in Chapter X; The Analysis.

Table 1. Basic information regarding the Nature Park Zlatibor

<p><i>Location: Southwestern Serbia, Cajetina Municipality</i></p> <p>Nature Park “Zlatibor” is placed in southwestern Serbia. Its southern boundary is formed by the Uvac River with its surroundings. The western boundary coincides with the state border towards Bosnia and Herzegovina. To the north, the boundary follows the slopes of local village of Semegnjevo and its mountains, bypasses the populated place of Zlatibor, and continues with the northern slopes of Čigota mountain. The eastern boundary follows the Katušnica River with its surroundings and the slopes of Murtinica mountain.</p> <p>NPZ is also located on the territories of the municipalities of Cajetina, Užice, Nova Varoš, and Priboj, with a total surface area of 41,923.26 ha.</p>
<p><i>Manager: Serbiaforests</i></p> <p>Management of the Zlatibor Nature Park is carried out through the parts of the “Srbijasume” forestry enterprises "Užice" and "Prijepolje".</p>
<p><i>Protection type: Nature Park</i></p> <p><i>A Nature Park is an area of well-preserved natural values with predominantly preserved natural ecosystems and picturesque landscapes, intended to preserve the overall geological, biological and landscape diversity, as well as to meet the scientific, educational, spiritual, aesthetic, cultural, tourist, health and recreational needs and other activities in harmony with the traditional way of life and the principles of sustainable development (Nature Park definition in the Law on Nature Protection)</i></p>
<p><i>Category: 1st category – Protected Area of international, national and special importance</i></p> <p>This is the strictest protection category there is in the Law on Nature Protection.</p>

Protection regimes: 1st, 2nd and 3rd

1st protection regime covers only 4,7% of the park; 2nd protection regime covers 45,9%; and 3rd protection regime covers 49,4%. The regimes vary in strictness of the restrictions, ranging from the 1st protection regime, which is the strictest to the 3rd protection regime, the least strict one.

IUCN category: Category 5 – Protected landscape/seascape

Category V: Areas where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values. (Dudley, 2008)

Land ownership: state and private

State land covers 18,158.83 ha (43.31%), whilst private land covers 23,582.42 ha (56.25%) of the total park area.

4.6.1 1st protection regime

The Law on Nature Protection and the Regulation on Protection Regimes, defines management of 1st protection regimes as:

"Strict protection is implemented in a protected area or its part with original or slightly modified ecosystems of exceptional scientific and practical importance, which enables natural succession processes and preservation of habitats and animal communities in wilderness conditions, [...]"

In NPZ, areas under the 1st protection regime occupy a total area of 1,968.89 ha (4.69% of the total protected area). They are in four isolated localities within the park: "Viogor", "Crni Rzav", "Uvac Gorge", and "Griža Gorge".

Table 2. Prohibited and Restricted activities in the 1st protection regime of NP “Zlatibor” (Adapted from the Regulation on the Proclamation of Nature Park “Zlatibor”, 2017)

1 st protection regime of NP “Zlatibor”	
Prohibited activities	Restricted activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use of natural resources and construction of facilities - uncontrolled visits and exploration, movement outside existing roads and specially designated trails. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work and activities for scientific research and monitoring of natural processes - controlled visits for educational, recreational and cultural purposes that are not contrary to the goals of preserving natural values - implementation of protective, remedial and other necessary measures in the event of fires, natural disasters, accidents, the appearance of plant and animal diseases and pests, with the consent of the Ministry.

4.6.2 2nd protection regime

The Law on Nature Protection and the Regulation on Protection Regimes, defines management of 2nd protection regimes as:

"Active protection is carried out in a protected area or its part with partially modified ecosystems of great scientific and practical significance, as well as particularly valuable landscapes and objects of geodiversity"

The areas under the 2nd protection regime cover a total area of 19,255.59 ha (45.93% of NPZ). They are located in eight isolated locations within the park: "Semegnjevska Gora-Crni Rzav-Chavlovac", "Bijele Vode", "Ribnicko Jezero", "Ravni Tornik", "Cigota", "Klisura Katusnice", "Murtrenica" and "area around the Uvac River Canyon".

Table 3. Prohibited and Restricted activities in the 2nd protection regime of NP “Zlatibor” (Adapted from the Regulation on the Proclamation of Nature Park “Zlatibor”, 2017)

2 nd protection regime of NP “Zlatibor”	
Prohibited activities	Restricted activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - construction of vacation homes and other family vacation facilities - construction of public ski resorts - construction of wind turbines - construction of mining facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - traditional use of stone, clay, and other materials for local needs; - formation of forest and agricultural monocultures;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exploitation of mineral resources, peat, and materials from riverbeds - industrial fishing - construction of facilities for recycling and incineration of waste and landfill sites - alteration of terrain morphology or works that could destroy or disturb the geomorphological and hydrological characteristics of the area - diversion of water and alteration of hydrodynamic characteristics and flow regime of rivers and streams, as well as all other works and interventions that may affect the modification of the hydrological regime of underground and surface waters - construction of hydrotechnical facilities (dam-reservoir), damming and regulation of watercourses, as well as the construction of hydropower plants on watercourses or their parts that are of a gorge or canyon type or where reservoirs enter gorge and canyon parts of watercourses - change of the purpose of water land - construction of septic tanks of the permeable type and any discharge of waste and effluent water into watercourses and land - actions and activities that would destroy, modify or disrupt the geomorphological and hydrological characteristics of Gostilje and Skakavac waterfall - clearcutting in the zone and at the transition from forest to non-forest areas - clearcutting for the reconstruction, i.e., direct conversion of devastated and degraded stands - implementation of interventions and activities that adversely affect habitats or strictly protected wild species of plants and animals, whose presence has been determined by research in the area. restrictions and prohibitions are defined by prescribing protection measures within the special protection conditions for given species and their habitats. - excessive opening of the forest complex and construction of a network of forest roads - cutting down and destroying munika trees, as well as destroying the understory - placing signs and other information on trees - uncontrolled collection of medicinal plants - setting fires, except in designated areas - all types of fishing in the source areas of katušnica, along the entire course of ljubišnica, bele reke, dobroselička reka and along the course of uvac river within the boundaries of the protected area, except for fishing for scientific research purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduction of foreign species that may harm the local plant and animal life in the protected area - underground exploitation of mineral resources - the entrance to mining areas must be located outside the level II protection zone - capturing water sources for the needs of existing households - management of forests and forest land specified in forest management plans, as well as the management of near-natural forests to ensure the maintenance of existing forest ecosystems, improve their composition, structure, and health status, preserve the diversity and origin of trees, shrubs, and other plant and animal species in forest stands - less intensive forest harvesting in multiple stages - research on the natural spread of “munika” tree and the application of breeding measures to enable natural regeneration, formation, and preservation of tree stands, as well as increasing the number of its offspring - implementation of appropriate biological measures against phytosanitary and entomological diseases of forests - activities related to the improvement of populations of rare and endangered plant and animal species - controlled visits for educational, recreational, and cultural purposes - conducting activities within scientific research and monitoring of natural processes - implementation of appropriate measures for fire and erosion protection - removal of low-growing vegetation according to the terrain's topography to enable unobstructed passage along gorges and canyons. - From building tourist accommodation facilities, hospitality, and tourist infrastructure to building smaller facilities for presenting natural values or traditional-style facilities
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fishing for river and stream crayfish, as well as fishing for chub and <i>vimba vimba</i>; - all actions and activities that endanger fish fauna and disrupt their spawning, growth, feeding and movement - destruction of bird nests and activities that disturb birds during the breeding season (march-july) - collection and trafficking of all species listed in the regulation on the control of use and trafficking of wild flora and fauna without permission from the ministry responsible for nature protection (hereinafter: ministry) - collecting, damaging, capturing, killing and disturbing all species of plants and animals listed in the rulebook on the proclamation and protection of strictly protected and protected wild species of plants, animals and fungi - formation of landfills in the area of karst sediments of natural assets - formation of borrow pits or opening of quarries - surface exploitation of mineral raw materials - conducting geological research that involves the construction of research facilities (drilling, excavations, cuts, incisions, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From constructing transportation, energy, communal, and other infrastructure, residential and economic buildings for agricultural and forestry farms, to facilities that do not negatively affect the favourable position of animal or plant species, their habitats, natural values, landscape beauty, and swamp areas - From building facilities for conventional breeding of domestic animals and wildlife within existing rural households - To the use of chemical agents for the use of artificial fertilizers on cultivable surfaces, and for chemical agents for plant protection with the consent of the Ministry - Fishing, recreational and scientific research - Hunting, sanitary hunting of wildlife.
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4.6.3 3rd protection regime

The Law on Nature Protection and the Regulation on Protection Regimes, defines management of 3rd protection regimes as:

"Proactive protection is carried out in a protected area or its part with partially modified and/or modified ecosystems, landscapes, and objects of geonational heritage of scientific and practical significance [...] In the III protection degree, management interventions can be carried out for the purpose of restoration, revitalization, and overall improvement of the protected area, village development and improvement of rural households, arrangement of cultural-historical heritage and traditional architecture objects, preservation of traditional activities of the local population, selective and limited use of natural resources and space with the necessary infrastructure and other construction."

The areas under the protection regime of the third degree cover a total area of 20,698.78 ha (49.38% of the total protected area) and cover the territory of the NPZ which is not under protection regimes of the first and second degree.

Table 4. Prohibited and Restricted activities in the 3rd protection regime of NP “Zlatibor” (Adapted from the Regulation on the Proclamation of Nature Park “Zlatibor”, 2017)

3rd protection regime of NP “Zlatibor”	
Prohibited activities:	Restricted activities:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establishment of landfills - opening of new technical stone quarries within the protected area, except if the material of such or similar characteristics cannot be found outside the boundaries of the protected area, or it is spatially and temporally strictly limited and used to improve living conditions of the local community (construction and maintenance of local roads, etc.) - exploitation of mineral resources in zones of immediate and already protected water supply sources, in areas or near areas intended for tourism, in or near the protected environment of immovable cultural goods. - destruction and collection of strictly protected and protected plant and animal species, - clearcutting of forested areas, - cutting of individual old trees with impressive dendrometric characteristics, - removal of native vegetation and introduction of invasive alien species, disturbance of fauna and collection of eggs, - fishing during closed season for brown trout (<i>Salmo trutta</i>) - from October 1 to March 1, and chub (<i>Squalius cephalus</i>) from April 15 to May 31. Minimum size limit for caught fish: brown trout - 25 cm, rainbow trout - 25 cm, European grayling - 15 cm, chub - 20 cm, and gudgeon (<i>Gobio spp.</i>) - 10 cm. - fishing for river and stream crayfish (<i>Astacus astacus</i> and <i>Austropotamobius torrentium</i>) is restricted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - management practices prescribed in special forest management plans for all management units located in protected natural areas - construction of energy facilities and mini hydropower plants with a maximum capacity of 30 MW, excluding watercourses with highly ravine and canyon-like valleys (such as the Dobroselica River, Ribnica, Jablanica) - daily catch limit for recreational fishermen is up to 5 kg of native fish species, and for individual species and number of specimens (e.g. for trout and other defined species - 3 specimens collectively; for chub, along with other species - 10 specimens collectively).

4.7 EU Natura2000 and Emerald Network

4.7.1 The Emerald Network

In 1989, the Council of Europe adopted the concept of a European ecological network aimed at conserving the species listed in the Annexes of the Convention. This initiative was launched in 1996 through the Emerald Program, which established an Emerald Ecological Network in the territories of all the signatories and states that follow the Bern Convention. The Emerald Network comprises of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCIs). It is founded on the same principles as the Natura 2000 Network and is considered a preparatory phase in the implementation of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, known as the Habitats Directive, during European integration.

Serbia has identified and established 61 areas that meet the criteria for nomination as crucial for the preservation and safeguarding of wild flora and fauna species, as well as their natural habitats, within the Emerald Network (Sekulic and Sinzar-Sekulic, 2010). These areas make up a total of 1,019,269.31 hectares, which corresponds to 11.54% of Serbia's territory. Moreover, half of these regions are situated within Serbia's ecological network. Nature Park “Zlatibor” is one of the identified areas.

4.7.2 Natura2000

In 1992, the European Union introduced the Habitats Directive and the LIFE programme, which led to the creation of the world's largest coordinated network of protected areas, the Natura 2000 Network. The current network, which includes 27 member states, encompasses over 27,000 land and marine areas and accounts for approximately 20% of the EU's land area and more than 8% of its marine territory. It is the most extensive and coordinated network of protected areas globally, and it includes about 1400 species of wild animals and plants and 460 species of birds in the EU (Natura 2000 European Commission., n.d.).

“Natura 2000 is a network of protected areas located within the European Union's borders. The primary objective of creating this network was to identify conservation areas that would ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and endangered species and habitats.” (The Council Directive 92/43/EEC, also known as the Habitats Directive)

Natura 2000 is not a system of strict nature reserves from which all human activities would be excluded. While it includes strictly protected nature reserves, most of the land remains privately owned. The approach to conservation and sustainable use of the Natura 2000 areas is much wider, largely cantered on people working with nature rather than against it. However, Member States must ensure that the sites are managed in a sustainable manner, both ecologically and economically (Natura 2000 European Commission., n.d.).

According to INCS (2017), there are three species from the Zlatibor area, which are listed in the Annexes of the Habitat Directive and for which it is necessary to designate Natura 2000 areas (*Echium russicum*, *Galanthus nivalis* and *Gentiana lutea*), as well as to prescribe conservation and management measures, in the future. Like any other habitat in Serbia, Zlatibor habitats would be included in the preliminary list of all Natura 2000 areas on the day when Serbia enters the European Union.

4.7.3 Serbia's relation to Emerald and Natura2000

During a public discussion meeting regarding the NPZ creation, a ministry employee gave one of the reasons as to why NPZ ought to be created:

“Currently, in Serbia, 6.54% of the territory is designated as 'republican interest' and protected, and according to the spatial plan of the Government of Serbia, the goal is to reach 12% by 2020. This is one of the tasks that we all need to accomplish together, as it is one of the conditions for joining the European Union.”

Serbia's ecological network will be established and integrated into the Natura 2000 European ecological network by the date of Serbia's accession to the European Union. According to a Serbian government website (Kojanic, 2021), when Natura 2000 is established, “at least between 20 to 30% of Serbian territory” will be included in some form of a protected area.

Each EU Member State and accession country designates the Natura 2000 network, which involves conducting a thorough assessment of habitat types and species present within its territory, developing reference lists of the species, and selecting sites based on specific scientific criteria. For several years now, the Republic of Serbia has been working on identifying and designating the

Natura 2000 network with the support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia.

To assist with this task, the European Union Delegation of Serbia is providing support, especially during the "EU for Natura 2000 in Serbia" (funded by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance of the European Union (IPA) and co-financed by the budget of the Republic of Serbia) two-year project which began in 2019. The outcomes of the project included the development of a list of potential Natura2000 sites, creation of an information data system, database, and GIS, as well as harmonization of Serbian legislation with EU Directives related to nature protection. By harmonizing legal regulations in the field of environmental and nature protection with the regulations of the European Union, European and global standards are considered and applied in the field of environmental and nature protection in Serbia.

Additionally, INCS has been collaborating with organizations and institutions in various countries to implement a number of projects aimed at incorporating Serbian nature into the European as well as global nature protection system. And some of these projects INCS boosts of are "the Establishment of the Emerald Network in Southeast Europe", "Emerald Network in Serbia", "European Green Belt" etc.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

5.1.1 Case Study Design (CSD)

One of the most well-known research designs is the case study design (CSD). CSD is commonly falls under categories of flexible designs and quality research. Methods of systematic and empirical inquiry define, explore, or map the nature of emergent, complex, or poorly understood phenomena. (Anastas, 2010). They are often qualitative, inductive, and dependent on the acquisition of unstructured data, not unlike this thesis. Its main defining factor is the fact that it focuses on a single unit of something. Which, in this case, is the NPZ and the socio-ecological community living within its borders. (Anastas, 2010).

According to Yin (1999) there are several defining characteristics of case studies. One such characteristic is the fact that most case studies revolve around the "why" and "how" questions

regarding contemporary events and happenings that are outside the researcher's control. Another classic characteristic of case studies is a detailed, thick, description of the context within which the case study takes place. Which includes both the on the ground socio-ecological context as well as the context in which the research and data gathering takes place (Gilgun, 1994). Usually, data is gathered in a naturalistic manner and based on everyday settings from for example: households, communities and day to day work lives (Anastas, 2010) A potentially useful time to use case study designs is when examining the processes of change or outcomes of outside interventions (Gilgun 1994). Obviously, the implementation of NPZ was a major change to the region and its people, hence in this case, a case study design serves to help assess how the implementation worked as well as the major actors who were impacted.

Commonly, case study research relies on multiple sources of data and multiple perspectives, typically gathered through interviews, observations and written sources/documents. It is, however, important to note that case study research does not depend upon statistically representative participant samples. Instead, it relies on “analytic generalization”, sound conclusions which can be generalized and possibly applied to other similar cases around the world. This theory of generalization, as described by Gilgun (1994), works best if the case study in question is conceptualized well and described in such detail so that it is easily understood and interpreted. Only then, may the researcher attempt to generalise.

Hence, the credibility of a good case research often depends on intensive data gathering endeavour, as only that may enable the researcher to observe patterns of behaviour and activity. The soundness of conceptual and theoretical explanations of the data is, however, also crucial. (Anastas, 2010) Commonly, this research design results in rich data findings which may be used for further theory generation, elaboration or testing. Hence, its compatibility with grounded theory research is well-founded.

According to Anastas (2000) quality case studies have some defining characteristics and quality hallmarks. Firstly, they provide detailed information regarding the uniqueness of the case study, zooming in on factors such as historical context, physical environment, socio-economic and political background as well as the nature of researcher’s positionality and access to the case study. Secondly, in order to achieve quality and credibility in case study research, data should be derived from multiple sources and through multiple methods of data collection as much as possible (Fonagy and Moran, 1993). Such data gathering strategy is widely known in research as triangulation

(Patton, 1990). Thirdly, there should be a form of permanent durable record of the gathered data upon which the findings and the analysis were based on. This data ought to be “intersubjectively” available”, as to enable other researchers’ access to it in case the conclusions derived from said data are to be double checked. (Anastas, 2010)

This thesis also makes use of two fundamental qualitative research characteristics: emergence and purposefulness. The term emergent research design refers to the researcher's ability to acquire data in a flexible manner, meaning that as the researcher's understanding of the issue grows, the researcher can choose to pursue new avenues of discovery. Avoiding certain designs' strict frameworks, which might potentially reduce responsiveness and limit research quality. Second, the purposeful research design refers to the researcher's deliberate decision to include specific persons (places, events, organizations, etc.) in their research because they may provide meaningful and information-rich insight into the topic under investigation. The goal here is not generalization from sample to population, but rather greater knowledge into the single phenomena under consideration.

5.1.2 Grounded Theory Approach

The concept of grounded theory first surfaced in 1967 when Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss introduced it in their work "The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research." Later, it was further refined and expanded by Kathy Charmaz (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory methods offer a flexible and systematic, inductive, approach to data collection and analysis, along with guiding principles for theory development based on the data (Charmaz, 2014).

Glaser, Strauss, and Charmaz highlight the practical application of grounded theory, which involves simultaneous data collection and analysis, the creation of analytical codes and categories, employing constant comparison methods throughout the entire process, developing theories at each stage of data collection and analysis, writing memos, utilizing theoretical sampling for theory development rather than representative purposes, and conducting a literature review only after an independent analysis has been established. This comprehensive methodology allows researchers to develop rich and contextually grounded theories. According to their assessment, a completed grounded theory satisfies the following standards: close alignment with the data, practical

applicability, high conceptual complexity, longevity, modifiability, and substantial explanatory capabilities.

In her 2014 work, Charmaz further defines a “constructivist” grounded theory. A grounded theory which can be utilized by researchers without endorsing outdated notions of an objective external reality, a passive or neutral observer, or a detached and narrow empiricism. Rather, researchers should begin by assuming that social reality is multifaceted, ongoing, and constructed. It is important to acknowledge the researcher's position, privileges, perspective, and interactions as an inherent part of the research process as well. A researcher must consider their own personal process of construction, their own biases, and acknowledge their subjectivity.

Charmaz (2014) argues that adopting the perspective that research is a construct, rather than a discovery, promotes researchers' self-awareness regarding their choices and actions. There is no such thing as a value free expert, hard objectivism or a neutral observer. Hence, the analysis of the world we study through a grounded theory approach is a construction, not an accurate rendering of this world we are studying.

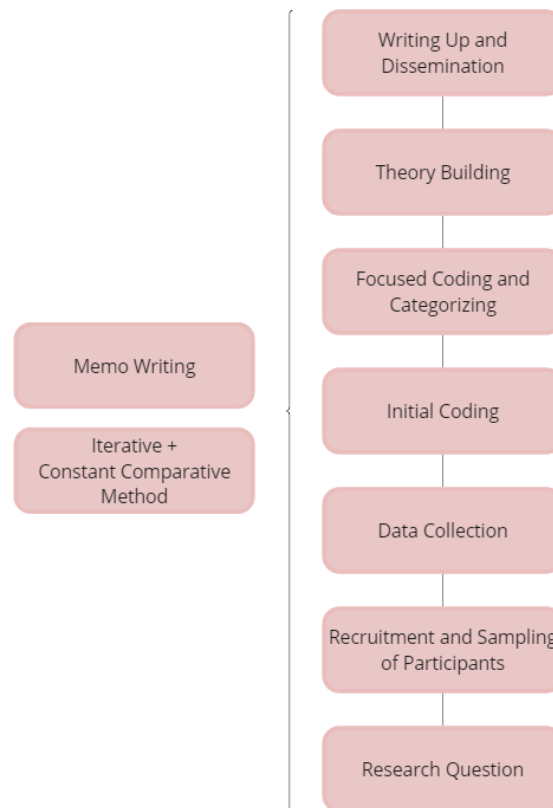


Figure 7. A visual representation of grounded theory. Adapted from Charmaz (2014).

Grounded Theory, just like most other research approaches starts with a research question and recruitment and sampling of the participants. Data collection is conducted, and the analysis starts. One starts with initial or “open coding” by breaking up data transcripts into individual excerpts and codes. These codes serve as a springboard for more theoretical sampling, research and perhaps, interviews. Once more research material is gathered, one has to see how the new data compares with the codes so far and begin focused coding and categorization. The new data might contradict the codes one has or give more detail on the code one already has. As the researcher does more data collection the codes and categories start to change and take shape. Slowly, a theory is being built. Codes are being grouped together as the researcher finds connections between them, and a basis for the theory is formed. See Figure 7 for an illustration of the entire process.

In addition to be inductive, the entire process is comparative and interactive with the data, participants and the analysis. The process is also iterative, because one goes back and forth with the data and concepts continuously.

5.2 Positionality mapping

As a part of conducting constructivist grounded theory, Charmaz (2014) claims that the researcher must consider their own personal process of construction, their own biases, and acknowledge their subjectivity. Here I attempt the exercise called positionality mapping, in order to explore my possible biases in relation to this particular research case.

Class: middle
My middle-class upbringing in Norway has enabled me to have a stable home, shelter and education. My family has always had its basic needs covered and I have never experienced a life of complete poverty or true financial insecurity. Which is unlike many of the people I’ve interviewed for my research. Many of the local people have at one point in their lives struggled to make ends meet and wondered if they will have enough to eat during the day. Because of not having experienced such poverty, I may be unable to understand some of their life views and standpoints. I tried to solve this possible issue by being a good listener and by showing understanding towards all research participants.

Citizenship: Serbian and Norwegian

I live in one of the richest countries in the world, and I have the freedom to live how I want to and rights to do so. Compared to Serbia, the political system is more stable and trustworthy. Healthcare is universal. The university is free of charge. Something that is simply not the case in Serbia. I informed all research participants about the fact that I live abroad, and I believe that it had very little influence on the research, if any. People would, however, from time to time say things like: “*You come from a country which has a good system, you cannot understand what things are like here...*” or “*This may be hard to understand for someone who does not live in Serbia...*”. And it was true, to some extent. It took me a couple months to realise how bad the socio-economic situation is. But the problem was solved by the fact that I stayed in Serbia for such a long time, allowing me to get the sense of real life in the country.

Age/generation: 25

I am a young adult, and still have a lot to learn about life. I also have very little practical research experience, inexperience which could reflect in the analysis section of the thesis. This young age of mine could have also been a privilege during fieldwork, however. I believe many people underestimated me and my ability to critically discern the truth, henceforth recklessly revealing some of their thoughts.

5.3. Research Ethics

5.3.1 Handling Research Data

At the beginning stages of planning my research and managing personal data, I, like many other Norwegian researchers, sought guidance from The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD), which is the national centre of expertise on data protection and research data management. I also familiarized myself with my university's guidelines and regulations regarding data

management plans. To gain institutional approval, I submitted my research proposal and data management plan to the NSD and had to wait until it was in compliance with the approved research protocol, laws, and regulations before conducting my research.

Additionally, I developed a data management plan as part of my research project, which outlined the type and scope of data that I would be generating and how I would ensure the safe storage of participants' personal information. I decided to store the data in a password-protected folder on my private laptop. To comply with regulations, I will also be archiving the research data that my masters' thesis is based on in national and/or international archives. I have chosen to use the NSD archives for this purpose, as they provide secure and long-term storage as well as visibility of my research data.

The official owner of personal and all other research data in this project is me, however the access to the collected personal data was and still is extended to my advisor as well. I am, however, the only person accountable for upholding confidentiality throughout the process of creating, storing, accessing, transferring, and disposing of personal records (Anastas, 2010). Additionally, it is my obligation to adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Norwegian research ethics code as prescribed by NSD.

Legal basis for processing general categories of personal data was consent (as described in General Data Protection Regulation art. 6 nr. 1a) as well explicit consent (based on General Data Protection Regulation art. 9 nr. 2a). Which are the two most common legal basis laws for processing personal data in research projects with active participation such as interviews and observations in Norway.

5.3.2 Ethical Principles and Responsibilities – from the previous sub chapter

One of the most vital responsibilities of a researcher is to ensure voluntary and informed consent from research participants prior to conducting research. In this instance, I established a written two-part agreement or contract with the participants to ensure their informed consent. The first part was for informational purposes only, and it provided details about the research nature, project objectives, participation requirements, data generation, dissemination, and the rights and responsibilities of each party. The second part of the contract required active participation from the participants, where they indicated their consent by signing and ticking off the relevant boxes,

stating what they agree to and what they do not consent to (See Appendix 1 and 2). According to Anastas (2010) consent can only be considered valid once it is freely given, specific and informed. It should also be so that the consent can be easily withdrawn by any participant, without any negative consequences. None of the participants in this research expressed any desire to withdraw their personal information from the research.

Additionally, the very question of ethics is an important one and it should not be overlooked. Ethical research is done in such a way that the researcher and the research participant are both open, honest and willing to participate in what should be a respectful win-win situation (Anastas, 2010). Sieber (1992) also adds that for research to be fully ethical, the community in question should regard the research questions, results and conclusions as constructive at large. This serves as a motivator for the researcher to do something of actual importance for the community in question. Most people I talked to expressed excitement once I described my research interests and claimed that there are many issues related to the NPZ that they would like to see addressed and attended to.

According to Sieber (1992), there are three general ethical principles which ought to guide a researcher, and those are the following: beneficence, respect and justice.

Beneficence is about ensuring that the benefits of the research are big and useful, as well as insuring that there is no harm done or unnecessary risk inflicted to the participants. In my case, I had to ensure that the participants who were negatively affected by the NPZ and its management, and had something to say about it, remained as anonymous as possible. Otherwise, there could be some negative consequences for them if the park management found out who said what exactly. Similarly, some employees of the park expressed negative thoughts and comments regarding the management and people with higher ranking positions in the NPZ management hierarchy, which could of course have negative consequences regarding their jobs, i.e., they could lose their jobs in the worst-case scenario. Hence, I had to be very careful with the sensitive information given to me, and especially so, if the participant expressed dislike or critique of others. Like so, I tried to make sure that there is no harm done to the participants. Instead, I aimed to help them and hopefully, by writing about the events that take place within and outside the park borders, illuminate both the positives and the negatives regarding the park and make place for improvement and problem solving, which should in the end, benefit everyone.

Bowman (1991) suggested adding these two additional principles of beneficence when the research is being done together with a vulnerable group of people: significant involvement and functional relevance. The first one is about the importance of significant involvement of research participants in the entire research process, from research question formulation to conclusion and results generation. The latter is about the importance of the research promoting actual, on the ground, expressed needs and viewpoints of the study population. Not some fictional and imposed problem, formulated by the outsider- researcher. Both principles are addressed in my research as I am using constructed grounded theory methods.

Anastas (2010) formulates the second principle, respect, as “*respecting the autonomy of individuals and protecting those who cannot protect themselves*”, in my case meant respecting the variety of opinions and worldviews which came my way during the interviews and field observations. By trying to listen and ask genuine constructive questions, even when I would disagree completely with my participants, I showed respect towards every person’s free will and opinion. When it comes to protecting those who cannot protect themselves, it is difficult to say when and what kind of protection is needed as there was no known direct violence inflicted upon the local community from the park, or the other way around. However, writing a thesis about the issues that take place and publishing it in the local language which is easily accessible to all people from the region, could be seen as some form of protection of those who cannot protect themselves. At least, it could be seen as a first step towards the much-needed autonomy and power seizure by the local community. By speaking in their name in this thesis, I hope I am not silencing their voices by using mine. Rather, I hope to amplify what they have to say and stand on their side. It would indeed, be ideal if the local community themselves could write this thesis instead of me, and use their own voice to communicate their concerns. However, since many of them are not in the position to do so, I hope to be the next best thing.

Lastly, justice, the third principle, is the practice of making sure that there is no exploitation of certain groups of people, but rather fair and just distribution of cost and benefits among the actors involved in the research process, i.e., participant and the researcher (Sieber, 1992). This can sometimes feel like a difficult task to do. A dark history of knowledge exploitation follows researchers who were and still are known for their ability to arrive at a troubled place, extract knowledge and data for the generation of their “smart scholarly publications”, and then simply leave. Leave back to their comfortable universities, offices and safe home countries. Leaving the

field behind, they leave the people and the situation they encountered when they arrived unchanged. So, in an attempt to minimise the chances of something like this happening in my case as well, I am constantly thinking about how I can ensure that I give back, as much as I receive, or even more. One way of doing that is to write a thesis about what local people think is important, hence my use of grounded theory research. Second, I can and will translate the thesis into Serbian language and adapt it to a more everyday reader friendly format, such as a handbook with illustrations and stories that are more interesting to read than the dry academic master thesis format is.

One other important principle guiding research ethics is the consideration of all possible positive and negative implications, consequences and outcomes of the research that may arise (Anastas, 2010). All the possible ways the findings of the research could be put in use, or all the various ways participants and readers could interpret the research process and conclusions, is important to keep in mind. This thesis deals with a topic that is important to many, the use of and control over what many refer to as “natural resources”. Since there is a lot of money to be extracted from owning ecologies and its “resources”, big and powerful actors are involved and play important roles in this story. I was aware of the fact that I may step on a few toes during my research beforehand, maybe I even hoped to do so. Yet I was, naively indeed, less aware of the possible dangers that may cause me and the other people who chose to speak up against oppression and marginalisation. People in power whom I might end up critiquing, have means to subjugate and silence everyone who stands in their way. They know that they are in power and will do everything they can to keep it that way. Hence, various forms of violence can be expected from their side, directed both towards me and other research participants. Everything from threats, silencing, intimidation and actual physical violence is possible.

However, there could be and hopefully, will be, more positive than negative outcomes of this research. For example, the analysis of all various actors and their viewpoints could serve to foster cooperation and mutual understanding between all actors involved. Reading about others experiences and opinions could be eye-opening for some people, hopefully reaching those specific people who have the power to change something. Additionally, bringing the academic world, its ways of analysing situations and its theories closer to the local people, could have positive impacts for both the academia as well as the people. The people may understand their situation better than before once it is presented in big picture theoretical manner, whilst the academia may benefit

because of its exposure to the outside readers and “the real world”. The local people who read academic research may help generate better and more accurate theories, as well as they could be the most valuable editors, critics, and debaters.

5.4 Data Collection

Data gathered in this research is a result of prolonged engagement with the case study and Nature Park Zlatibor area. I spent almost ten months living in a town situated right at the nature park’s border, Zlatibor Town, fully emerging myself in the culture and the way of life of the local people.

5.4.1 Data sampling

Sampling in this thesis is based on non-probability non-random samples which do not involve chance systematically. According to Anastas (2010) sampling should always be designed in such a way as to help identify and access the key informants, actors and research participants. Especially in qualitative research, where the utility and trustworthiness of the results and conclusions depends heavily on the information provided by the selected sources of information for the research. The research can decide to only study a selected subgroup of individuals from a much larger population of individuals. In my case, that meant choosing a few individuals from each actor group I and other research participants deemed important. The actor groups I identified in the beginning are:

- The local people
- The local government
- State Enterprise Serbiaforests which manages state forests in the region
- State Organisation “Nature Park Zlatibor” and its management
- The local hunting association
- Local tourism companies/organizations
- Ecotourism guides and other employees in tourism
- Foreign tourist companies/organizations
- Possible powerful local NGOs
- Researchers and other university ecologists who occasionally work in the NPZ area
- Tourists

The actor groups I ended up interviewing and researching are:

- The local people (hunters, journalists, lawyers etc.)
- The local government representatives (town mayor, spatial planners etc.)
- “Serbiaforests” and “Nature Park Zlatibor” employees
- Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia representatives

5.4.2 Representativeness in data sampling

It is of importance to always keep in mind that both data collection and analysis should always remain a critical and sceptical process. In practice, this means that the researcher should always strive to include all possible rival opinions, interpretations and angles (Yin, 1994). Alternative ways of viewing and interpreting case study data are always important to consider, especially in complex systems where multiple actors play important roles.

In my case, I tried to include as many women and young people in my research as possible. However, sometimes it is rather impossible to study gender or class variations systemically simply because of the small numbers of actors in each subgroup who are so homogeneous and small that only one or two people can stand in for the representation of the whole group. This happened to me in the case of local sport hunters, who were basically all middle-class, male, and over forty-five years old. (Gilgun, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1990)

5.4.3. Diminishing returns, triangulation and saturation

For many heterogenous populations I used the concept of diminishing returns and triangulation, to help me decide when the sample size is big enough and when to stop interviewing and observing new people from the same population. This concept refers to the method of stopping data gathering only when there is very little or no new and unexpected information obtained from the interviews and encounters, and when there is a certain level of predictability and confirmation of previous patterns in every new interview (Anastas, 2010). In practice, this meant that I had to keep including new interviewees in the research until they started repeating what the other said and nothing else or new came up. This is also known as saturation.

5.4.4 Theoretical, purposive and snowball sampling

Theoretical sampling is a sampling method usually used in most of the grounded theory research. It purposefully builds variation into a sampling plan based on all the theoretically relevant populations to the issue at hand, without targeting a specific number of people (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In practice, this meant specifying all theoretically possible population categories, actor groups, at the early stages of research, and selecting a few individuals from each group to begin with.

Similarly, to theoretical sampling, purposive sampling is about carefully selecting a set of respondents. During purposive sampling, the researcher chooses people they deem to be atypical or special in a sense that they may provide valuable information. (Anastas, 2010)

Snowball sampling in combination with purposive and theoretical sampling works by asking the first few chosen interviewees and research participants to identify and suggest other participants. They could suggest people like themselves as well as those whom they think might have very different opinion from their own. The snowball method may be biased if the chain of personal and professional connections is short and similar in opinion, but the bias can be lessened by including more people (without connections to the previous people) in the snowball chain and like so, attuning the original connections. Additionally, the bias is lessened by asking about people who may disagree with the original snowball interviewee. In my case, snowball method proved to be a good choice for finding outspoken people who had something against the park. In some cases, those people were connected to each other due to their common dislike of the park and parks management. They could refer me to each other.

Another way of utilizing the snowball method is to get to know the social system, both formal and informal, as well as its members on a deeper level. (Anastas, 2010) To the outside world this may look like simple getting to know the place and its people, but to a researcher, this opens eyes for the ties between people, their ways of thinking, their culture and everyday lives. Which in my case, at least, helps to put things in perspective. By socialising, chitchatting and creating personal bonds with some of my research participants as well as their friends, I was able to understand their words and perceptions so much more clearly than I would have, had I decided not to interact with them on a more personal level.

My first round of interviews was based on theoretical, purposive, and snowball sampling and included:

- People from the Nature Park Zlatibor (management and rangers)
- Local government people
- Local people
- Hunters

The second round of interviews included:

- More people from the local government
- More NPZ employees
- More local people
- People from the Institute for nature conservation (INCS)

The interview rounds were inspired by and followed the grounded theory interview approach guide (Figure 8 below).

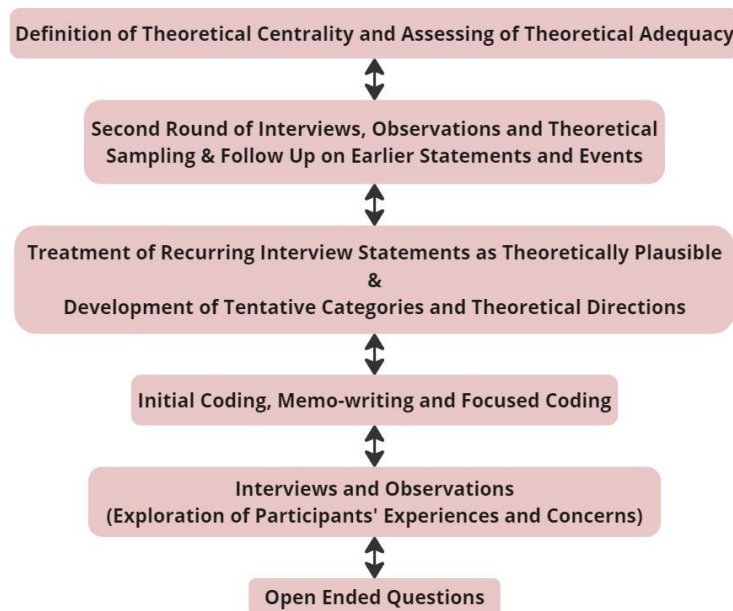


Figure 8. Interviewing approach in grounded theory. Adapted from Charmaz (2014)

5.4.5 Observations

In this research project I rely on my written fieldnotes during observations of various settings regarding NPZ. The fieldnotes I have are written in Serbian language, they: document individual and collective behaviours, maintain comprehensive and elaborate records, highlight crucial processes that occur during the observation, address participants' interests and concerns, place actors and actions within appropriate contexts, develop a focus on analytical concepts and

ideas (Charmaz, 2014) The instructions on how to write these fieldnotes and what to include in them I got from the Charmaz (2014) book.

5.4.6 Interviews

I conducted approximately 30 interviews. They vary from semi-structured to unstructured. All of the semi-structured interviews were recorded and stored safely under password protection on my laptop. Later on, they were translated and transcribed in the “NVivo” coding software, which I also used for initial coding. I adapted the interview questions and guide to fit each participant and their field of knowledge.

6. Results

Due to its large size, all of the results material, including coding, can be seen in Appendix nr. 3.

7. Analysis

7.1 Local people’s general concerns; rural exodus and lack of livelihood alternatives

[...] The quiet village looked quite empty and deserted. There were abandoned houses everywhere with huge orchards and small gardens nobody seems to tend to anymore. In the air, there was a feeling of nostalgia and of a vibrant life that once was, but no longer is. – Authors’ fieldnote, September 1st, 2022

Numerous local people point out the fact and, as they perceive it, a problem, that there are very few remaining young people living in the villages. As they say, most of the houses are elderly households and the villages are slowly but surely dying out. I confirmed this by walking around the villages and knocking on some random doors, there were many empty and abandoned houses all around me, whilst those houses that had inhabitants usually housed older people.

Villagers talk nostalgically about the past and the vibrant community that used to be present in most of the villages in the park sixty to seventy years ago. In addition to there being many more people in the villages, there were many more animals (cows, sheep and goats) as well as job opportunities, or as locals put it “ways to make a living”.

Nowadays, almost every park inhabitant I've interviewed complains about the lack of livelihood alternatives, no jobs, things to do, and ways to earn some money. The older people have very small pensions (usually from 100 to 200 euros a month) and they live off that. That amount of money is usually just enough to cover basic needs and to pay the bills. The younger people capable of working travel outside the park to find work, to some of the bigger cities nearby or to the capital and other big cities in Serbia. Very few young people live in the park. Indeed, many people who live and work in the city must send money to their older parents who live in the NPZ villages. This lack of ways to earn some money is possibly identified by the locals as the main driver for the young people's exodus.

Additionally, local people point out the fact that small-scale farming is both non-profitable as well as difficult to physically do for older people who live in the NPZ villages. Some people keep a cow or two if they are capable, but many locals complain that only the larger producers may benefit in agriculture, whilst there are very few benefits and irrelevantly small subsidies left for the smaller producers. Some locals blame the global market and foreign product imports, whilst others simply blame the state for letting this happen. Regardless of who is to blame, this has resulted in there being no place to buy locally made milk or cheese in many of the villages. Hence, the locals complain about having to drive out to the nearest cities and larger settlements to buy these products from the supermarket.

For the villages to come to life again, locals say they need access to local jobs, profitable farming, and some even hope for possible factories opening in the area or the mining industry starting up again. Any jobs seem to be better than no jobs at all. As things seem to be standing today, the only way for a local person to make money in Zlatibor region is to either sell a piece of their land (to someone who wants to build a mountain cabin for themselves or for tourism development) or to develop a truistic undertaking themselves, usually in for of rooms or cabins to rent or a bed and breakfast.

However, as I will explain in further detail later, since NPZ has been established, even this final and what seems to be, the only option to make some money and stay in the region, is being made impossible due to the park's rules and conditions. Local people who live within the borders of the park have had their already limited options limited even more by the NPZ, getting to the point of being incapable of doing anything (profitable) with and on their lands.

Regarding the amount of power local people feel they have in general; they say they feel powerless when it comes to any decision-making in the area. According to some, municipality decides everything. When I asked a local man whether he feels that he has any power to decide certain matters in the village, he replied:

We don't decide anything; it's all dictated by the municipality. When you don't have financial means here, you depend on them. If they fix the road, they fix it; if not, nothing happens. But look, it used to be different. For example, in the center, where the school is, it was all built by the people themselves. People back then worked to create something.

Others, when asked about power, immediately thought of the larger picture and the socio-economic system they find themselves in. One local said it this way:

Ah, that's it. Power is sweet and being in control is a challenge. There's simply too much money involved, too much power in the game.

He, like many others, feels that the system and the state they find themselves living in do does not exist to serve and benefit the people, but rather that it exists to increase the profits of the select few at the top of it. Locals have called Serbian institutions dysfunctional and corrupted on numerous occasions. Several believe that there is no hope in fixing such a system and accuse the state of running “state mafia” and money laundering in Zlatibor. Several are convinced that it is exactly these, state investors and “tycoons” as one person calls them, developing apartment buildings and hotels in the center of Zlatibor Town. Many say that one of the reasons they build so many buildings is to launder money through their development. Regardless of their reasons to build and invest in the development of Zlatibor Town, it is clear that the local people are not the ones holding the majority of the restaurants, hotels etc., rather the owners are usually wealthy individuals from Belgrade or abroad.

Additionally, many people are convinced that the people owning most of the establishments in Zlatibor Town have close connections to the ruling party in Serbia, SNS. They accuse the party of giving all authority and power to one person, the president, of using violence and violent tactics to stay in power, as well as of running a pyramid scheme. One local person says that SNS is more of a system of trusteeship than a political party, giving their members no independence or place for individual thought:

The SNS is structured as a party with a pyramid scheme. They operate on the principle of constantly attracting new people in order to have new voters. But you can only achieve that through promises and rhetoric.

It is probably safe to say that all locals I've interviewed believe that by either having enough money or enough connections with the people in power, people can achieve anything they want. Usually, connections and power go hand in hand, and locals believe that those who know the "right people" manage to get approvals and permits for anything. They say that a person in power can get all approvals to build easily, and if that person is on good terms with Serbiaforests and NPZ they can "get away with anything".

But here in our park, the way it works is that if you come to build something and it's not allowed, you call the director or someone from Belgrade, some influential person, and they come and sort everything out for you, allowing you to proceed with the construction.

The municipality mayor says that the only reason the municipality of Cajetina and its ruling party have managed to stay in opposition to the ruling party is the fact that they cannot be financially extinguished, i.e., they earn enough revenue from tourism and development in Zlatibor Town to stay afloat as a party and municipality in opposition.

Lastly, a couple of locals touched upon larger political and global issues. Several critiqued the rise of privatization and centralization in the region and Serbia in general. One local person critiques the foreign capital investment in the region and says:

They have sold everything Serbian. Look at what the Chinese companies are doing - they are building our roads. We used to have airplanes, trucks, cars... Now we don't have them anymore. They say it's good, but for me, it's not good. No country with foreign capital has ever benefited from it.

Another local critiques centralization:

You know, they've done centralization. Everything has been centralized, even this. And everything is in Belgrade. Unfortunately, everything is in Belgrade.

7.2 Local municipalities perceptions of the park; Landgrab and abuse from the state

This is a crime. This is a crime against Zlatibor and the villages of Zlatibor. [...] This is a serious matter; we need to address it seriously to avoid reaching a point where the development of Zlatibor is halted and people are forced to leave, making way for others. They want to seize a part of our territory and commit legal violence. [...] In this way, the current owners of land will be prevented from building on their own property and will be forced to sell their parcels cheaply or give them away and move to Belgrade. Later on, they will change this regulation, abolish these boundaries, and then their investors will be able to build. (Cajetina Municipality Mayor, 2017)

Based on various interviews with the local municipality representatives, the dislike and resentment towards the NPZ was obvious. The local municipality mayor especially had a lot of negative things to say about the park. He claims that the nature park presents “mismanagement of state resources” as well as it stops local people from developing. This exacerbates the rural exodus and “forces local people to move to Belgrade”. According to him, the park is working against the local people and bringing them absolutely no benefits at all. There is also no compensation (monetary or any other) given to those people who own land inside the park. He calls the NPZ imposition a crime and legal violence, also claiming that once the park land is “people-free” and everyone has left due to the lack of development opportunities and livelihood alternatives, the rules and protection boundaries will be lifted enabling the people close to the ruling party, investors or mining companies to build and develop on the newly abandoned land.

Cajetina municipality mayor also sees NPZ as both centralization and “abuse of state power” which benefits only certain individuals, i.e., those people close to the ruling party as well as Serbiaforests. Indeed, the municipality and numerous other actors who are present in the park have been paying yearly fees to Serbiaforests for the use of “parks natural resources” since 2018. Serbiaforests, however, does not seem to be paying these fees to the NPZ bank account (which they themselves manage) even though they are one of the biggest users of the “parks natural resources” with regards to all the timber they cut on a yearly basis. In addition, he complains, since Serbiaforests are both the users of the natural resources within the park (mainly wood) as well as those who control all general use of parks natural resources, nobody is there to control Serbiaforests.

He refers to the fact and a paradox in his opinion, that mining is legal in some areas of the 3rd protection regime. He asks, how is it possible that people cannot build or develop agricultural initiatives on their own lands, but multinational companies can come and exploit minerals in the park? Additionally, he points out the fact that in 2018, a Finnish company “Afarak” acquired the mining rights on numerous magnesite mines in Serbia, including those in the NPZ. He believes that companies like “Afarak” can access unpopulated lands easier than populated land, which is why it is so convenient to create a nature park first, get rid of all the people, and then conduct mining and resource extraction "in peace”.

Numerous people employed in the local government including the mayor criticize the protection regimes placements, alluding to the absurdity of having for example, 1st protection regime on one side of the road and no protection (the end of the park border) on the other side of the road. This confuses people who live on the borders of different protection regimes. If you live in the 2nd protection regime and cannot do anything on your land, but your neighbor who has a house only ten meters away from you lives outside the park and can do virtually anything on his land, there is bound to be confusion and anger. Additionally, municipality employees say that the protection regimes border placement throughout the park is illogical most of the time and that the NPZ spatial plan from 2018 makes little sense. Employees dislike NPZ’s rigorousness and the way the park was created, claiming that NPZ should allow for more development and consultation with the local people. Another comment which often came from the local municipality employees was that INCS employees in Belgrade (those who decide whether to give or deny construction permits in the park area) are incompetently misunderstanding the spatial planning laws and denying construction and development in the park where it should not be denied.

Cajetina municipality mayor mentions what he believes to be the two possible reasons as to why the park was formed in the first place: conflict with the SNS and secondly, European Union’s nature protection conditions for all candidate countries. Since he and the ruling party in Zlatibor “Healthy Serbia” have always been in strong opposition to the Aleksandar Vucic ruling party “SNS” there have always been political disagreements between the two. In 2016/17 there was a big conflict regarding a piece of land in Zlatibor, occurring between the Cajetina municipality mayor and the deputy prime minister at the time, Zorana Mihajlovic. The local municipality mayor “won” the battle over the disputed piece of land, but he believes that the conflict between himself and Zorana sparked the NPZ creation.

[By creating the nature park] the Government of the Republic of Serbia, specifically Zorana Mihajlovic, wants to gain control over a larger part of Zlatibor. She wants to control everything that is private, everything that belongs to the people. (Cajetina Municipality Mayor, 2018)

Additionally, the mayor claims that the EU imposes expansion of protected areas in Serbia. And indeed, one of the requisites for entering the EU is an extended protected area network.

Another reason why they are doing this, let me tell you. The EU imposed it on them, saying they must declare around 20 territories as protected areas. Serbia has plenty of nature, let them declare protection where it is truly justified. There are many mountains and regions where a protected zone or national park can be established with valid reasons.

7.3 Local people's perceptions of the park; uninformed and restricted

During a consultation meeting between the state representatives (INCS and the Ministry of Nature Protection) and the local people in Cajetina municipal building in 2016, one could hear dissatisfied local people:

State rep: Please be reasonable...

People: How can we be reasonable when you are taking away our heritage from all of us...

State rep.: We are not taking anything away... I don't know what you're talking about.

People: You are taking it away... You will restrict us... No fishing, no this, no that...

The general consensus on the NPZ among the local people is that it causes problems and gives no benefits to those who live inside the park. People perceive the park as limiting, restricting what people can do on their piece of land or in the village area. They feel that their hands are tied, complaining about not being able to do anything without a paper and Serbiaforests' approval. One local man refers to this and calls "NPZ" a political weapon to get voters. He believes that the park is a way to manipulate people and keep them economically dependent on the state rather than the local government. And he may not be wrong, by having the power to decide what people can and cannot do on their land, Serbiaforests, INCS, and the Ministry can indeed, by giving or withholding permits to build, farm, hunt, forage etc., manipulate some of the local people.

However, the biggest issue according to the local people is the fact that construction permits have become very difficult, and for many people, impossible to get. And when we talk

about construction permits, we talk about permits to build tool sheds, barns, house extensions, auxiliary objects next to the house, or a cabin or two with a couple of guest beds to rent out to tourists. People are angry that INCS and the Ministry of Nature Protection continuously deny almost all construction applications and halt all development that could possibly happen inside the park. One local man expresses himself quite clearly and strongly about the issue in the following interview quote beneath:

They just took it and declared it a nature park. They didn't ask anyone... So, if they've taken my land, preventing me from using it, not allowing me to demolish or dig, not letting me do anything without their permission, then give me a legal paper which says that you have taken my land. [...] I haven't met the supposed director of that park yet. And I haven't started working on my land yet, but if he sends people to check me and inspect what I am doing on my land, I'll kill him. [...] Serbiaforests are a catastrophe. They make life quite tricky.

A couple of people have linked the rural exodus that was happening prior to the park's establishment and the possibility of it being exacerbated by the park's strict limitations with a possible land grab situation. They express doubt that "someone" is playing a more serious game than what it may look like and plans to "eventually grab" the parkland. Nobody has been clear with regards to who that someone is, or what their endgame plan may be, but they are suspicious regardless:

Local man: *But it seems to me like some other game is being played. Someone will eventually grab all of this. And it's much easier for them to do so when the area is empty like this, rather than if someone had built a house here.*

Another local man: *In this park, there won't be people anymore. Someone is deliberately doing all of this. It's not just related to the nature park; it's also related to those villages. If I take you up there, you'll see the type of houses, there's nobody around. Maybe there is just one elderly person in the house.*

Righteously so, the local people are critiquing the whole protection regime and park borders idea. Some of them find it so puzzling and absurd that it is hard for them to wrap their heads around it, while others understand the idea but critique the placement of the various borders

and protection regimes. Indeed, it is hard to find logic in some of the situations, like one local village representative explains here:

My question for the ministry and INCS is; can the park boundaries be somehow revised? [...] Somewhere where someone lives, can a protection zone be changed or something like that, to avoid consequences? Also, how is it possible that in one place it's the first protection zone, but just three meters away it's not considered any zone at all? Or like here by the waterfall, it's the second zone and then immediately next to it there's nothing [no protection]. How is that possible?"

Indeed, this person works in a locally initiated touristic organization centered around a beautiful waterfall in Gostilje village. There, they must take strict care of the waterfall and its surroundings as they are located in the second protection regime. Yet the park ends only three meters away from the waterfall zone, and after those three meters, there is no park, no protection at all. Here the organization built a parking lot and a small winter house for the employees and tourists to sit in once it gets cold. This probably could not have been possible had the park's border been further away from the waterfall. One Waterfall organization employee says:

"I find the whole concept of these "protection zones and borders" absurd. You have the first zone, and then there's nothing... or it doesn't matter which zone it is... It's just, you know, puzzling to me." [...] They should have declared everything as a nature park or nothing at all.

Additionally, neighbors who live on the borders of protection regimes talk. One neighbor may live in the third regime and somehow manage to build or do something on his land, whilst the other neighbor may be in the second regime and have his hands completely tied. Very different rules apply to the two neighbors, causing confusion amongst the people.

Locals also joke about the whole situation. When describing their meetings with the Ministry or INCS people, locals make fun of the way "they" talk, dress and act. By creating a clear distinction between themselves and the "others", they freely critique and joke about the "fancy Belgrade people and their extravagant cars". They make fun of the time one INCS employee came to the waterfall and told them to avoid a specific protected orchid when cutting grass. Almost nobody remembers what the orchid he was talking about looks like and they most definitely do not follow his instructions when cutting grass. Furthermore, locals joke about a butterfly's or a bear's life being more important than a human's life to the INCS.

Once asked about the parks manager, Serbiaforests, nobody local had anything good or nice to say about them, a couple of people were neutral or said that they do not know anything about them, whilst most of the people expressed clear dislike towards them. Numerous people see Serbiaforests as the biggest exploiters of the forest and trees in the area, some are even accusing them of having a monopoly on most natural resources in the area or of logging continuously and cutting down much more forest than they should. One villager also mentions that the forest that is being managed by Serbiaforests, and is also part of the park today, was once a local village forest managed by the local people:

It used to be a village forest, and someone, I don't know who, gave it away and now they're [Serbiaforests] cutting it down, managing it, and making a living out of it. They're corrupt. They launder money and all that.

In this quote, however, another common opinion about park managers comes up. He and many others believe that Serbiaforests are a corrupt company, that they launder money, as well as that individuals embezzle money at every chance they get. Several individuals believe that, since Serbiaforests have an outdoor furniture production factory close to the park and sell a lot of these products to the park managers to put out in the park, Serbiaforests employees get a chance to spike up the prices of these products and take the big surplus for themselves. Indeed, the park managers talk and brag a lot about the products they “improve” the NPZ quality with benches, fences, and tables. Both rangers and various local people have said that they cost way too much compared to what they are worth, raising the local suspicion that there is some form of embezzlement happening in the Serbiaforests. Indeed, locals dislike everything Serbiaforests does, they critique the rangers, management, and all of their activities.

Locals also dislike Serbiaforests development of hiking trails, since they often pass through private land parcels, and dirt roads. Serbiaforests make numerous dirt roads that pass through the forests, which trucks may use to carry out the cut wood or which may serve as a forest fire protection strip. However, tourists who stay in the nearby Zlatibor Town make heavy use of these dirt roads for their 4-wheeler adventure fun drives around the park. The problem is, however, that the tourists often drive outside the already-made roads and drive through private property or grassy fields which people grow and use to feed their cattle or other livestock they may have.

A couple of people, when asked about why they think the park was created, mentioned that they believe it all started as a political conflict between the municipality and the state, more exactly, between the local mayor and the deputy prime minister. Several people think the park was “political revenge”, or a way to set a small local municipality in opposition “back in its place”. Whilst others mention that they believe the park was created to halt the construction of the cable car gondola lift as well as to extract revenue from the municipality.

7.4 Local people’s perception of participation and communication with the NPZ

How can the people from Belgrade just come and simply decide the park's borders and what would be where? We were not consulted about all of it and had very little say in the matter...

Local people feel that they were not properly consulted and that they had very little decision-making power during the park establishment phase in 2017 and even still today. Most people, and especially the elderly who move little outside of their houses, knew nothing about the park plans before the park was already in power and the rangers started marking out protection regime borders and putting up boards and signs which explain everything that is no longer allowed to do in the area (Figure 9 below).



Figure 9. Signs like these are numerous throughout the park. Depending on the protection regime, they list in bullet points everything that is not allowed in the region.

One local man tells me that he only found out that he lives inside the park when the signs were put up in the village. His experience is not unlike that of other people who live in the park. They complain that nobody informed them and that only those people who often make their way into the municipal building or have some sort of contact with the municipality knew what was happening. Another local man complains about the lack of community meetings or gatherings regarding the park prior to its creation:

Well, [I only found out that my land is within NPZ] when they started putting up signs and marking the area. Nobody came to inform the people. There were no gatherings, no community meetings to provide information [...] Even to this day, nobody has informed me that my private property is part of a nature park. That I have no right to do anything.

Instead of there being good and easy access to information about the park prior to the public consultation and discussion period, one local journalist says that it was extremely difficult to find any information about the park in 2017, let alone a map or an explanation of where the park would be located:

You could find documents stating the area size and technical specifications, but there was no actual map available. No one really knew how the nature park would look like. It took me about a month of intensive searching and googling until I found something that could be considered as a starting point for a map.

Indeed, people were completely unaware of the parks purpose, rules and regulations prior to its creation. During the one and only organized consultation meeting in the municipal building in 2017, people showed clear confusion regarding the protection regimes, restrictions, and limitations. Even today, most people do not know about the existence of the NPZ office in Zlatibor, a place where they could go to voice their concerns and discuss issues with the park managers and rangers. A local journalist says that the communication between the park and the local community is practically non-existent, and another local man complains about the lack of consultation:

How can the people from Belgrade just come and simply decide the park's borders and what would be where? We were not consulted about all of it and had very little said in the matter.

In general, local people felt that they had no impact on the decision-making process and that the park was created without proper consultation or involvement of the local people. The town mayor complains about never being able to reach an agreement with the Ministry and INCS:

They came and did it without our involvement. It means they were not obligated to inform us about what they would put under park control or which part they would occupy because it was done by a state institution [...].

Even though INCS conducted two separate big studies of the region, one in 2005 and another one in 2015, most local people were never included in the studies or even informed of their existence. INCS reps spend a lot of time in the field, “exploring” villages, conducting ecological research, noting down flora and fauna they see, and researching the geography of the area. But they spent little time talking to the local people about any of it. Rather, they consulted mainly with Serbiaforests and their employees who are well acquainted with the region.

People ask me how someone could just “take” their land and put it under protection. Locals are in disbelief that it is legal and possible to simply put someone's land under protection and include it inside a nature park, without even informing the local people prior to the event. In one interview with two local men, I recorded this part of their conversation:

Local Man nr. 1: *How did they just go through your land without asking? They didn't seek your consent; you didn't allow them... nothing was done.*

Local Village Representative nr.1: *[Shrugs...] My piece of land is in the second zone, near the river. There I am allowed to do nothing. Actually, I have no idea. I haven't asked because I'm not doing anything. If I were doing something, I would have asked.*

7.5 The public debate: 3rd of June 2017

On June 3rd, 2017, representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, along with several representatives of the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, organized a public debate that was supposed to last for two hours and would include several presentations given by the state representatives regarding NPZ, its borders, protection regimes, etc.

However, even before the state representatives started addressing the attendees, it was noticeable that people were dissatisfied, agitated, and uncomfortable. It was difficult for the NPZ presenters to speak as everyone was talking at the same time, and there was noticeable discontent among the locals. People constantly interjected with loud comments here and there, expressing opposition and discontent. At one point, one INCS rep managed to get a second to speak and start her presentation, but she was quickly interrupted:

INCS rep: *"I will acquaint you with the fundamental values and reason as to why INCS decided to conduct this study [and create NPZ]. Zlatibor is a mountain in southwestern Serbia, as well as a part of "* [She gets interrupted by the loud locals]

People [all at once]: *"We know, we know. We know where we live. Don't take away our precious time like this. Tell us what we will lose. We're not gaining anything, but what are we losing? Tell us. Do you want to drive us out of here?"*

In addition, locals complained about the lack of time during the public review process, which was supposed to last for twenty days, but in reality, only lasted ten days. This is the time locals were given to read up about the case, whatever little information was provided, send complaints or come up with questions and arguments to bring up during the public discussion meeting. In this excerpt from the meeting, locals complain about the shortened period:

Ministry rep: *The announcement of the public review was published in...*

Audience: *Carefully. Listen carefully!*

Ministry rep: *You talk and can't hear me... The announcement of the public review was published in the daily newspaper "Novosti".*

A local man: *On which date? You published it on May 19. But it says that the proposal was made on May 10. You published it nine days later. Is that right? Just tell me if I'm correct?*

Ministry rep: *Yes, you're right. The public review was initiated on May 10 and lasted until May 29. Nonetheless, you had the opportunity, and still have the opportunity, to submit comments and suggestions regarding the protection regulation...*

Furthermore, only fifteen minutes into the meeting, state representatives decided to end the debate and leave. Due to the loud and tumultuous atmosphere, unpleasant and unfriendly towards the NPZ representatives, a ministry employee ended the meeting with these words:

Ministry rep: "Since we don't have the conditions to continue this public discussion, please write down all your thoughts on this matter, and we will discuss them, but not like this." [They all get up and leave]

A local journalist describes the event like so:

There was no proper debate, and the representatives from the ministry even left the scene due to the anger and frustration of the people.

One local man who was there also describes the event:

One person provoked the situation, and I can't recall if some water was thrown at them or not. But then they packed up and left. They were supposed to schedule another public discussion, but they never did. The room was full. We came from all sides.

And the town mayor, who was not present at the meeting, says:

During the public debate here in our municipality people specifically voiced their dissatisfaction and expressed their objections. However, they did not take it into consideration even though they simply had the duty and obligation, according to the law, to respond to the objections.

In addition to the protests prior to the park's establishment in 2017, locals also boycotted and refused to participate in all meetings and discussions with state-employed spatial planners regarding the creation of the park's spatial plan in 2018. The local government persisted that the people were not consulted properly regarding the park and its spatial plan, pointing out that the state ignored all complaints. There was no survey conducted amongst the locals and people were uninformed. The municipality was not provided with a proper map of the protection zones in time, the town mayor says. For all these reasons, the municipality decided to boycott all public discussions with the state regarding NPZ in 2018, as well as to write to the constitutional court and request an assessment of NPZ's "constitutionality and legality". They believed that by not consulting local people properly and by cutting down on the public discussion time, the state made the park illegally, i.e., the state broke the law. Unfortunately, the municipality never received an answer from the court.

NPZ is the ministries and relevant state institutions persistent attempt to make Zlatibor their own playground, without asking the local population about their fate. Therefore, we will certainly

exercise all legally provided possibilities to ensure that this is done in accordance with the law. [...] We must certainly prevent this, fight against it, and keep it [the land] within the jurisdiction of the local self-government. Because without this, there will be no income, no people, and no municipality of Cajetina. (Cajetina Municipality mayor, 2017)

7.6 Changes in local peoples land use practices and economy change due to the NPZ

One of the biggest issues regarding NPZ and its impact on the local people is the fact that it has become much harder for people to develop and construct anything on their land inside the park. Indeed, people feel that it is practically impossible to get permits to build anything inside the park. Local lawyer says that:

People cannot build anything. Reconstruction is allowed, but the building of additional new objects is not.

The problem, according to some of the local people, is the fact that most of the private lands in the park belong under the “agricultural land” title, whilst a very small portion of the lands is designated as “construction area”. According to the NPZ spatial plan (which is in power), anyone with land outside designated “construction areas” cannot build any additional objects. Yet, the municipal spatial plan which was in power prior to the park allowed for construction and development on agricultural land. So now, people who were previously able to expand their households, and build new objects and facilities, find themselves in a situation where they are constantly receiving rejection letters for most of the construction permits they apply for. And a classic letter of rejection for development on agricultural land sound something like this:

According to the provided plan, the subject parcel is located in an area designated as agricultural land and is not within the construction area. In the Spatial Plan of the special purpose area of the "Zlatibor" Nature Park [...] it is defined that within the spatial units with the regime of the Park's III degree of protection, outside the existing and planned construction areas of settlements, only the reconstruction and extension of existing residential and economic objects of agricultural households are allowed. (Directly copy-pasted text from an anonymous letter of rejection)

This means that the majority of people who live inside the park cannot build new construction units on their lands, even if it is just small buildings for agriculture or storage. For

example, one woman applied for a permit to build a small tool shed on her parcel, yet she received a rejection because her land parcel is registered as “agricultural land” parcel. Or, numerous people applied for a permit to build a house, but they all got rejected.

Hence, it has become obvious to many that the chances of rejection are high. One spatial planner and municipality employee tells me that such a high likelihood of rejection has a very demoralizing effect on people. Plus, the average application cost of three thousand euros does not help with morale and motivation. Most people in the park do not have that much money, and even if some did have it, it is very unlikely that they would be willing to gamble it all on an application that will probably get rejected. All things considered; it is not unexpected that there will be some illegal construction going on in the park. And indeed, there was. From my time spent with the park rangers during their field control drives around the park, I could tell that the majority of their work consists of stopping this illegal construction and requesting permits from the local people. A spatial planning municipality employee says:

I usually warn people who want to build in the park, especially in the second protection zone, that the chances of getting a rejection from the ministry and institute are very high. By applying, they risk spending a lot of money on the [...] project that may never be realized. [...] People on average spend around 3000 euros [just on obtaining all the necessary papers for construction].

The spatial planner municipal employee also mentions that she herself has a piece of land inside the park, but doubts that she will ever be able to build something there, even though she wanted to before the park. She says that if people cannot get permits to build houses or even simple sheds and barns on their properties, rural tourism and agricultural development must be an unobtainable dream:

People can't even build a simple barn or obtain a permit to construct a house. Not to mention ecotourism or the production of organic agriculture... it's practically impossible.

Town mayor also comments:

Now, someone in those areas might want to engage in tourism but doesn't have the opportunity to develop their land for construction [...]

What he points to in his comment above is the fact that it is possible to convert agricultural land into construction land, but that kind of legal conversion costs a lot of money, which many of the local people do not have, according to one local man:

There are many locals who are complaining. You have locals who can't build, who have their own property and are seeking to build their own structure but don't get permission. But again, it's a matter of money. You have to submit a request to Belgrade and get it approved. Then you also have to transfer it from agricultural land to building land; it's all about money.

In addition, locals are complaining about the fact that it has become significantly harder to sell their plots of land now, due to the fact that few buyers are looking to buy agricultural land inside the park, knowing well that it will cost them a lot of money to convert it into a construction area as well as it will be difficult to get all the permits. One local man complains about this and about the lack of ways to “make use of the land”:

I would gladly sell my plots, of course, why wouldn't I sell them. I have three plots down by the road. 12 acres, those are three great plots. Now, in order to sell a plot, it has to be converted from meadow to pasture for livestock, and then from pasture to construction land. [...] Do you know how much that costs? It's a huge amount of money. Then those requests will go to Belgrade, and whether they will accept it or not...

My children, the only thing they could make use of this land, of all this, was either to rent the house to tourists or to sell the plots, but now, under these conditions of the nature park, they can't do that. There's nothing they can do about it.

Several people criticize the state for not providing local people with any kind of compensation for the lost income and for another negative economic impact the park has had on them. They mention that they have heard of other places in Europe where people who live inside the park have received subsidies and compensations for their losses, whilst complaining that they have not received anything.

The state says, "No, no, this is now your parcel... but what can I do with it? Nothing. And the land taxes keep coming. Okay, it would be fine if they could say, if your parcel is in the first zone of protection, you are exempt from paying taxes because you can't do anything on that piece of land.

7.7 “Resource users” park fees, as perceived by the local people

Serbiaforests and NPZ take yearly and event-based fees from all, what they call, “natural resource users” within the park. Fees must be paid for most cultural events, social gatherings, railways, tv and internet stations, electro distribution stations, as well as for the ski-station area, some parking spaces, roads, a local water factory etc. Basically, fees can be collected for all human activity, construction, and development inside the park.

Town mayor complains about the municipality having to pay fees for “everything”, whilst Serbiaforests does not invest any of the money back into the park, cultural events, and local people. The municipality and people are trying to keep the villages alive by arranging numerous festivals and events to keep the traditions alive and people engaged, but the fees are causing some people to cancel their event plans due to their high costs. Municipality mayor says:

And that is the problem... now, with these inspections, people have to pay fees to the nature park for anything they do, even we (the municipality) have to pay fees for any activities we undertake in the park. And everything we do, whether it's building roads, asphalt work, or organizing cultural events in the villages, we have to pay fees to the nature park.

Additionally, people complain that the large sums of money Serbiaforests earns from gathering fees end up in the private pockets of Serbiaforests directors and managers. They accuse Serbiaforests leaders of stealing money for themselves as their personal income, and of sending all the money to Belgrade. Nothing stays here for the development of the local community, they say:

But the money they earn from the fees goes to the private pockets of Serbia Forests and their company.

However, as I will explain further in the chapter below, Serbiaforests have quite a flexible approach as to who must pay the fees and who doesn't. It depends heavily on connections and relations between the Serbiaforests and those who are supposed to pay. One example of this is the community organization “Gostilje Waterfall Touristic Organization” centered around the promotion of a beautiful waterfall in the village of Gostilje. Organization leaders tell me that they have a “special contract” with the park, which says that they do not have to pay the fees as long as

they buy all the wooden products (benches, boards, fences etc.) they use for the improvement of the waterfall and the trails around it, from Serbiaforests. Either way, Serbiaforests ensures that they get the money from the local organization.

7.8 Narratives told by Serbiaforests and its employees

NPZ management office in Zlatibor consists of one boss, one ranger manager, and of around five rangers (the numbers vary constantly, as some rangers continuously come and go). At the beginning of my research, during my first couple of weeks in Zlatibor I spent quite a lot of time with the management and rangers. They welcomed me with open arms and showed genuine interest in helping me with the thesis. I could join the rangers in their daily activities every day if I wanted and observe their work, talk to them while we drive around, and gather a lot of interesting information along the way. However, it was obvious from the start that the managers wanted to control the narrative to their advantage. Possibly the reason why they wanted to be so accommodating and helpful is because they wanted to know at all times where I was, what I was seeing, and to whom I was talking to. In one of the early days, they mentioned that they will point out the “right” people with whom I should talk and that I should be careful to avoid “unpleasant” and “rude” people. Of course, I did not listen to them and eventually, they realized that I was asking very critical questions and not listening to their recommendations as to whom I should and should not talk to. They became suspicious of my intentions and stopped offering rides and helping me. Their desire to control the narrative and the story I would tell was obvious and concerning.

In general, park management and rangers spend a lot of time and energy on controlling the nature park area, driving around, and checking for illegal development. Almost every day rangers drive around the park and approach people who seem to be building, constructing, or working on something, and ask for legal papers and permits. If people do not have them, the rangers ask them to stop doing whatever they are doing and to only continue once and if they get the right permits and papers. In case they get a rejection, the people must demolish whatever they have built so far. Moreover, park rangers control various events, competitions and happenings in the park, they check if the fees have been paid and if people follow the event rules set by the INCS and the ministry.

Park management also talks about the importance of sustainability and sustainable forest management. They claim they cut forests in a sustainable, selective, and responsive manner, as

well as they derive “economic benefits” from these forests. The problem, according to them, is that private individuals clear-cut their forests and “destroy everything”. Some of the Serbiaforests employees blame forest destruction on local people and on their “*unregulated management*”.

Private forests are the problem... people do not care, and they destroy everything.

And this text can be found on the Serbiaforests website:

The relationship between humans and forests, as well as their purpose, has changed over time and has been conditioned by existing socio-economic conditions, which have affected both the state of forests and forest ecosystems, as well as the state of nature as a whole. In the past, due to the denser population of rural areas, forests around the world were exposed to unregulated management, which included grazing, using wood for fuel and construction, as well as for charcoal production, and more.

Furthermore, NPZ employees talk of sustainability and profitability interchangeably. Forests are seen as profit centers and the “economic function of forests” as something necessary to achieve “positive business results”:

The company implements the concept of integrated natural resource management, with the aim of providing sustainable use of the natural potential of forest areas and the business capacity of the company, to ensure profits that will enable the implementation of measures for the protection and improvement of the state of forests, as well as the development of the company's business capacity. The economic function of forests implies the use of forest products and the valorisation of the general beneficial functions of forests in order to achieve positive business results. (Stated “enterprise mission” from the plan 2017-2026)

The forest is referred to as a “natural resource” which should be managed according to the principles of “sustainable forest management” and “sustainable yield”:

The forest presents a renewable natural resource that offers different potential uses, which are determined by the habitat conditions and the developmental stage. [...] The modern principle of sustainable forest management is derived from the principle of sustainable yield, which involves managing and using forests and forest land in such a way and to such an extent that biodiversity is preserved and the productivity, renewal, vitality, and potential of forests are at a level that would

satisfy appropriate ecological, economic, and social needs of present and future generations, both at the local and national levels, without endangering or damaging other ecosystems.

Serbiaforests as an enterprise runs its units with a classic corporate governance managerial approach. They refer to the forests as capital (which “must not be reduced”) and hope for “maximum levels of efficiency and profitability”:

The aim of corporate governance is to achieve the maximum level of efficiency and profitability of the enterprise. (Direct quote from the Serbiaforests business plan 2017-2026)

State forests, given their specific public function, are considered a specific state capital, and the state as the owner of this capital has two basic interests regarding forests: the value of this capital (forests) must not be reduced, and it must be increased, and the state as the owner requires the realization of multiple benefits from this capital (forests). The basic goal of managing state forests is to ensure sustainable development of the state forestry sector, as well as to create the highest possible additional value of forest products. (Direct quote from the Serbiaforests business plan 2017-2026)

When talking about the work they do in the park, the managers always almost exclusively brag about the hiking trails and wooden benches they have made:

We have made a lot of improvements to the region, not only did we make new hiking trails, but we have also built a lot of outdoor furniture all throughout the park.

Serbiaforests are, however, not investing in the development of overnight stay locations inside the park. Tourists come to Zlatibor, sleep in the city-like Zlatibor Town on the outskirts of the NPZ, and then simply go on short daily trips to the park. Indeed, it seems like all the money Serbiaforests are putting into the “development” and “improvement” of the park goes into the improvement of the tourist offers. The wooden picnic benches they put up around the park mostly exclusively serve tourists, and the hiking roads are also something mainly tourists make use of. During a field visit to one of the park's villages, the rangers set up a big wooden round bench on a private man's property (with his approval), but he wanted the bench as far away as possible from his house and fields as it would attract tourists. He said that the bench does not mean anything to him, but that he fears that the tourists who come on four-wheelers would not respect his land and would possibly drive over his fields.

Serbiaforests and the NPZ did not employ a single biologist, ecologist, or let alone social scientist to have in their team. They only have forecasters and what they refer to as forest engineers on their team. Their primary focus is forest management. One NPZ employee tells me:

No, no [we do not have any biologists or other experts working in the NPZ team]. We only have foresters. As for their knowledge of biology and ecology, I don't know... Well, we manage a large area, nearly 42,000 hectares. [...] and in my opinion, there is a need for hiring such professionals. But unfortunately, our management structures don't prioritize that.

However, surprisingly enough, NPZ employees admit that including one specific and very populated part of the park within its borders has been a mistake. The “Vodice” area is the most densely built village in the park, and during one interview with the NPZ office, I’ve recorded them saying that it should be excluded from the park during the 2027 10-year revision process:

Employee 1: It's nonsense that they included Vodice in the protected area. I assume someone forced them to do it. I mean, there's no reason.

Employee 3: Hopefully, we can remove what we think should be excluded.

Employee 1: We should propose that.

Employee 3: The issue of Vodice was already discussed in those meetings we had with representatives of the institute, the ministry, and so on. And it can be done during the revision of the park, in 10 years. So, in 2027.

Fees for all “resource users”

One NPZ employee tells me that the company is highly centralized, with all information and money having to go through the company headquarters in Belgrade before they make their way back to the smaller management units. Hence, the NPZ fees are not an exception. Cajetina municipality, in addition to numerous other state- and privately-owned organizations pay the fees, money gets sent to the Serbiaforests account in Belgrade and gets managed by the directorate. Whatever NPZ spends money on locally, they must send invoices to Belgrade to receive the money back.

The NPZ employee also tells me that they try to, each year, spend all the fee money that has been paid and invest it in the park’s improvement. As previously mentioned, they usually

invest in wooden outdoor furniture, hiking trails, and information boards which are all made by and bought from their own wood processing company, Serbiaforests. However, they spend the fee money on bulldozers, trucks, and other machinery they use for forest management, both inside and outside NPZ. For example, the NPZ employee talks about some of the “forest maintenance” machines they bought with fee money, which they are now using outside the protected area, on other forest areas NPZ owns and manages. Mechanization, innovation, and modernization are seen as necessary and even called a “primary determination of the company”:

Mechanization in forestry is necessary to achieve optimal forest openness (construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of forest roads and railways), as well as for logging, wood processing, and transportation. Investing in innovation of mechanization and equipment for forestry work is a primary determination of the company. (Serbiaforests, n.d.)

However, as previously mentioned, NPZ managers have a somewhat flexible approach regarding fees. For example, they tell me that they choose not to collect fees from single individuals who run small family businesses, restaurants, or overnight stays inside the park. Yet, neither do they collect money from the public company “Roads of Serbia” or “Zlatibor Hydropower Plants”, which both refuse to pay and obviously get away with it without a problem.

There are also several powerful individuals inside the park who seem to be able to get away with anything. For example, Rangers have been told to “close their eyes” when driving past “El Paso City”, a cowboy-themed fun park with beds for overnight stays. The place is owned by an individual who probably has enough money and the right connections so that the rangers and park management simply have to let him be. He owns an illegal helipad and a helicopter at the premises, offers wealthy tourists helicopter rides, and even one time, killed a rare white vulture bird with said helicopter. Similarly, another person, a famous politician's brother and an owner of a sweets-producing company, owns an illegal helipad and possibly a property with unofficial apartments which he rents out to his friends, for which he does not pay any fees. Furthermore, some events, such as the “Tribalion”, a mountain racing competition, do not have to pay fees whilst other similar competitions do. An NPZ manager explains it like this:

No, the “Tribalion” competition organization does not pay event fees, but if we had the opportunity we would charge a fee for that as well. However, it's just... [she stops and thinks] there is some agreement that those things should not be paid for...

Rangers' stories

Out of all the NPZ employees, I spent the longest time talking to the rangers and driving around the park with them. Unlike the managers, rangers often had a negative word or two to say about the park and its management. At one time, a ranger told me that I should “tell the truth” about the park, and not paint the pretty picture the park management wants me to.

In general, all rangers complain about constantly having to build and set up outdoor furniture, fences and information boards. They say that their job should be to patrol the area and monitor wildlife and people. One ranger even quit because of this. He tells me that he expected to spend time outdoors, in the mountains and forests monitoring wildlife changes, flora and fauna. Yet instead, he spent most of his time at work setting up benches and fences:

I am not happy with the time we spend building furniture outside. I think that it would be better if each ranger did what they are good at. Ranger 1, for example, likes to talk to people and is good with all the bureaucracy stuff. I much prefer to spend time out in the wild. And I am good at biology and species recognition. They just do not seem to need these kinds of skills in the NPZ. [...] There is also a lot of corruption, money laundering and embezzlement in Serbiaforests, you know.

Several rangers complain about corruption in Serbiaforests. One ranger even tells me a story of how he and other rangers got blackmailed into joining an SNS party meeting in Belgrade in May 2023. Since “Serbiaforests” and NPZ are a state company, it was “expected” from them to show up in the capital city to support the SNS party and president Vucic. The pressure was exerted on them, and they were told that they must join. Out of fear of keeping their jobs and salaries, almost all rangers and employees went.

I was blackmailed into going to the SNS party meeting in Belgrade in May 2023 by my bosses, by people higher up than me. So were all the other employees of Serbiaforests and NPZ rangers.

He also says about the park:

This park is a cake, and everybody wants a piece.

7.9 Narratives told by the INCS and the Ministry for Nature Protection

Headquartered in Belgrade, INCS creates nature parks, national parks, nature reserves etc. all over Serbia. They decide about rules, laws, and regulations for numerous places they visit once or twice. Their “expert” team travels to the area, spends a couple of days or weeks there, and then feels competent to create a protected area based on the knowledge they have gathered during the visit. Of course, they combine their freshly gathered field knowledge and information with scientific articles and journals about the place and its biodiversity. However, they are still “outsiders” who know little about the place compared to the local people who have lived there for generations. One observation comment I made during an INCS field visit to the park is as follows:

The director of INCS was (for the first time) in the area and kept proclaiming how beautiful it is. It got me wondering, she had no idea about this region, its peoples or customs yet INCS and the state's role to protect NPZ had such a huge effect on the local people. This shows how removed INCS is from what is happening on the ground, from reality.

Nevertheless, INCS feels competent to manage and decide the faith of the NPZ area and its people, as well as to provide managers with “expert” supervision and assistance:

Expert supervision and assistance to managers will be directed towards regular monitoring of the state of nature in protected areas, especially in situations where various activities are undertaken that are estimated to threaten, damage or destroy natural assets or their parts. It is expected that through expert supervision and assistance in the conservation of natural resources and their sustainable use, cooperation with managers of protected areas, local communities, local self-government bodies, space and resource users, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders will improve.

Furthermore, they take it upon themselves to propose who the best manager for the position could be but leave it to the Ministry to give the final approval. In the 2015 study of Zlatibor, they proposed Serbiaforests as the manager, and wrote:

Since the state forests on this territory are one of the main natural values, and since this enterprise has the necessary material, technical and professional capacities, "Serbiaforests" is interested in becoming the manager of this protected natural resource.

Later, once I interviewed one of the INCS employees, she addressed the same topic by saying that:

Serbiaforests are big managers of protected areas in Serbia. Serbiaforests manage many and huge areas in Serbia already, so it was natural to give the management job to them. For bigger public goods, Serbiaforests are the managers in Serbia.

Neither the study nor the INCS employee mentioned anything about the possibility of giving the management to the local people, municipality, or some other suitable local organization. The town mayor says that he does not think that there ever was a possibility of local park governance and that even if there was such an opportunity, he does not think that the people would want to do it, because they would not want to engage in the idea of NPZ at all. He says:

We never even had the option [of municipality being the park manager] offered to us. They never talked about who would manage the nature park.

Moreover, the institute and ministry employees see themselves as very accommodating, and claim that they listened to all the local government wishes during the consultation process:

Ministry employee: *Again, I want to emphasize that the ministry accommodated 99% of the objections raised by the local self-government. Not just accommodated but accepted them as justified.*

INCS employee: *We were very accommodating and listened to the local government's wishes during the meetings in the public consultation phase spring 2017. There were complaints regarding the Gondola, those were addressed. We had a meeting in the municipal building where we agreed to take away a part of the second zone of protection just for the sake of Gondola cable car.*

INCS writes about their approach towards local people and their communication strategy in their Zlatibor study from 2015. In addition to considering a couple of local strategic development documents, INCS claims to have considered the “possible interests and needs of interested parties,

primarily the local population” by meeting with the local municipality representatives two times and by having one public discussion (which went very badly, as discussed in a previous analysis chapter).

Indeed, INCS and ministry representatives did admit that they should have met more often with the local people. They did so during the public discussion meeting when they realised how much the local people dislike the park:

I believe that we should have met more often with you in order to discuss this matter. Because what brings us here today, I think, and I believe you will understand, is something that should primarily benefit the local population and local self-government. Through our discussion today, we will focus on the possibilities that this regulation offers to the local self-government and the local population, rather than just prohibitions and limitations.

Furthermore, INCS (2017) touches upon a desire to “raise awareness about nature” and go back to the “untouched nature” of Zlatibor. In addition to raising public awareness, INCS suggests that Zlatibor should be a symbol of “untouched exciting nature”.

A particular task in the process of protecting the "Zlatibor" Nature Park, as well as in the successful implementation of the protection program, is to raise public awareness about the exceptional natural values of this area. This includes not only improving the awareness of the local population as a partner in protection, but also raising awareness among the wider public. [...] The return of Zlatibor as a symbol of untouched exciting nature in the citizens' consciousness will contribute to improving the socio-economic effects of protection.

This idea of wilderness and untouched nature coincides with the INCS’s antipathy towards tourism in the area. They claim:

Incorrectly conceived tourism development principles and excessive tourist presence in this area can lead to various types of pollution.

And the pollution they refer to here is the pollution of watercourses and soil due to the lack of wastewater treatment, increased concentration of exhaust gases and noise from motorized tourists, soil pollution due to people camping and burning fire outside of designated areas, uncontrolled waste disposal, as well as unplanned and massive construction of facilities,

transportation, and other infrastructure which, in their words “can lead to the disturbance of the original appearance and authentic values of the natural landscape”.

7.10 Local people’s proposed alternatives

Several locals think that life in the rural areas and Zlatibor specifically, would be better if control was returned to the local people, communities, and municipalities. Town mayor says that the municipality already has an approach to environmental protection, one that focuses on actions they could take to live better and improve their environment, such as; Building a sewage network with a separation system and a waste treatment plant for sanitary wastewater, building impermeable septic tanks in areas not covered by the sewage network, ensuring an appropriate waste collection and disposal system, developing organic production of healthy food, planning the development of "clean" technologies, protecting the area from pollution etc. (Cajetina Municipality, 2015). Yet, since they find themselves in a nature park they never asked for, local people hope that it is at least possible to revise the boundaries of the protection zones and change them.

Strict nature park rules are impeding local people's development, and especially tourism. Municipalities’ plan to invest in decentralization of tourism and touristic offers by promoting existing and future tourist sites outside the Zlatibor Town is not going so well. According to the town mayor, the municipality wants to be able to develop and utilize the countryside, but NPZ makes that quite difficult and almost impossible for many.

One spatial planner says that NPZ’s rule regarding no development and construction on agricultural land is not a good one and that it should be changed. People who have enough money are applying to convert their agricultural lands into construction lands, so that they may get an approval to construct their planned objects, but she says that:

The solution is not to convert agricultural, forest, or meadow land into construction land. It doesn't make sense in rural areas to have a lot of construction land. That's why the spatial plan of the municipality of Cajetina allows for construction on agricultural land.

Several other municipality employees have expressed similar opinions and suggested that questionnaires should have been sent to the local people as the first step of the NPZ spatial plan creation:

The way spatial plan making should be done should start with questionnaires sent to the local people first. It should be done like this, the old way. The local person knows the best, they live there. There are many smart people from the countryside.

In addition, local people and spatial planners complain that there are no proper checkups and assessments of the park's impact. In the last five years, nobody has come and asked the local people what they think about the park, how it works, and would they like to change anything. Just like they were not asked about anything in the beginning, they're not being asked about it today. This should be changed, and the local people should be consulted more often, one spatial planner believes.

7.11 Local people's approach to and view of non-human ecologies

Several locals expressed that they like "nature" and care about it a lot, pointing out the fact that they grew up with it and know how to appreciate it. For that reason, when asked about the park, many people tried to first explain that they like and care about nature in general but then went on to critique the park. It seems to me like many of them were conflicted and disliked critiquing the idea of a "nature park" as they seemed to think of themselves as nature loving and caring people. One local man expressed his sympathy towards nature parks as "a good idea", as long it is not in his village:

The concept of a nature park is indeed a good idea, but it should be located in a place where it truly represents a natural park, where there are animals like deer, rabbits, foxes, boars, and so on... and let it be a real nature park. What do I need a nature park here for?

Additionally, many people critique the municipality and the state for not doing enough when it comes to "ecology":

"As a country, we haven't made much progress in terms of ecology, unfortunately."

One local journalist claims that ecology as a topic in the municipal building comes down to whatever seems the most interesting and profitable to the politicians at the moment, whilst others critique the devastating effect mini hydropower plants had on a river and its surroundings in one of the villages inside the park. Most local people care about their environment a lot and complain about anything that affects biodiversity and the environment negatively.

For example, many local people showed an in-tuned understanding of climatic changes and environmental abnormalities in the region. Especially the older generations who remember how things used to be and compare it with today. One older woman says that the “land is poisoned” today (referring to the increased use of pesticides and fertilizers) and complains about the increasingly common weather fluctuations which affect plants and their growth. Similarly, a local hunter says that, due to the climatic changes, wild boars started giving birth later in the year compared to what they did before:

Older local woman: *We've lost spring here. There's no longer a proper spring. Also, due to our high altitude and the large mountains, autumn comes early. We get those sudden temperature drops early in autumn. And in spring, it [the cold period] lasts longer. You can't sow early. There's either constant rain or drought. For example, in our village, we didn't have rain for two months. If you don't have water, you have nothing.*

8. Discussion

8.1 Backdrop; rural exodus, lack of livelihood alternatives and unprofitable agriculture

Even prior to the park's creation, local people of the Zlatibor mountain area had a lot of problems to tackle. They complain about the prevalence of strong rural exodus combined with, and exacerbated by, the lack of livelihood alternatives. Young people are moving out to the cities, or possibly even abroad, whilst the older generations seem to be the only ones who stay, either because they cannot leave, or because of their love for their home village and the mountains.

The older people I've talked to notice and complain about the fact that the modern food system primarily benefits a small group of farmers and multinational corporations, which is also a general global trend (Galt, 2013). Only fifty years ago all local people in the area could have been considered farmers, as almost everybody had a couple of cows, sheep, goats, or some other animals. Now, as Pimbert et al. (2001) describes, we are seeing an increasing similarity between agriculture and other global sectors, with a shift towards large-scale, capital-intensive operations and market integration. This, unfortunately, results in the marginalization of small-to-mid-size peasantry and family farming, which threatens the livelihood security of rural producers. Local

people of Zlatibor indeed, complain that few people are left in the village who have animals, and who can take care of them, for that reason, there is no local food produce available for purchase anywhere in the village, and local people must travel to the nearest town and supermarket to buy their food. Comparing the current situation with the one back in the day when family and community held operations conducted most of the trading in the area, local people cannot help but concern themselves over the amount of control just a few firms have gained over the entire food system, both locally and globally (Pimbert et al., 2001).

Vandana Shiva (2004) discusses the challenges faced by Indian farmers due to government policies and globalization. She claims that one of the key issues includes government procurement centers not buying foodgrains from farmers and the lack of enforcement of Minimum Support Price (a government-backed strategy for agricultural pricing with a goal to establish a baseline income for farmers by defining a minimum price for their crops) on private traders, leading to distress sales. The influx of cheap, subsidized agricultural products from abroad and rising farm input costs are exacerbating the situation in India. Henceforth, one could argue that we are seeing a rather similar situation in Zlatibor, where people are complaining about not being able to keep up with the big companies and their prices as well. The older people remember the days when the Minimum Support Price (MSP) existed and describe how it worked. On the same day, every week, a person employed in a state purchasing company would come to the village and buy all of the milk, cheese, animals, etc. people wanted to sell. The older lady who tells me this story also says that the purchasing price rarely changed, and that you could be sure before you went to sell your produce how much you would earn.

Today, however, the situation in Zlatibor is different. The state is not buying food from local small-scale farmers, it is importing agricultural products from abroad and favoring big corporations instead. The subsidies for small-scale agriculture are, according to the local people, so small and irrelevant that almost nobody bothers to apply for them.

For things to get better, we need to address the issue of unfair agriculture prices and re-introduce MSP with its price floor for farmers and a ceiling for consumers to ensure accessibility (Shiva, 2004). We need to see changes in agricultural policies away from centralized resource systems controlled by a few corporations, towards more resilient and less exploitative systems of decentralized community owned cooperatives. Unquestionably, we need to rebuild the resilience of agriculture and rural communities (Galt, 2013). Because, if we do not, local people will keep

leaving the countryside and moving to the cities. Unprofitable agriculture combined with a lack of other job opportunities leaves the local people with very few options. Especially when it is combined with a nature park and all of the restrictions that come with it as well.

8.2 Zlatibor – a symbol of untouched and exciting nature for some and a home for others

As previously discussed in the literature review, the discourse of wilderness and human-nature dichotomy dominates most of the thinking regarding protected areas. And Nature Park Zlatibor is not an exception. In their 2015 study, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia writes:

A particular task in the process of protecting the "Zlatibor" Nature Park, as well as in the successful implementation of the protection program, is to raise public awareness about the exceptional natural values of this area. This includes not only improving the awareness of the local population as a partner in protection, but also raising awareness among the wider public. [...] The return of Zlatibor as a symbol of untouched exciting nature in the citizens' consciousness will contribute to improving the socio-economic effects of protection.

Furthermore, when referring to the potential development that could happen in area in the future, they fear the possibility that it could “lead to the disturbance of the original appearance and authentic values of the natural landscape”.

Henceforth, in addition to wanting to present Zlatibor as a “symbol of untouched exciting nature”, they want to “improve the awareness of the local population as a partner in protection”. Funnily enough, they cannot seem to decide if they want the area to be “untouched” or if they want to co-manage the area with the local people whose “awareness” must be “improved” according to the INCS. Either way, by saying that Zlatibor should become a symbol of untouched nature, they are disregarding the local people who currently own and manage approx. 50% of the park's lands. In addition, they seem to be saying that there is something wrong with the local people's awareness, since it needs to be “improved”. Simply because local people do not see their environments the same way INCS people do, does not mean that their thinking should be adjusted in accordance with the INCS narrative. This romanticized view of the region is a powerful driver for the NPZ narrative and nature conservation discourses in general. Local people would most likely never refer to their homes as “untouched exciting nature”, this is something only an outsider, who has not spent enough time in the area and with the local people, can say.

Nonetheless, with the Republic of Serbia and its Ministry of Environmental Protection continuously working towards EU integration and Natura 2000 (EU's network of protected areas) membership, we should consider the implications this may have on numerous areas and citizens of Serbia. As the deputy minister confirmed during the consultation meeting regarding the NPZ in 2017.

Although the 2020 goal was never reached, with currently 7,81% of Serbian territory being under protection, it is obvious that the government plans to intensify protected area creation and reach. But what kind of consequences could that have on the local people? Accumulation by dispossession is one possible outcome. By looking at the NPZ case and the impact it has on the people living in it, we may learn more about the possible impacts other protected areas could have across Serbia or even across the world.

8.3 Accumulation by dispossession

Accumulation by dispossession, one of the central topics in political ecology, can be used to explain and theorize issues over access to the environment as well as conflicts over exclusion from it in numerous protected areas, including NPZ. The people of Zlatibor complain that the park makes any kind of development impossible, limits their opportunities and imposes fees which many of them are not willing to pay.

The story of NPZ can also be connected to the term “Accumulation by Conservation”, a version of accumulation by dispossession coined by Buscher and Fletcher (2015). They argue that conservation is being used by powerful actors to harness “natural capital”, which is exactly what we are seeing in NPZ, with Serbiaforests referring to the forest as “capital, which must not be reduced” (Public Enterprise for Forest Management Serbiaforests, n.d.).

People perceive that the park limits what they can do on their land or in their village. They dislike the constant control and surveillance by the NPZ rangers who drive around the park almost every day. INCS and the Ministry for Nature Protection control who can get the permits to farm, hunt, forage, build, etc. Basically, all aspects of any kind of resource use or local development are in the centralized hands of the INCS and the ministry. However, the largest difficulty, according to locals, is that it has become extremely difficult and for some people even impossible to obtain construction permits. It is difficult to get permits to build tool sheds, barns, house extensions, and auxiliary objects next to the house, let alone a cabin or two with a couple of guest beds to possibly

rent out to tourists. The possibilities for the development of the local people have been seriously lowered, leaving people to struggle even more than they were prior to the park.

In addition, there has not been any compensation provided to the local people. Several local people have criticized the state for not compensating them for the lost income and for the park's detrimental economic impact. This is consistent with Li's (2010) contention that many conservation organizations make no commitment to relocating, compensating, or providing alternative livelihoods for individuals displaced by their projects. Rather, it appears that they expect these people to simply find another place to go and something else to do.

Even though nobody came to the local people's doors and said: "We are now taking your land, it is in the hands of the state, and we will manage it". Local people expressed several times that they feel like their land has been taken away from them, in a way. They asked me how it is possible for some stranger to come and just "take" their land and put it under protection. Locals are in disbelief that it is legal and possible to simply put someone's land under protection and include it inside a nature park, without even informing the local people prior to the event. Unfortunately, however, this is something that has been recorded numerous times across the world and got coined "green grabbing" (Fairhead et al., 2012b), previously discussed in the literature review chapter. Benjaminsen and Bryceson (2012) demonstrated how the dispossession of local people's land and resources can take place slowly and does not have to take the typical shape of land privatization. They showed how conservation spaces can legally and formally remain state or village territory, but it is the benefits derived from the land and natural resources that are "grabbed" from the local people.

One could argue that this kind of green grabbing is exactly what we are seeing in the NPZ, where the local people are being dispossessed of their resources and access to them even though the land is still formally theirs on paper. There is however a way for the local people to avoid being trapped in a "green grab", but that's only possible if they have enough money. By paying a lot of money to legally convert their land status from agricultural to development or construction land, people can ensure that their permits to develop, farm, build, etc. get an approval. Another way to avoid green grabbing, at least according to the local people, is by knowing someone "at the top" and by having the right connection with these people who can ensure that you get the permit for whatever you need.

Another classic trait of green grabbing is the accumulation of benefits and resources from the park by the more powerful actors (Benjaminsen and Bryceson, 2012). In the case of NPZ, these actors are the state and its forestry enterprise “Serbiaforests”. In addition to ensuring themselves the uncontrolled access to many of the forests in the area (50% of the land in the park is state-owned, and a huge part of that are forests), Serbiaforests collect yearly fees from numerous actors which they call “resource users” within the park. Moreover, local people sometimes end up canceling their events and planned gatherings due to the expensive fee demand from the park. Luckily, NPZ is not charging the few local people who managed to develop their touristic businesses prior to the park formation and have a couple of beds for overnight stays. However, according to the law, NPZ could charge them fees per bed, hence this could always change.

Some local people and the town mayor also believe in the possibility that someone will eventually come and “grab all of this” as one local man says it. That someone they refer to is usually a big multinational corporation or people close to the ruling SNS party, investors. People believe that the NPZ creation is simply their strategy to depopulate the area, forcing people to move to cities and other areas due to the lack of livelihood alternatives. Once the area has become free of people, the town mayor believes that the rules and protection boundaries will be lifted (i.e., the protected area will cease to exist) enabling these multinationals to exploit water, forests, minerals etc. He mentions the Finnish mining company “Afarak” which has exploration rights in one of the villages inside the park and believes that they, and other similar companies, can access unpopulated lands much easier than populated land, which is why it is so convenient to create a nature park first, get rid of all the people, and then conduct mining and resource extraction “in peace”. Indeed, this is not so hard to imagine, as it is even currently legal to mine in certain areas under the third protection regime in the park.

8.4 Ecotourism

Ecotourism can most definitely be identified as one of the ways Serbiaforests are benefiting from the park. Even though Serbiaforests themselves do not have hotels, restaurants, or any tourist businesses inside the park, a lot of the fees they collect from the park’s “resource users” come from tourist businesses such as the “Gondola” cable car municipal enterprise, “Zlatibor” tourist organization, the local Ski Center, etc...

In addition, Serbiaforests seem to be investing quite a bit in the touristic offers of the NPZ. Indeed, some part of the fee money they collect from the people and organizations is invested back in the park in the form of hiking trail improvements and outdoor furniture such as wooden benches, tables, and fences. Yet one could not say that this money goes back to the community, these investments are solely for the tourist's benefit. Serbiaforests are not investing in the development of overnight stay locations inside the park or in any of the local people's businesses. Possibly because they want to keep the park looking as “wild” and people-free as possible, for the tourist's eye to “enjoy”.

Indeed, this protected area seems to have been created by and for the city people. Zlatibor is full of tourists from Belgrade and Novi Sad (the second biggest city in Serbia), who want to escape the concrete jungles they live in and see the countryside for the weekend. They want to see “nature”, preferably as “wild” as possible. And Serbiaforests are the ones trying to make this possible. By limiting local people's development and by only investing in trails and benches, Serbiaforests are slowly but surely making sure that the NPZ truly becomes a people free zone.

Serbian tourists from the city are going from one extreme to another. Possibly because they live in such cramped spaces, concrete skyscrapers packed with people, streets full of noise and pollution they seek the exact opposite; open wide space, wild and empty, quiet. Fletcher and Neves (2012) have a name for this desire to escape from everyday life. They call it the “psychological fix”. As previously discussed in the literature review chapter, this capitalist fix enables tourists to escape and revitalize through tourism. Capitalism is classically solving its internal problem of people's psychological dissatisfaction with more capitalism, in the shape of protected area tourism (as previously discussed in Chapter 2.3 Accumulation by Dispossession).

And since the majority of the tourists who come to Zlatibor sleep in Zlatibor Town hotels and apartments owned by the elite and rich people from other parts of Serbia, little money goes into the pockets of the local people. Ecotourism is promoted by the Serbiaforests, but only in the form of a day trip. They envision people coming to stay in Zlatibor town, sleeping there and eating there, but then going on small daily hikes or drives out to the nature park area. That way, local people who live in the park benefit very little, if anything at all, from the tourism and ecotourism in the area. The story is not unlike the one recorded by Ghosh and Ghosh (2019) in Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve (SBR) in India, where they showed how tourism in the reserve area benefits only a small fraction of the local population. In their case, however, people could benefit from the

increase in land prices caused by the ecotourism boom and at least sell some of their land to earn some money. In the case of NPZ however, locals complain that nobody wants to buy land inside the park since the development permits are so hard to obtain. Not that selling land is the ideal solution, many NPZ locals would agree, but it is a way for some impoverished people in the area to earn some much-needed money. Especially if they have a lot of land, selling a small part of it to a tourist who seeks to build a cabin in the mountains is seen as a good way to earn money by many locals.

8.5 Centralization, experts, neoliberal conservation and tragedy of the commons

Serbiaforests are a highly centralized company with all the information and money, for example from the nature park fees, going through the headquarters in Belgrade. The company is highly top-down structured, with orders and information coming from above. The previously discussed sad story of a ranger who was basically “ordered” from, what he calls, “above” to join the SNS party meeting tells it all. Everybody must adhere to the wishes and orders from the person above them, quite possibly all the way up to the president and his close circle of friends.

In addition to this highly centralized set-up, Serbiaforests runs its units with a classic corporate governance managerial approach. Mechanization, innovation, and modernization are regarded as vital and even referred to be a "company's primary determination." This type of thinking leads to a conventional “scientific management” method, which, according to Shiva (1993), reduces forests to their commercial timber value while ignoring biological variety and the myriad ways local inhabitants use them for food, grazing, fuel, and other uses. Indeed, when talking to the NPZ management employees and Serbiaforests forest-engineers it is clear that the focus is put on the “scientific forestry” techniques and methods, rather than on the local people use and knowledge of the forests.

The Institute for Nature Conservation also talks solely in terms of scientific management, expert knowledge and expert supervision. Their teams of “experts” travel to an area that is to be protected, spend a couple of days or weeks there, and then somehow feel competent to create a protected area based on the knowledge they have gathered during the short visit. Furthermore, the INCS “experts” conduct visits to their parks every five years, to make sure that everything is running smoothly and help if there are any issues. Yet these experts are complete outsiders to the area who know close to nothing about the local people and the ways they manage their

surroundings and the environment. I was lucky enough to be present at the first “expert supervision” visit to Zlatibor in 2023, since it has gone five years since 2017, and saw firsthand the ignorance and unawareness many of the INCS “experts” had of the area. An INCS employee with a rather high position in the company exclaimed at one point during the supervision that she had never been to Zlatibor before and had no idea how beautiful it was, saying that she simply must come back again. And those are the people who decide whether the nature park is working as it should? People who decide the faith of the local villagers? People who have never once been there before.

Birkes and Folk (1998) critique such “expert” driven Western science and scientific method. This type of science is, however, employed as the foundation of resource management by centralized bureaucracies all over the world. It ends up marginalizing the local communities, their traditional ecological knowledge, and experiences. Their environmental awareness, usually based on experimental learning and generational knowledge, is completely disregarded and seen as secondary to theoretical scientific knowledge. And I would argue that this is exactly what we see unfolding in the NPZ. Local people and their knowledge have been completely ignored and undermined, for the sake of neoliberal conservation.

Neoliberal values such as economic growth, efficiency, and effectiveness are at the core of Serbiaforests management tactics. By referring to the forests as a “natural resource”, managed according to the principles of “sustainable forest management” and “sustainable yield” Serbiaforests, like many other global organizations, result in an almost exclusive focus on “nature” as “ecosystem services” (Turnhout, 2018). Seeing our environment in terms of “services” and “resources” then, in turn, reinforces the idea that forests and all other non-human entities are there to be exploited and there for humans to take maximum advantage of. This is made clear by the way NPZ employees and documents talk about forests; they call them “profit centers” and stress that the “economic function of forests” is necessary to achieve positive business results.

Furthermore, Serbiaforests blame forest destruction on individual local people and on their “unregulated management”. In line with Hardin's (1968) "Tragedy of the Commons", Serbiaforests and NPZ employees blame individuals for pursuing only their selfish interests, “not caring” and “destroying everything”. They use this argument, possibly to justify their heavy involvement in the management of natural resources in the area, and to rationalize their “land grab”. Combined,

the discourse on wilderness and the tragedy of the commons, make for an excellent narrative as to why the region ought to be “protected”.

8.6 Participation

Participation, or the lack thereof, has shown to be another major issue in the NPZ case. In their 2015 Zlatibor Study INCS writes about their approach towards local people, their communication strategy, and participation. They claim to have considered all the “possible interests and needs of interested parties, primarily the local population” by meeting with the local municipality representatives two times and by having one public discussion. In addition, they claim to have consulted a couple of local documents regarding the planned future development of the area. Moreover, the institute and ministry employees see themselves as very accommodating, claiming that they listened to all the local government's wishes and concerns during the consultation process. They say they even changed some of the proposed park borders in order to accommodate municipal plans to build a cable car in the park area.

Yet this is not how the local people and the municipality see the situation. The town mayor complains about the lack of meetings and consultation with the municipality. Two meetings were clearly not enough, and one public discussion which went terribly bad is not cutting it, he feels, and many locals agree. Local people felt a lack of participation, lack of consultation and communication. They feel like they were not included in the 2015 study and that their knowledge was regarded as irrelevant. The public debate, which started with fifteen minutes of solely information sharing and PowerPoints by the INCS, was maybe supposed to end with constructive conversation between the actors involved, but quickly turned into a shouting match due to the discontent and angry locals. Instead of hearing what the locals had to say, however, INCS and ministry reps decided to get up and leave. Never scheduling another public meeting again.

This kind of participation would possibly be called “passive participation” by Pretty (1995). Out of the general seven participation types he sees organizations interpreting the word “participation”, passive participation is at the bottom of the list, just above manipulative participation, meaning that people have very little, if any, power. He defines passive participation as: *“People participating by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by administration or project management without any listening to people’s responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.”* Indeed,

in our case, local people only participated by showing up at a meeting where they were told what has been decided and what happened through a PowerPoint presentation. The information being shared was unilateral, coming from the INCS and municipality employees (what Pretty calls external professional), without any listening to the people's responses even though they protested heavily. The meeting was so one sided that the NPZ representatives could just get up and leave after twenty minutes, choosing not to engage with the local people anymore.

According to Arenstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation, the level of participation seen at NPZ could possibly be called "tokenism", and fluctuate between step 3 of the ladder, informing, and step 4, consultation. Citizens lack the ability to ensure that the powerful will listen to their concerns, and there is very little, if any, follow-through by those in control of the case. Step 3, informing, describes occasions where there is a clear one-way information flow—from authorities to citizens—with no mechanism for feedback and little negotiating leverage. People have a small window of opportunity to influence anything, especially if the information is shared with them at the late stages of the planning process, as was the case in NPZ. Step 4 also describes what could have been observed in Zlatibor, consultation without assurance that any of the concerns and ideas will actually be considered. Local people complain about nothing happening since the public discussion meeting in 2017. Some hoped for a second meeting where they could voice their concerns properly, others sent letters to which they never received answers to. The public meeting was arranged, went terribly wrong for the park people due to the local people's protests, and that was the last attempt to consult or include local people in any kind of participation by the NPZ and its management.

Local people have since boycotted the second round of meetings in 2018, demonstrating that they do indeed have some form of power cards up their sleeves. They can always choose not to participate and to refuse to engage in any kind of discussion with the NPZ. As Østmo and Law (2018) show, refusing to entertain the powerful can be seen as a tenacious act of defiance and resistance.

9. Conclusion: Could Convivial Conservation be the Solution?

There is a need for something different in the world of nature conservation, but also, more specifically, in the Zlatibor area. Local people are clearly discontented with the way NPZ manages the park, imposes strict rules, and controls the region. They ask, who are you “protecting” Zlatibor from? Knowing quite well that it is themselves and other people that the “nature” is being protected from.

As previously discussed, convivial conservation proposes a radical shift in the world of nature conservation. Here I will attempt to connect the five elements which are presented as the keys of convivial conservation vision (Buscher and Fletcher, book) with the NPZ case and see how the possible shift towards convivial conservation might look like in Zlatibor.

The first element of the convivial conservation vision focuses on changing societies' views of protected areas and moving “from protected to promoted areas”. Whilst the second element concentrates on a similar issue, that is, moving beyond “saving nature” to “celebrating both human and nonhuman nature”. Instead of protecting nature “from” humans, we ought to promote nature “for, to and by humans” the authors argue. Promoted areas would be the places where people are considered welcome, not shut out and expelled for the sake of exploitation and a nonhuman landscape look. However, in order for this change to happen, there needs to be a shift in thinking, from productivity and exploitation to conviviality. Buscher and Fletcher (book) define conviviality here as: *“the building of long-lasting, engaging and open-ended relationships with nonhumans and ecologies”*.

For Zlatibor, this kind of change would possibly result in a fundamental change in the way the park is being managed. Serbiaforests are running a tight ship focused on economic growth, exploitation, and productivity. Instead of focusing on building and improving the relationship between humans and nonhumans, Serbiaforests are doing the exact opposite, they are destroying the relationship and contributing to the human vs. nature discourse. Many local people in the area, especially the older ones, remember the times when almost every house in the village was self-sufficient, and when the community organized to manage the village together. The community would decide how to handle both human and non-human ecologies. And since the humans depended on the non-humans and on the environment around them, the chances are, they made sure that the management of these areas was sustainable. The older people I’ve talked to remember making their own clothes from hemp and flour from buckwheat, they produced and used local

products by themselves for almost everything they needed. Nowadays, however, the people who manage the park have forgotten how to truly “live with” non-human nature and with conviviality in their souls.

The third element, labeled “from touristic voyeurism to engaged visitation” says that we need to transform how we interact with, perceive, and experience non-human nature. We need to part ways with commodified tourism experiences influenced by capitalism and make way for much more meaningful and possibly long-term engagement by the visitors. The fourth element of convivial conservation focuses on a similar issue, i.e., on getting rid of the “spectacle of nature” discourse critiqued by Igoe (2010). The issue here is that people commodify and consume the “image of nature” whilst they alienate it from the relationships that produced it (Igoe, 2010).

Currently, tourism in Zlatibor is dominated by short-term voyeuristic tourism, primarily for the elite and the privileged. As previously discussed, most people sleep in fancy hotels and modern apartments on the outskirts of the park, only to visit the park for a couple of hours during their visit. They do not engage with or talk to the local people that much, and their focus is far from issues regarding the ecological and social justice of the area. This needs to change. The local municipality of Cajetina did have some plans to decentralize tourism (i.e., out of the Zlatibor Town and into the villages and mountains) prior to the park creation, but now, the town mayor says, those plans are impossible to execute due to the strict development restrictions imposed by the NPZ. Such decentralization could be a step in the right direction as it would enable tourists to spend more time with the local people in the villages and learn more about their lives during the visit. During this hopefully, long term stay, the people would not fall prey to the “spectacle of nature” and would instead learn about the relationships between humans, non-humans and environments which produce the socio-ecological landscape they see. Yet, for this to start happening, NPZ needs to loosen its reign on restrictions and let local people develop their own businesses. Of course, there is a danger here that the more powerful actors or investors from the “outside” would make use of the looser rules and restrictions and invest in large scale apartment or cabin development, but that could be regulated.

Last but not least, the final element of the convivial conservation vision entails moving away from the “privatized expert technocracy” rule towards “common democratic engagement”. What the conservation revolution needs, Buscher and Fletcher (2020) argue, is the push towards a much more democratic view of nature as commons, rather than nature as capital, economic growth

and GDP. The top-down management founded on technical professional and expert judgment, such as we are seeing in the NPZ, alienates the local people and their knowledge.

In accordance with this, several Zlatibor locals think that life in the rural areas across Serbia and Zlatibor more specifically, would be better if control and management were returned to the local people, communities, and municipalities. The town mayor says that the municipality already has an approach to environmental protection and a plan which focuses on actions they could take to live better and improve their environment. Instead of focusing on a broad global definition of sustainability and conservation, the municipality created a localized plan for sustainable development focusing on investments in local agriculture, rural development, waste management, and decentralized tourism. Both municipality and the local people see “conservation” as an improvement of people's relationship with the non-human world and the ecologies surrounding them. Conservation, to the local people, are actions they can take to improve local environmental management. Conservation is not something that should impede local people's development. In fact, it should improve it.

The case of Zlatibor Nature Park is unfortunately just a drop in the ocean of similar conservation stories. Researchers have shown, time and time again, that conservation and nature protection strategies which dominate the world today, clearly and simply do not work. Local and indigenous people from all over the world have been reaching out and conveying their messages of dispossession and marginalization by conservation organizations for years. Yet, on a global scale, very little has been done. Almost nothing has changed in years. As long as capitalism is the global economic system, it will be hard (and quite likely impossible) to transition towards sustainable futures for everyone. As long as “increasing capital” is the central focus of our economies and “profitability” dominates the discussions around management tables, the exploitation of “natural resources” will continue. Moreover, problems such as those we see in Nature Park Zlatibor will not cease happening.

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11. Appendix

Appendix files start on the following page.

Appendix 1 Information Letter (English Version)

Are you interested in taking part in the research project:

” Political Ecology: Exploring Human – Nonhuman Nature Relations and Interactions in Zlatibor Nature Park Serbia”?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to explore the political ecology as well as the potential for convivial conservation and convivial modes of living in the Zlatibor Nature Park (ZNP) region. In this letter I will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

In this thesis I will research the potential for conviviality in the Zlatibor Nature Park (ZNP) region as well as political ecology issues regarding the park and its creation. The purpose of this study is to critically explore the potential for convivial modes of living in ZNP. This will be done by examining existing human-nonhuman nature relations as well as current conflict and coexistence patterns in the region.

The collected personal data will only be used for the purposes of this master thesis research.

Who is responsible for the research project?

Norwegian University of Life Sciences is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You are being asked to participate because of your particular role in ZNP. Your views and opinions about the park and nature in general are important.

What does participation involve for you?

If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve that you agree to be interviewed by me and possibly observed in a “participant observation” setting. The interview will take approx. 60 minutes, and includes questions about the ZNP, your connection to nature, your political opinions and how you see nature management in the region. Your answers will be recorded electronically and stored privately for further research analysis.

I will also collect information about the participant from other sources – such as registers, records/journals, educational records, other project participants. For example, I will also ask other actors to provide information about you in an interview. It will be information regarding ZNP and nature management. I will record the interview and will take notes during the interview.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how I will store and use your personal data

I will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. I will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

Only me and my thesis supervisor, T.A. Benjaminsen, will have access to your personal data.

No unauthorized persons will be able to access the personal data. I will replace your name and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data. I will store the data on a research server, locked away and encrypted.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end in June 2023. The personal data, including any digital recordings, will be anonymised at the end of the project.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives me the right to process your personal data?

I will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- NMBU via Tijana Malesevic (+47 46654394, +381 616411271, tijana.malesevic@nmbu.no) and Tor A. Benjaminsen (t.a.benjaminsen@nmbu.no, +47 67231353)
- Our Data Protection Officer: Hanne Pernille Gulbrandsen (+47 40281558, personvernombud@nmbu.no)
- Data Protection Services, by email: (personvertjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely, Tijana Malesevic

Project Leader
(Researcher)

Appendix 1 Information Letter (Serbian Version)

Да ли желите да учествујете у истраживачком пројекту:
” Политичка екологија: Истраживање односа и интеракција између човека и природе у региону парка природе Златибор, Србија” ?

Ово је упит о учешћу у истраживачком пројекту чији је основни циљ истраживање политичке екологије, као и потенцијала за суживот човека и природе у региону парка природе Златибор (ППЗ). У овом документу ће вам бити дате информације о сврси овог пројекта и о вашим правима.

Сврха пројекта

У овом раду ћу истражити потенцијал за суживот у региону парка природе Златибор (ППЗ), као и питања политичке екологије у вези са парком и његовим проглашењем. Сврха ове студије је да критички истражи потенцијал за суживот и политичку екологију у ППЗ. Ово ће бити урађено испитивањем постојећих односа између човека и природе, као и тренутних сукоба интереса у региону.

Прикупљени лични подаци ће се користити само за потребе овог мастер рада.

Ко је одговоран за истраживачки пројекат?

Норвешки универзитет природних наука (Norwegian University of Life Sciences) је институција одговорна за пројекат.

Зашто се од вас тражи да учествујете?

Од вас се тражи да учествујете због ваше улоге у ППЗ. Ваши ставови и мишљења о парку и о природи генерално су битни и потребни извршиоцу рада како би се написао овај рад.

Ваше учешће

Ако одлучите да учествујете у пројекту, то ће подразумевати да пристанете да вас ја интервјуишем и евентуално посматрам („посматрања учесника“). Интервју ће трајати од 60 до 120 минута, и укључује питања о ППЗ, вашој вези са природом, вашим политичким ставовима и вашем виду о управљању природом у Златиборском региону. Ваши одговори ће, уколико се сложите, бити снимљени електронски и сачувани приватно за даљу анализу и истраживање.

Такође бих прикупљала информације о вама из других извора – као што су комунални регистри, научни радови и други људи. На пример, можда ћу замолити друге учеснике овог рада да дају информације и њихово мишљење о вама. Снимаћу аудио запис интервјуа и водићу белешке током интервјуа.

Учешће је добровољно

Учешће у пројекту је добровољно. Ако одлучите да учествујете, ви можете повући своју сагласност у било ком тренутку без навођења разлога. Све информације о вама ће тада бити у потпуности анонимизоване. Неће бити негативних последица за вас ако одлучите да не учествујете или ако касније одлучите да се повучете из истраживања.

Ваша лична приватност – како ћу чувати и користити ваше личне податке

Ваше личне податке ћу користити само у сврхе наведене у овом информативном писму. Ваше личне податке ћу обрађивати поверљиво и у складу са законима о заштити података (Општа уредба о заштити података и Закон о личним подацима - Норвешка).

Само ја и мој ментор, Т.А. Бењаминсен, ћемо имати приступ вашим личним подацима.

Ниједно неовлашћено лица неће имати приступ вашим личним подацима. Заменићу ваше име и контакт податке шифром. Списак имена, контакт података и одговарајућих шифри биће сачувани одвојено од осталих прикупљених података. Чуваћу ове податке на истраживачком серверу, закључане и шифроване.

Шта ће се десити са вашим личним подацима на крају истраживачког пројекта?

Планирано је да пројекат буде завршен у јуну 2023. Лични подаци, укључујући све дигиталне снимке, биће у потпуности анонимизовани на крају пројекта.

Ваша права

Све док можете бити идентификовани у прикупљеним подацима, имате право да:

- приступите личним подацима који се тичу вас
- захтевајте да се ваши лични подаци избришу
- захтевајте да се нетачни лични подаци о вама исправе/промене
- примите копију ваших личних података, и да
- пошаљите жалбу службенику за заштиту података или Норвешком органу за заштиту података у вези са обрадом ваших личних података

Шта ми даје право да обрађујем ваше личне податке?

Право да обрађујем ваше личне податке је дато на основу вашег пристанка и вашег потписа овог документа.

На основу споразума са Норвешким универзитетом природних наука, Норвешка служба за заштиту података је оценила да је обрада личних података у овом пројекту у складу са законима о заштити података.

Где можете да сазнате више о заштит података и о вашим правима?

Ако имате питања о пројекту, или желите да остварите своја права, контактирајте:

- Норвешки универзитет природних наука преко Тијане Малешевић (+47 46654394, +381 616411271, tijana.malesevic@nmbu.no) и Тор А. Бењаминсен (t.a.benjaminsen@nmbu.no, +47 67231353)
- Службеницу за заштиту података: Хане Перниле Гулбрандсен (+47 40281558, personvernombud@nmbu.no)
- Услуге заштите података, путем е-поште: (personvertjenester@sikt.no) или путем телефона: +47 53211500.

С поштовањем, вођа пројекта и истраживач,
Тијана Малешевић

Appendix 2: Consent form (English Version)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project “*Political Ecology: Exploring Human – Nonhuman Nature Relations and Interactions in Zlatibor Nature Park, Serbia*” and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I henceforth give consent:

- to participate in an interview
- to participate in participant observation
- for researcher to use non-participant observation information about me in the project
- for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised (only relevant for people with recognisable local roles, i.e., the municipality mayor)
- for other research participants to provide information and opinions about me and that information be included in the research
- for uptakes of interview audio recordings

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. June 2023

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix 2: Consent form (Serbian Version)

Образац сагласности

Добио/добила сам и разумео/разумела информације о пројекту *”Политичка екологија: Истраживање односа и интеракција између човека и природе у региону парка природе Златибор, Србија”* и добио/добила сам прилику да постављам питања у вези мог учества.

Из тог разлога дајем сагласност:

- да учествујем у интервјуу
- да вођа пројекта снима аудио запис у току интервјуа
- да други учесници овог истраживања дају информације и/или њихова мишљења о мени које касније може бити укључено у завршни рад
- да учествујем у научном „посматрању учесника“
- да информације о мени буду објављене у раду тако да сам препознатљив/ препознатљива – без анонимности/шифровања информација (релевантно за људе са препознатљивим локалним улогама, као на пример: председник општине, управник парка природе Златибор, министри итд.)

Дајем сагласност да се моји лични подаци обрађују до завршетка пројекта, јуна 2023.

Потпис учесника

Датум

Appendix 3: Results

Research participant	Gender
Cajetina municipality mayor	M
Municipality spatial planning employee nr. 1	F
Municipality spatial planning employee nr. 2	F
Municipality spatial planning employee nr. 3	F
Spatial planner (municipality temporary employee)	M
Local man nr.1	M
Local village representative nr.1	M
Local village representative nr.2	M
Local man nr. 2 (a hunter)	M
Local man nr. 3	M
Local village representative nr. 3	M
Local village representative nr. 4 (municipality employee)	F
Local man nr. 4	M
Local man nr. 5	M
Local woman nr. 1	F
Local village representative nr. 5	M
Local man nr. 6 (a journalist)	M
Local man nr. 7	M
Local woman nr. 2 (lawyer)	F
Local woman nr. 3	F
Local woman nr. 4	F
Biology professor	M
Local woman nr. 5	F
Local woman nr. 6	F
Biology teacher, president of the NGO "Circle of Zlatibor"	F
Local man nr. 8	M
Park ranger nr.1	M
Park ranger nr. 2	M
NPZ management employee nr. 1	M
INCS employee	F
NPZ management employee nr. 2	F
NPZ management employee nr. 3	M

RQ1 Local People's lives and perceptions of the NPZ

RQ1sub1 Lives and land use practices: What are some of the most commonly brought up issues by the local people regarding their lives in the NPZ area?

Participant	What are some of the most commonly brought up issues by the local people regarding their lives in the NPZ area?	Code
Local village representative nr.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “These are elderly households. You'll see it when you go there. They have no idea that their land is under protection within a nature park. They keep sheep, they have something. The park authorities tolerate them if they plant something. You know what the point is for the state, they know that it's dying out, if not in 15 years, then in 20. If we didn't charge them now, we will in the future. These are long-term plans.” • “People from this rural area, many of them have never traveled beyond Cajetina and Uzice in their entire lives.” 	<p>Elderly households</p> <p>The villages on the Zlatibor mountain are dying out</p> <p>Modest lives, little traveling</p>
Local man nr. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Life in rural areas is difficult everywhere.” 	<p>Difficult life</p>
Local woman nr. 2 (lawyer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The local people are the ones who lose the most. Their rights are limited. That is politics.” 	<p>Politics = local people always suffer the most</p>
<p>A conversation between:</p> <p>Local man nr. 4, Local woman nr. 3, and Local woman nr.4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LM4: “People can only survive here on a small pension and nothing else. They have taken everything from us.” (Field note: Here he alludes to the absence of viable ways to make a living in the region. There are no jobs, no subsidies for small-scale farming.) • LW3: “In summer we have people to socialize with, yes, but in the winter, no. There's only one old lady, two maybe. Everyone is getting older. When one partner passes away, another one remains.” • LM4: “I have a monthly pension of 12,000 units and my father is in need of care, but I don't have access to any assistance from the state, monetary or any.” • LM4:” People cannot organize to make a change because these are all elderly households, older people. My mother is 75 years old; everyone is over 70. There are not ten or fifteen of us who are younger. I am 60 years old. The younger ones have all moved to Uzice, Cajetina, the cities.” • LW3: “And now, if you focus on livestock farming, you don't have a market where you can sell it. You don't have a price.” • LW4: “Only thieving business here. My husband has been bedridden for 15-16 years. He hasn't been able to walk on his own for 3 years. They put him 	<p>Small pensions</p> <p>No ways to make a living, no jobs, no subsidies for small-scale farming</p> <p>Only elderly people left in the village</p> <p>Small pension income</p> <p>Difficult to make a change, or organize, because everyone is old</p> <p>Young people leave to cities</p> <p>Small-scale farming is not profitable</p> <p>Thinks the system is full of thieves</p>

	<p>through the home care commission 3 times and they rejected him. Look at how sick he is and how they reject him.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LW3: “You see all these houses here, back in the day nobody had less than two cows. Now nobody here has any. There is nobody in the surroundings who has cows. We don't have milk and cheese to buy here in the village.” • LM4: “There are no people, you can't have that when it's all elderly households.” • LW3: “We know how much our grandparents struggled and worked to buy these plots of land, and we appreciate that. But many people don't know that. Many would sell their own mother for money.” • LM4: “The youth are only interested in money.” • LW3: “Now it's all about money...” • LW4: “Well, damn it, money is temporary. You get it and then you lose it.” • LM4: “Now it's all about whether you have money, what car you drive, and how you dress.” • LM4: “It's all regulated with the big supermarkets and manufacturers. The small-scale producers are going bankrupt.” • LW4: “Imported meat, imported this, imported that, everything is imported. And our domestic products are all going to waste.” • LM4: “Well, look at the “Zlatiborac” meat factory down there, there's nothing Zlatibor about it. You know, these used to be Zlatibor's meat products. Everything was sourced locally. There used to be a slaughterhouse in Cajetina that was a world-class facility. Now they bring in meat from Argentina, Norway, Germany, Belgium, who knows where. They get it processed and ready-made, and who knows under what conditions...” • LW3: “If the “Zlatiborac” factory were to buy livestock from all the villages in Zlatibor, they wouldn't have enough for daily production.” 	<p>Cannot get help for her sick husband</p> <p>Almost nobody in the village has cows anymore</p> <p>They cannot buy local cheese and milk in the village</p> <p>Critiquing the money chasing culture and materialism in Serbia</p> <p>Believe that people lost quality values</p> <p>Critiquing the market and imported products Small-scale production is virtually impossible</p> <p>Meat that used to be sourced locally is now imported from all around the world</p>
<p>Local man nr. 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I went to Uzice in 1977. I lived there until I retired, and when I retired, I came back here. I built this cottage myself. I escaped from the crowds, from the city. I've had enough of the hustle and bustle. I returned here and planned to live here, to rent out and engage in tourism. However, we are tied down here, we can't do anything. We don't have any living conditions here. We don't have crops, orchards, or any livestock.” • “People can only live here on a small pension, nothing else. There's nothing else to do here, there's no way to make a living. The only option is if someone sells a piece of land and uses that. Us older folks who returned to the village, once we're gone, it's over. This will pass into their ownership. So, our children, grandchildren, won't benefit from this at all.” • “I read in the Zlatibor newspaper that 70 hectares of land were given to some monasteries. We've had enough monasteries, let us work, let's have factories, and let our children find employment so they don't have to go abroad. Let us focus on that. Why does Zlatibor need more churches?” 	<p>Worked in a nearby town Came back to the village after retirement</p> <p>Bad living conditions</p> <p>No way to make a living</p> <p>Selling land – an option to earn some money</p> <p>Once older folks die there will be no one left in the village</p> <p>Wants work possibilities in the village, factories, employment</p>

<p>Local man nr. 6 (journalist)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I understand people who don't want to sell [their land parcels]. But let’s look at one thing. Take someone who is 60-65 years old, receiving a pension of 200-300 euros, and suddenly someone offers them a million euros for their property. So, their children are either in Belgrade or somewhere else, doing jobs, engaged in something. I mean, that amount solves most of your problems in the long run.” “Zlatibor is Las Vegas of Serbian tourism.” 	<p>Selling land can be a simple solution to many of the life's problems locals have</p> <p>Most of the locals' kids live in Uzice, Belgrade or maybe Cajetina</p>
<p>Local woman nr. 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Nowadays, those who don't know anything are the ones complaining. I live on a pension of 13,000, and I can live comfortably. I've never had it easier than now. My son graduated from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering on time, but he can't make ends meet with his salary. However, I can manage with my 13,000 because I don't have to pay for rent, water, bills... With that amount, I can live and even save for a trip so that my son can afford it.” “I have two brothers and a sister. My younger brother, born in 1956, says it may be a crisis now, but he says neither does he walk barefoot in "konduras" (traditional footwear made from car tires), nor do I or my children. Nowadays, I'm surprised when I see someone walking. When I see someone walking, I think they are crazy, they are crazy... walking on foot. Nobody walks anywhere, neither wants to nor can, and there is no time for that. The younger generation only looks at life in terms of self-interest and time. Nothing else.” 	<p>Has only 100-euro pension; says she can manage because she does not have to pay rent, water, and some other bills most people pay</p> <p>She was very poor when she was young</p> <p>Thinks times are better now than they were before</p>
<p>My fieldnotes/ research diary notes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I drove around with park ranger nr.2. We visited two places. First, we visited a house of a nice older man and lady, his daughter, who prepared cheese rolls for us. She told us a bit about her brother, who works as a tree logger (for Serbiaforest among others probably). She described it as a dangerous job, which is also very straining on the body. Serbiaforest employees do not do this part of the job, they just arrive at a forest, mark the trees to be cut, and arrive weeks or days later to collect the fallen trees. These kinds of strenuous jobs are usually done by the local people, and often the ones with a lower economic standard. Secondly, we visited a very old man who lived alone in a very old traditional house near Cigota mountain. He told about the man who was stealing his trees in his forest, and asked park ranger nr.2 for some help. He also talked about how he moved to that house when he was young with his wife. This man was over 80 years old, and obviously lives a very modest life in his tiny wooden cottage in the village. He walked slowly but offered us water, drinks, coffee and honey. His son, a doctor, lives in a nearby town. And visit the village from time to time, sending money to his father. The old man says that he does not live on the mountain during the coldest months of the year. In the winter, he stays with his son in a city. 1st of September: I walked around the Gostilje village. The quiet village looked quite empty and deserted. There were abandoned houses everywhere with huge orchards and small gardens nobody seems to tend to anymore. In the 	<p>Friendly hosts</p> <p>Her brother cuts trees for Serbiaforests</p> <p>All three of them were older people</p> <p>Very old man, 80/90+</p> <p>His son lives in a city and sends him money</p> <p>Abandoned houses</p>

	air, there was a feeling of nostalgia and of a vibrant life that once was, but no longer is.	Unkept orchards and wildflowers
Municipality spatial planning employee nr. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I wonder, then, how are people in rural areas supposed to make a living? Additionally, predominantly older people live in these rural areas.” 	Lack of livelihood alternatives
Local man nr. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “And here I returned and planned to live, to rent out and engage in tourism. However, we are tied here, unable to do anything. We don't have any conditions for living. There are no crops, no orchards, no livestock farming here.” “There is nothing else to do here [other than tourism], there is no means of livelihood.” 	<p>No ways to make a living Nothing to do</p> <p>Is tourism the only option?</p>
Local village representative nr. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Most people from Rudine village part outside the park area have money because they sold some land for development and tourism, maybe they themselves built Airbnb cottages.” 	Selling land parcels + tourism = only way of earning income?
Local village of Jablanica monthly meeting notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are around 600 people living in the village Jablanica today. The school is open and there are around 15 students in it. But today there are many unmarried men (single people) in the village, and much less kids than before. They talked about some important village issues such as: need for more roads, need for more electric lightning installations, need for water pipes to reach more homes. They ask: from what can the village live now? No industry, no factories, agriculture is not profitable... They then mention magnesium ore findings all over Zlatibor and especially near Jablanica. They think it is important for the world economy and will become more and more sought after. They say that this here is the largest magnesium concentration in all of Balkans. They think mining is a good opportunity and say that it “pollutes the environment the least”. But they think it hard to find Serbians willing to work in a mine. But things that could help, they say, would be better infrastructure, profitable small-scale agriculture, and factories and places to hire people. There are no more wood makers, carpenters, painters, plumbers left in Zlatibor villages, they complain. Many people in the group support traditional crafts and ways of knowing. One person told me about the “pevanje izvika”, a traditional way of singing which tells stories and conveys historical knowledge from the past. He still does it and participates in traditional knowledge festivals. They also told me about the few remaining “guslar”, people who play the traditional one string instrument. 	<p>Many single men in the village</p> <p>People need more roads, electricity, water pipes</p> <p>Lack of ways to make a living</p> <p>Locals show some support towards the possible mining extraction sites – job opportunity</p> <p>Asking for infrastructure, profitable farming, and factories/jobs</p> <p>Show strong support towards traditional crafts and knowledge</p> <p>They keep the traditions alive and social gatherings lively</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are responsible for a very old wooden church nearby, where they hold huge gatherings every 14th of January for Serbian New Year. They organize village skills competition every year called “Viseboj” in which people compete in traditional skills such as ox wood pulling, wood cutting and much more. • The local veterinarian says that the government provides some small amount of money, subsidies, for livestock. (Note: but only if you have registered your home as an agricultural homestead, which costs a lot of money, so the subsidies you get are not worth it. Not worth spending the money on registration. He says) • “The state helps with subsidies only to those who have many cows. They thought of every way to destroy small-scale producers.” • Also, talk about EU measures – You must tag each cow you have. If you do not mark it, you do not get any subventions. Usually, those who have cows are older people, 50 +, they do not have cards or bank accounts, you must have one to get the subvention. Marking cows is so expensive that it doesn’t pay off to mark only to get a small subvention. • “It is difficult for older people to have cows and other cattle; it requires physical abilities which old people don’t have anymore.” They say. • One person is the local veterinarian who has been working for fifty years as one, he has crossed the hills and mountains of Zlatibor numerous times and has been to every village to look after animals. He says that when he started working, so for more than 50 years ago, around the 1970s, there were many more animals in each village. And every Wednesday he says, people from the outside cities and countries would come to buy animals. So, agriculture focused on animals was profitable. • He says that he thinks that 1955 was the last year with the highest number of students in the generation. There were 76 students in the school that generation. • “It is not possible for things to go back to how they once were, for the village to come to life again, there is no way. We have passed the limit.” • “50-60 years ago, each house had a couple of oxen, cows, a horse, goats or sheep. Vegetables they had corn, squash, beans, and cabbage. They had plums, apples and other fruit as well. There were around 50 water mills at least for flour making in the village as well.” 	<p>Good example of local people's initiative (waterfall too)</p> <p>Small and irrelevant subsidies</p> <p>Larger producers have more benefits than small-scale ones</p> <p>Older households cannot have many animals or even a single cow- too physically exhausting for them</p> <p>50-70 years ago, Zlatibor had more people and more animals, the village was alive</p> <p>People have little hope</p> <p>Small scale vegetables and fruits grow well in the region. It is just difficult to keep livestock.</p>
<p>Biology professor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Local residents have good ecological knowledge and have a sense of notice of changes in nature. They are observant of natural phenomena, but they can also tell tales and "all sorts of nonsense." Detective work is to differentiate what is true, what is science, from their tales.” • “There are people who can provide me with accurate descriptions of events. For example, if someone tells me that they have seen bear tracks in the village, I can believe them because I know that that local person has a sense for nature. However, not everyone in the village possesses that natural sense.” 	<p>Admits local people know much about their surroundings and environment</p> <p>Has the people he goes to for information regarding environmental changes</p>

RQ1sub2 Municipalities perceptions: How do the local municipality representatives perceive NPZ?

Participant	Municipalities perceptions: How do the local municipality representatives perceive NPZ?	Codes
<p>Cajetina municipality mayor (Interview 6th of September 2022)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “And this plan is against the residents, against the indigenous people, and again I say, emphasize that it benefits those certain companies that want to use the resources related to mineral potentials, water, forests. So, this plan doesn't apply to Serbia's forests, nature parks. They ruthlessly cut down trees and destroy our infrastructure when they give it to private individuals. The private individuals cut forests down. And they destroy our infrastructure with heavy trucks. We built roads for local traffic and lighter loads, but they drive with 50 tons of those trees and damage our roads, and no one ever returns, and they leave behind an unmanaged area. Tomorrow, due to fires, there will always be a need for forest management, but nobody controls them. They won't control themselves. And over here, these private individuals and rural households who have their own forest, they are really tortured and mistreated by them.” • “Well, this work is certainly for some future time. It will definitely serve as a negative example in Serbian history of what was done, how mismanagement occurred with state resources and with the people living in those areas. So, it can surely be proven with facts, not just hearsay, and with the statements of those people, what the plan has brought to them. What it has given them, what it has taken away from them. The state has made an abuse of power.” • “What you prepare as official documentation in the thesis will definitely be used as a lesson on how not to do things.” • “NPZ was definitely a political decision and a decision that supports multinational companies that have an interest in buying our resources. Or to acquire resources at a cheaper price. [...] Clearly, there is an interest here in people leaving this area due to the inability to survive on their less productive land. And once they leave this area, multinational companies can easily access agricultural and forest land, as well as those resources and water sources.” • “Well, Rio Tinto definitely has an interest. There are these companies that have already bought the magnesite mine. It's a Finnish company. They have several mines here in our territory. They are located in Jablanica, in that area in Masnica.” • “And our household and Serbian hosts are supposedly bigger polluters than mines? Indeed, it's really ironic that regulations or the establishment of a nature park allow for a mine or a polluting facility like separation to remain within the park, but a simple house cannot be built. 	<p>Plan against the local people</p> <p>Benefits only certain individuals</p> <p>Nobody controls Serbiaforests</p> <p>Mismanagement of state resources</p> <p>Abuse of state power</p> <p>Multinational companies may benefit from NPZ</p> <p>People vs. Mines Sees NPZ as a way to acquire resources</p> <p>Once people leave, the gov can access agricultural land, minerals, resources, water sources</p> <p>RioTinto, plus a Finnish company bought mining rights in a local village</p>

	<p>A household cannot make changes, convert land from pasture to meadow. You are not allowed to plant a single blueberry.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They don't invest in anything. I have said they don't bring anything good. They don't bring us anything good at all.” • “So, both the national and local government are affected by this, maybe we would like to develop Zlatibor in terms of sports facilities, high-class hotels. Not everything has to be concentrated in the center of Zlatibor. And why are they now raising the question and criticizing why there is such dense population in the center of Zlatibor? It's because people cannot develop further due to the nature park. They cannot develop those locations on the outskirts, you know.” • “People here are complaining that they don't want to respond, and there are many inconsistencies. It's illogical that you have the first protection zone, then immediately after that comes the third, and somewhere in between is the second. It makes no sense; it's clear that it was done to favor someone. Because if you look at it, you should have created these zones, like first, second, and third, in a logical order. But there are cases where there's a first protection zone, and then there are no more zones. It's obvious that someone created these isolated islands where it's allowed for some but not for others. It's not serious.” • “It is illogical if Serbiaforests (Forestry Enterprise) is both exploiting and controlling themselves. They have created their own organizational unit where they themselves are cutting down forests. So, they are cutting down forests and I don't know if they are paying [for the use of natural resources] to their own company. Surely, they are not paying.” • “They claim that they make and mark some hiking trails, that they have done something, I don't know. That is necessary in some way. But when you take paint and make that circle on a tree, I mean, that's the easiest thing to do. You mark some hiking trails and that's it.” • “They have adopted a nature park where it is stated that separation, which is used for the extraction of magnesite ore, is allowed, and a magnesite mine is permitted. However, individuals cannot change the land use on their own family households without their consent. They are not allowed to construct their economic facilities within the nature park, which puts the people in that area at a disadvantage. It is not a problem if the government wants to protect it, but those people cannot live here. This is a passive region with limited earning opportunities, and if the government wants to declare it a nature park, they should provide additional non-repayable funds and subsidies to compensate those people and encourage them to stay. Clearly, there is an interest here for people to leave due to the inability to sustain themselves from their less productive land. Once they leave, multinational companies can easily acquire agricultural and forest land, as well as access those resources and water sources.” 	<p>Sees no benefits form NPZ</p> <p>NPZ stops local people's development</p> <p>Nonresponsive INCS</p> <p>Illogical protection zone placement</p> <p>Serbiaforests not paying fees for the “use of natural resources within NPZ” - for tree cutting</p> <p>Points out that the trail marking done by NPZ is irrelevant</p> <p>Mining is allowed yet people cannot work on their land freely</p> <p>Lack of compensation, in form of non-repayable funds and subsidies to people who are damaged</p> <p>Multinational companies can access unpopulated lands easier than populated land</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We wrote to the Constitutional Court about it. Because that was the only option, we had to lodge a complaint, but we never received any response regarding... We requested an assessment of the constitutionality of the park... to have it reviewed and explained why, but we never received a response for that. The government issues regulations, and you have no idea about it. So, regulations are made within a small circle of people. We protested against it.” • “According to the law and the constitution, you cannot restrict someone's rights and deny them equal opportunities. Everyone should have the same rules and the ability to live on an equal footing. It shouldn't depend on politics to give or take away from someone. And that's exactly what they did. Or, God forbid, it might be due to some corrupt interests. In other words, enabling someone to gain financial or material benefits in the future.” • “In 2018 the Municipality of Čajetina has decided at an extraordinary session of the Municipal Assembly that it will no longer participate in the early public consultation process regarding the Spatial Plan for the Special Purpose Area of Zlatibor Nature Park, as it believes that the plan is against the interests of the municipality's citizens.” • “The municipality ignored the creation of the new spatial plan and its planners completely. Nobody from the municipality showed up in the meetings regarding this spatial plan.” • “The municipality said that they will await the decision of the Constitutional Court of Serbia, to which it has appealed, to assess the constitutionality and legality of the Decree on the Proclamation of Zlatibor Nature Park and the Decision on the Development of the Spatial Plan for the Special Purpose Area of Zlatibor Nature Park.” • “We are evenly developing the entire territory of our municipality. And if we talk about regional development, this park is not regional development, this is centralization. And centralization has never brought any good to anyone. If everything is centralized towards big cities, those cities will face pressure. Instead of having good Serbian farmers, you will have urban poverty, constantly exerting pressure on public institutions. It's not good for anyone in that situation.” 	<p>Municipality wrote to the constitutional court, requesting an assessment of NPZ's constitutionality and legality. But they received no answer.</p> <p>Choosing not to participate in the new spatial plan meetings in 2018</p> <p>Sees NPZ creation as centralization</p>
<p>Cajetina municipality mayor (Video interview statements from 2017 and 2018)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “And that's why you see, two-thirds of the municipality, Zorana Mihajlovic and the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), want to put it under protection and take control here. They want to collect revenues and issue building permits. There will be no money, no fishing, no development, nothing. Only what Zorana dictates will be allowed.” (2017) • “This is brute force and violence from one party, and we will definitely not allow it. We will not allow anyone to underestimate us, belittle us, or impose their own opinions on us.” (2017) • “Minister Zorana Mihajlovic wishes to bring both investors and us in local self-government under control. When I talk about control, I'm talking 	<p>Milan vs. Zorana political dislike, dispute and attacks</p> <p>Calling NPZ imposition for “brute force and violence from SPP”</p> <p>Claims that Zorana and SPS want control over Zlatibor</p>

	<p>about the control of one party, one person, the Serbian Progressive Party. They want to control everything, but it creates a big problem for them because they can't do that here in Cajetina.” (2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This is a serious matter; we need to address it seriously to avoid reaching a point where the development of Zlatibor is halted and people are forced to leave, making way for others. They want to seize a part of our territory and commit legal violence.” (2017) • “We must certainly prevent this, fight for it, and keep it within the jurisdiction of local self-government. Because without this, there will be no income, no people, and no municipality of Cajetina.” (2017) • “How come the NPZ regulation does not protect 2,213 hectares of state land used by PK "Zlatibor," which was practically gifted to private individuals or tycoons close to the ruling party through the privatization of this company?” (2017) • “Zorana is talking about wanting to gain control over everything that is private, everything that belongs to the people. On the other hand, she has provided opportunities for investors to whom she has given away state-owned land to build. There is no nature park in those areas. But here, where there are private parcels, she plans to declare a nature park and prevent current parcel owners from building on it. They will be forced to sell their parcels at low prices or give them away and leave for Belgrade.” (2017) • “In this way, the current owners of land will be prevented from building on their own property and will be forced to sell their parcels cheaply or give them away and move to Belgrade. Later on, they will change this regulation, abolish these boundaries, and then their investors will be able to build.” (2017) • “A certain Special Purpose Plan for NPZ is a cheap and transparent attempt by criminals from the Serbian Progressive Party who want to override the will of the people and invalidate all the plans of the Municipality of Cajetina that were adopted through regular channels and procedures.” (2018) • “The Government of the Republic of Serbia, specifically Zorana Mihajlovic, wants to gain control over a larger part of Zlatibor [by creating NPZ] due to money laundering, illegal construction, and the municipality's mayor issuing and approving building permits, which are all lies. I have not been convicted, nor is there any criminal proceeding against me. No criminal investigation is being conducted against me, and the fact that the Serbian Progressive Party (SPP) will file criminal charges and exert pressure, along with Zorana and whoever else, is irrelevant. There are still honorable and honest people in this country, not everyone is corrupt, not everyone is being blackmailed.” (2017) • “This is a crime. This is a crime against Zlatibor and the villages of Zlatibor. There is no legal basis for this, and they cannot do it as long as 	<p>Threat of halted development and even stronger rural exodus</p> <p>Calls for a fight and resistance</p> <p>Dispute with Zorana over PK Zlatibor</p> <p>Attacking Zorana</p> <p>Local people will be forced to move to Belgrade</p> <p>Calls SPP criminals and NPZ their plan to override the will of the people</p> <p>SPP vs Cajetina mayor given as the main reason as to why the park is being created</p> <p>Calls NPZ a crime against Zlatibor</p>
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<p>Municipality spatial planning employee nr.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A bunch of things in the Special Purpose Spatial Plan of Zlatibor Nature Park don't make sense. It's noticeable that both the regulations for declaring the park and the spatial plan were made thoughtlessly and hastily." 	<p>Claims that NPZ spatial plan does not make sense</p>
<p>Municipality spatial planning employee nr.2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Why are they [INCS and the ministry] so rigorous?" • "We are not against protecting nature, but do they have to do it this way?" • "We have sent various emails asking for an interpretation of their texts and laws regarding development and building on agricultural land, but we either received no answers, or confusing and not understandable answers." 	<p>Dislikes NPZ's rigorousness and the way they created the park</p> <p>Dislikes the bad communication with the ministry and INCS</p>
<p>Spatial planner (municipality temporary employee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Institute for Nature Conservation gives people terribly low salaries, that they do not hire enough people so that huge tasks fall on few individuals who cannot do the job properly, and people working there are incompetent. Hence, the people from INCS are reading and understanding the laws and regulations incorrectly and therefore passing out wrong answers to people's permit applications to build within the park (on what is titled "agricultural land). It is actually legal to build on this land." • "Somebody within the Institute of nature conservation does not know their job, since they reject an application for building a simple shed in an agricultural parcel. I cannot believe that somebody rejected an application to build a simple tool shed." • "There seems to be no rule in the law that says that there should be a checkup of whether the implementation of the park was a good idea or not." • "I will talk to the ministries and the institutes to find out how the "Spatial Plan of Special Purpose NPZ" is to be interpreted and applied. Let us try to change this, the rules, the borders of the park. We will find a way to solve this as much as possible." • "The zones of protection they have put in place are not justifiable and should not hinder local people's lives as much as they do." 	<p>Critique of INCS, low salaries, incompetent employees</p> <p>Bad at their job, misunderstanding the laws</p> <p>There should be checkups and assessments of the park's workings</p> <p>Issue: interpretation of the NPZ spatial plans</p> <p>NPZ hinders people's lives</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “There are no problems with people and issues such as construction when it comes to older national parks in Serbia, such as in Djerdap National Park for example. But wherever there are people there are problems like these in Zlatibor. I heard from a colleague that there is an identical issue in Nature Park Golija, and Nature Park Morkra Gora as well.” 	Also aware of the people vs. Park story in other places in Serbia
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RQ1sub3 Local people's perceptions of NPZ: How do the local people perceive NPZ?

Particip.	Local people's perceptions of NPZ: How do the local people perceive NPZ?	Codes
Local man nr.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “They should have declared everything as a nature park or nothing at all.” “They came to our land, not the other way around. But well, it doesn't matter, the state is supposedly the highest authority...” “If you kill a bear, you will probably go to prison for 100 years, if you kill a person, you can easily get out of that.” “Zorana Mihajlovic gave herself the right to transfer 2,312 hectares of state land in the heart of Zlatibor to a single person, Cvetic Radoje. That includes the lake and the surrounding area. Imagine that it was actually transferred and even entered the parcel system when the municipality mayor found out and started to make changes.” (PK Zlatibor land) 	<p>Critique of the half-earth idea –kind of</p> <p>Jokes that a bear's life is more important than a human life</p> <p>Knows about the Zorana vs Milan issue</p>
Local village representative nr.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Nature Park protects butterflies that lives for one day but endangers humans who live here their whole life. What is more important, the butterfly, snake, ladybug, or a human?” “In this park, there won't be people anymore. Someone is deliberately doing all of this. It's not just related to the nature park; it's also related to those villages. If I take you up there, you'll see the type of houses, there's nobody around. Maybe there is just one elderly person in the house.” “How can the people from Belgrade just come and simply decide the park's borders and what would be where? We were not consulted about all of it and had very little say in the matter.” “My question for the ministry and INCS is; can the park boundaries be somehow revised? On both sides, there and here. Somewhere where someone lives, can a zone be changed or something like that, to avoid consequences. Also, how is it possible that in one place it's the first zone, but just three meters away it's not considered any zone at all? Or like here by the waterfall, it's the second zone and then immediately next to it there's nothing [no protection]. How is that possible?” “I find the whole concept of these “protection zones and borders” absurd. You have the first zone, and then there's nothing... or it doesn't matter which zone it is... It's just, you know, puzzling to me.” 	<p>Animals vs. humans, what is more important, he asks</p> <p>Rural exodus, the village is dying out</p> <p>Complaints over lack of consultation</p> <p>Wants to change the park boundaries and protection zone borders</p> <p>Protection zones make little sense</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "In this watershed, it would be logical to me that the entire belt of cliffs is protected, not just around the river. Because now, right here next to it, you can build a building. And right here next to it, you can asphalt as much as you want. And we can build whatever we want." [as he talks, he gestures toward the nearby cliffs and the parking spot next to the entrance to the waterfall area] • "There is a road in the village of Gostilje where the park borders make very little sense. There is a road and on one side of the road is the park where the rangers come and check for building licenses all the time. On the other side there is no park and nobody comes to check for licenses. Actually, the state bodies should be doing that but none of them do it. So the local people are confused and angry when the neighbor across the road has the rights to do whatever he wants and the person in the park needs to get the license for everything." • "The park rangers never go down to the waterfall to check and see if everything is ok. Instead, the rangers come to the entrance fence and sit and drink coffee." • "One of the employees/park rangers in NPZ, is a cousin of Serbiaforests director from Uzice. So, he got the job through his good connections." • "For example, they cut down a lot of forest near Cigota mountain in 2017, because they probably knew exactly when the regulation would be issued. In that very area, which is now part of NPZ, they have cut down thousands and thousands of cubic meters of wood before the park was declared." • "Serbiaforests cut the vast areas of Cigota mountain just before the protection regulation started, in 2017. They knew verry well what was going to be protected and hurried up to cut that forest before the protection." • "And up in Vodice (a populated village inside the park), for example, local people definitely have a problem." 	<p>Neighbours talk, one lives inside the park and the other one outside. Very different rules apply.</p> <p>Critiques rangers, what is their purpose...</p> <p>Nepotism in Serbiaforests</p> <p>Sees Serbiaforests as big exploiters of the forests and trees</p>
<p>Local man nr.1 and local village rep.nr. 1 converse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local man nr. 1: "So that one time one ridiculous guy from the Ministry or the Nature Conservation Institute came, I mean he's probably smart, a botanist or something. He says, there are these protected orchids down there, it's unique in Europe, let me show you. I say my colleague will remember everything; he should show it to him. My colleague goes down there, comes back with the guy, and I ask him: "So, do you remember how the flower looks?" He says, "Yes, it's a protected orchid, don't cut it." Then that guy from the ministry leaves, and I ask my colleague again, "Did you remember what he said?" He says, "No, I have no idea what he was talking about." [Everybody around the table starts laughing immediately.]" • Local village rep. nr. 1: And he also said, "When you mow, call the people from the nature park." I later told that to one of the park rangers, but he just looked at me and said, "Are you crazy? Haha." • Local man nr. 1: "The people from the ministry came in jeeps, looked fancy." [The people around the table made fun of them when they were talking about them. Clear dislike and disdain towards their fancy cars, suits and attitude.] 	<p>Making fun of the whole situation</p> <p>Not caring about the protected orchid whatsoever</p> <p>Rangers also not caring</p> <p>Making fun of the way ministry people look and behave</p>

<p>Local village rep. nr. 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The state has one set of rules, and the local government has another. This is confusing for the residents and causes issues and many misunderstandings.” 	<p>Confusing NPZ rules causing misunderstandings</p>
<p>Local man nr. 2 (a hunter)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “But here, the park operates in such a way that if you want to build something, it's not allowed. Then you just call the director or someone from Belgrade, some well-connected person, they come and handle everything for you, and then they let you proceed with the construction.” • “The park was probably made just out of spite towards Cajetina municipality mayor. Because even before the nature park, Zorana Mihajlović used to come here to take, I don't know, about two thousand hectares that belonged to “PK Zlatibor” and give it privately to somebody. And then the mayor said that she can't do that.” • “Yesterday, I was told that Serbiaforests are logging here (points to the map towards Viogor peak). Yes, they are logging continuously. There are people from Priboj who are constantly logging there, including my friends and my godson. They just cut 100 cubic meters (about the volume of a one car garage). Logging is happening non-stop in that area.” • “Serbiaforests are not only controlling forest areas, but also hunting grounds, and have a permit to issue hunting licenses.” • “A few years ago, if you wanted to hunt a deer, you had to go through Serbiaforests (the forestry administration of Zlatibor) with their guide and pay to shoot a deer. This guy Nenad Milinkovic oversaw hunting there. Now an organization from Uzice owns the hunting ground.” • “[...] And that wood that Serbiaforests sell is of the poorest quality... how can a simple bench be worth a thousand euros? Someone is pocketing money from that.” • “Serbiaforests have a factory for making benches and “mushrooms” and whatever they need in Kremna. As Melovic told me, they take a simple board with a small plate, and mark it there as if it costs 100 euros. They take that money for themselves. But it actually costs 10 euros.” (So, they pocket 90 euros per plate) • “Now, the plan to establish the nature park had been in the works for a long time, but someone kept putting the paperwork aside, delaying its realization. And then, when Stamat got on Vucic's nerves, it suddenly happened. Because Stamat is from a different party, he rose up and thought he could win the elections and take over Belgrade. But Belgrade? No chance.” 	<p>Also aware of the Zorana vs. Milan issue over 2000 ha land</p> <p>Says that Serbiaforests logs and clears forests continuously</p> <p>Serbiaforests having a monopoly on “natural resources”</p> <p>Open money stealing withing the Serbiaforests company</p> <p>Money laundering within Serbiaforests</p> <p>Thinks NPZ was a political revenge (Vucic vs. Stamatovic)</p>
<p>Local man nr. 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Serbiaforests makes hiking trails nearby and we do not like it, the tourists walk through our plots of land.” 	<p>Dislike towards everything Serbiaforests do, even if it is just a hiking trail</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We dislike the four-wheelers and how rude the tourists driving them are. The 4 wheelers are driving across people's lands, fields and crops. We do not like them because the big heavy wheels often destroy our crops and fields.” 	Tourism vs. Local people? 4-wheelers
Local village representative nr. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The nature park starts beyond this small hill. For these people on the other side of the park boundary, outside the park, it's easier to obtain permits. Now, in order to get a construction permit within the park, if it's not regulated [it's very difficult] ... The problem here is that the municipality didn't boycott this. We all can say the same thing.” • “As a contractor, I'm not allowed to dig anywhere without their consent now, but I used to be able to. Look, here you can do whatever you want, you can build a house here without any regulations -outside the park. But inside the park, you can't, because they control that you have the permit.” • “We don't have any privileges from the park, nothing. The only good thing, perhaps, is that there is less construction (unlike in Zlatibor)...” • “According to me, the state has protected us in a way. It protected us from how things were being built. That should have been done long ago, like in Tara, where it was clear: stone, wood, and that's it... those small wooden houses and that's it. Complexes of small wooden houses.” • “I collaborate a bit with the people from the park, they made some big benches for me and now they need to put some signs and something else down there. I cooperate with them...” 	<p>Construction permits difficult to get</p> <p>Sad there was no real boycotting of NPZ</p> <p>No benefits from the park</p> <p>Happy there is no construction boom in the villages like in the town</p> <p>He is not against development, but against the way it is being done in Zlatibor Town. Prefers small scale natural material houses over concrete skyscrapers.</p> <p>Wants to show that he is willing to cooperate with NPZ?</p>
Local village representative nr. 4 (municipality employee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They (park management) always ask for our suggestions regarding what type of trash bins they should buy. Since they have annual plans, sometimes they purchase a few trash bins... but mostly we buy all the bins ourselves (through the municipal public utility company of the Cajetina municipality). However, they do acquire a small portion of the bins. But then they naturally hand them over to us, and we empty them using our resources.” • “We have worked together, and they have done a lot of work in cleaning up the waste around the Skakavac Waterfall in Semegnjevo. They cleaned the area, and we have installed a trash container there, which we continue to maintain. Afterwards, they carried out some improvements, such as installing benches. We have some joint activities. For example, at the Tornik Ski Resort, we collectively addressed the issue of waste management because it can be windy there, causing waste to scatter, and animals to scatter it further. So, we came up with the idea together to create enclosures for the containers and determined their location in relation to the cafes. Later, we installed them.” 	<p>Municipality and NPZ collaboration regarding trash bins</p> <p>Waste management issues addressed in collaboration with NPZ</p>
Local man nr. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Well, listen, this was back in 2017. Maybe it's better that it [the park] was created. Serbiaforests have all these forests, they took this, but didn't take the land without forests where Zlatibor is being developed.” 	Positive attitude towards the park
Local man nr. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Well, people have problems because of the park. A lot of problems. I haven't had any problems yet, but I will tell them that. As far as I'm concerned, they 	People have problems due to NPZ

	<p>can give me a solution if they've taken my land. Then I'll sue someone to get paid. I won't live under these conditions.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They just took it and declared it a nature park. They didn't ask anyone... So, if they've taken my land, preventing me from using it, not allowing me to demolish or dig, not letting me do anything without their permission, then give me a legal paper which says that you have taken my land. If I don't agree with it, I'll sue them. They'll have to pay me, and I'll move on.” • “I haven't met the supposed director of that park yet. And I haven't started working yet, but if he sends people to check me and inspect what I am doing on my land, I'll kill him.” • “You can't do anything without asking for permission from them. Even drilling for water, for example, requires a lot of permits. But they haven't given anything to the village, nothing. It used to be a village forest, and someone, I don't know who, gave it away, and now they're (Serbiaforests) cutting it down, managing it, and making a living out of it. They're corrupt. They launder money and all that.” • “It's very unclear who is benefiting from this nature park. Who are you to restrict me on my own ancestral land? And you're here cutting down state-owned land. So, there are no boundaries for the state, but there are boundaries for me?” • “Neither has anyone provided me with a notice that they took away my land, nor do I have the right to dispose of my ancestral land. Everything you have to do, you have to ask them for documents, permits... They are tormenting our people here.” • “A person started digging a well here, and they came and started harassing him, calling him, causing trouble, you know how it goes. They demanded permits from him.” • “I mean, how stupid, pitiful, and pathetic. For example, they started building portable toilets near the church here, and they came and stopped it. Then the church had to seek approval.” • “The concept of a nature park is indeed a good idea, but it should be located in a place where it truly represents a natural park, where there are animals like deer, rabbits, foxes, boars, and so on... and let it be a real nature park. What do I need a nature park here for?” • “The whole village is complaining.” • “But it seems to me like some other game is being played. Someone will eventually grab all of this. And it's much easier for them to do so when the area is empty like this, rather than if someone had built a house here. You know, they would have to pay for the demolition of the structure, but this way, they can take it as they please and then build something else. Some people are in cahoots with the municipality in these games. The municipality has no control over them; they do whatever they want.” • “During the first two years, the guards used to come here more often; they would pass by every day. I haven't seen them lately. I don't know what happened.” 	<p>Taken land</p> <p>NPZ did not ask for permission</p> <p>Wants to sue</p> <p>Death threats to the park manager</p> <p>No benefits from the park</p> <p>Cannot do anything without their approval</p> <p>Lost the village forest to Serbiaforests</p> <p>Accusing Serbiaforests of being corrupt and laundering money</p> <p>Accusing NPZ of harassing people</p> <p>Likes “nature” and the idea of a “nature park”, just not in his village</p> <p>Speaks of possible later landgrab</p> <p>Easy to grab land when there are no people around</p> <p>“They” do whatever they want (so powerful)</p> <p>Accusing Serbiaforests of cutting down way too</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This is all a nature park, that mountain over there, it belongs to the state, and they cut it all down, completely destroying it. It's a complete failure. Look, from here upwards, the Serbiaforests, they have cut it all down. And here they protect... It would have been better if they had built something here.” • “They cut it every day, there are no boundaries, because it connects to Viogor and Mokra Gora. There are no boundaries, no penalties for them. They cut enormous amounts and sell them. Yet they have tied the local people here up. I don't know why they have tied us up.” • “Serbiaforests are a catastrophe. They make life quite tricky.” 	<p>much forest in the village</p> <p>Feels that his hands are tied up</p> <p>NPZ makes life difficult for him</p>
Local woman nr. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lives alone inside the park but does not know anything about its existence.” 	An older uninformed woman
Local man nr. 6 (a journalist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “And what fascinated me was that NPZ (Nature Park Zlatibor) is the only park where we didn't have activists fighting for the park. Usually, you have... for Stara Planina, for example, there was a big struggle to establish that park, people fought for it, pursued this and that. But when it comes to Zlatibor Park, it was purely a political decision. Basically, nobody knew what, where, or who would happen. Even the people living in the park area had no idea what would happen to them.” • “Meanwhile, at the time the park was established, you had a gondola project planned to pass through the park, you had a ski resort within the park, you had the construction of mini hydroelectric power plants in the park area, and now you have 5-6 things that nobody knows the status of.” • “And now you have... First, the nature park, and there is no headquarters on Zlatibor. Those people are silent and nowhere to be found.” • “What is currently saving the nature park is primarily the infrastructure (or more so, the lack of it). If there were more infrastructure in the park, someone would have dared to build a larger structure. But the fact is that there is no infrastructure in the park, there is not enough...” • “I mean, for example, I laughed, but the main gas pipeline for Priboj and Montenegro is supposed to pass through the park. And the main channel for telecommunications passes through the nature park. And then you talk about a nature park where nature will be protected, but you haven't relocated those installations in your regional plans...?” • “[...] when the boundaries were being established, they weren't created solely to protect nature as nature, but also had some political considerations in mind.” • “And essentially, it [the park] will only affect those who are either too old or too uninformed to consider seeking their own parcel. They could say [have said] that this plot should not be included in the nature park because I cultivate raspberries, blackberries, or have an orchard there, for example...” • “So, it's [NPZ] all quite non-transparent. A pretty closed system where you have no idea what anyone is doing, and their communication with the local community is close to zero. That's at least my opinion most people don't even bother chasing the park administration here but seek direct connections in Belgrade, with Serbiaforests, or with the ministry.” 	<p>People were very uninformed prior to NPZ creation</p> <p>Points out the fact that there was lot of development happening inside the park before creation</p> <p>Does not even know about the NPZ office in Zlatibor</p> <p>Lack of infrastructure</p> <p>Main gas pipeline from Serbia to Montenegro to pass through the park</p> <p>The park was set up with political/economic considerations</p> <p>NPZ is most dangerous for the old and uninformed</p> <p>No NPZ communication with the local community</p>

- “The intermediate gondola station is located next to the second-degree zone of protection. So, here you have a zone, and there you have a ski resort... I mean... and there will be a hotel built near the Tornik ski resort. Essentially, you must create infrastructure for the people who will live there. There are a lot of uncertainties in this regard...”
- “My opinion is that the people working in the nature park got their jobs by force of circumstances. It means that I was assigned here, I didn't seek it out, nor am I really interested in it. Because in the nature park, we have a lake that supplies Zlatibor with water, and there's a bottled water factory within the park. Then, for example, the cable car had a problem because the intermediate station is located near Ribnica Lake. The question arose about what would happen in case of a malfunction, as hydraulic and motor oils could potentially spill into the lake, at least formally speaking. I mean, it's not right next to the lake... So there are a lot of things involved. Now, for example, on the cable car route, they need to make space equivalent to 20 football fields. Also, the Golden City is supposed to be around the lake. That's another one of those plans that nobody really understands what exactly will happen there in the end... whether it's feasible or not. And here [points to the map]... For example, this year, the Hilandar Monastery received around 70 hectares of land to build a scientific, educational, and religious center... [...] It's all a question of what will be there, who will be there, and what they will do.”
- “The park was made probably just out of spite towards Cajetina municipality mayor. Because Zorana Mihajlović had come here even before the nature park was established to take around 2 thousand hectares that belonged to the dairy farm, which was actually municipal land, and she wanted to make it state-owned land. But he said she couldn't do that. Then they started some legal proceedings there, and they didn't confiscate it, it remained municipal land.”
- “The park was created because of a conflict between the municipal and state authorities. The state government wanted to somehow limit the power of the local government without directly replacing it. This conflict started here in Cajetina between the mayor (and his party) and the local board of the Serbian Progressive Party in Cajetina.”
- “The idea for the park came from Belgrade. And if I had to guess, my assumption would be Zorana Mihajlovic. Because at one point, she had a heated argument with the mayor of our municipality. And as they argued, I think she tried to cunningly, in quotes, pull the rug out from under him.”
- “And in essence, this nature park can be used as a political weapon to discipline voters.”
- “Look at it this way; Jablanica is within the nature park, Stublo is within the nature park, Dobroselica is within the nature park. Now, when you consider this, you essentially have two or three thousand voters within the nature park who provide you with a base to manipulate and pressure them if they don't vote for you. They are no longer accountable to the Municipality of Cajetina but rather to you. Why? Well, people in Jablanica make a living from logging, and you are the ones who can ensure their access to state-owned forests. They become economically dependent on you rather than the municipality. Or perhaps you are allowed to build a visitor center on your own land. This makes it easier for you. In essence, you find yourself in a situation where, politically,

No logic regarding the zones and their borders

Thinks NPZ managers and rangers are uninterested in their jobs

Point out all of the development going on inside the park; cable car, 20 football fields, golden city, hilandar monastery

Zorana and Milan dispute, a possible reason as for why the park was made

SPP vs Cajetina Municipality conflict, a possible start to NPZ

Park = political weapon to get voters

Sees NPZ as a way to manipulate people and keep them economically dependent on the state rather than the local government

	<p>you are dismantling the voting structure that previously primarily supported the incumbent government.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To halt the cable car project, the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) started searching for a needle in a haystack, demanding every possible document and paper related to the cable car, claiming that some documentation was always missing. Then they came up with the idea to establish a nature park in that area. The construction of the nature park was always announced somewhere else, without providing the residents and citizens of the municipality with any information or involvement in the process.” • Interviewer: “So, you're saying that the park was created to halt the cable car?” • Interviewee: “Yes, both to halt the cable car project and to extract revenue from the municipality.” 	<p>NPZ to halt cable car gondola</p> <p>NPZ crated to extract revenue from the municipality</p>
Local man nr. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “NPZ limits the locals and does not allow them to do much on their land, camp, cut the grass etc. But NPZ is the same as Serbiaforests who manages and cuts a lot of the forests in the park.” • “It is very difficult for the local people to do anything in/with nature because it is under protection.” 	<p>NPZ limits the local people in what they can do on their land</p>

RQ2 Nature parks impact on local people’s socio-ecological practices and economy

RQ2sub1 NPZ’s impact on local people’s lives, practices, and economy: How did the local people’s land use practices and economy change due to the NPZ creation?

Participant	Quote/Note	Code
An example of a classic rejection letter from the ministry	<i>According to the provided Plan, the subject parcel is located in an area designated as agricultural land and is not within the construction area. In the Spatial Plan of the special purpose area of the "Zlatibor" Nature Park, Chapter IV [...] it is defined that within the spatial units with the regime of the Park's III degree of protection, outside the existing and planned construction areas of settlements, only the reconstruction and extension of existing residential and economic objects of agricultural households are allowed.</i>	<p>Agricultural land not designated for construction</p> <p>Planned construction area – only place people can build</p> <p>Only reconstruction and extension are allowed</p>
Municipality spatial planning employee nr. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There are discrepancies in the law interpretations between the institute and the municipality of Cajetina, especially regarding the issue of construction and whether it is allowed or not on agricultural land.” 	<p>Construction on agricultural land</p>
Municipality spatial planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Institute of Nature Conservation does not allow absolutely any building/development in any zone of protection, not even a house or a shed. 	<p>Interpreting the spatial plan differently</p>

employee nr. 3	<p>But in the Spatial plan of NPZ, it says that the local government's spatial plan is valuable and in power in the third zone.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “She says that, in the recent assessment, there were around 12 comments/remarks sent in by the local people, most of them regarding the legal purpose of their land. People want to change the title of their land parcel from something like meadow, pasture, or forest to building/development land. This would enable them to build on these lands.” 	People ask for conversion of agricultural land to construction land so that they may build
Local woman nr. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “She could not get a permit to build a simple tool shed on her land.” 	Rejected tool shed application
Local woman nr. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Could not get a permit to build a residential and auxiliary facility 120 square meters.” 	Rejected building next to her house
Municipality spatial planning employee nr. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I usually warn people who want to build in the park, especially in the second protection zone, that the chances of getting a rejection from the ministry and institute are very high. By applying, they risk spending a lot of money on the Unified Procedure for Obtaining Construction Permits (CEOP) and project documentation on a project that may never be realized.” • “People on average spend around 3000 euros on the Unified Procedure for Obtaining Construction Permits request. This request includes a letter sent to the INCS and the ministry of nature conservation for consideration. If they reject the request, that is, if they do not approve the construction, people lose a lot of money.” • “If I ever wanted to build something, like a house or auxiliary facility for economic and rural development, on my property in Cigla, I probably wouldn't be able to do so due to the restrictions imposed by the park.” • “People can't even build a simple barn or obtain a permit to construct a house. Not to mention eco-tourism or the production of organic agriculture... it's practically impossible.” 	<p>High chances of rejection – demoralizing for people</p> <p>3000 euros average on just the application – no wonder people build without all the necessary papers</p> <p>Lost hope that she may ever be able to build something on her land</p> <p>No barns, no houses, no eco-tourism, no agriculture...</p>
Local man nr. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This area of mine is a meadow. I must convert it, for example, from a meadow to pasture, and then from pasture to construction land. Do you know how much that costs? It's a huge amount of money. Then those requests will go to Belgrade, and whether they will accept it or not...” • “I would gladly sell my plots, of course, why wouldn't I sell them. I have three plots down by the road. 12 acres, those are three great plots. Now, in order to sell a plot, it has to be converted from meadow to pasture for livestock, and then from pasture to construction land. Do you know how much taxes are charged for that?” • “My children, the only thing they could make use of this land, of all this, was either to rent the house to tourists or to sell the plot, but now, under these conditions of the nature park, they can't do that. There's nothing they can do about it.” 	<p>Complains how expensive applications are</p> <p>Would sell his land gladly</p> <p>Complains that his children cannot earn or get anything out of the land</p>
Local man nr. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Do you know why people are bothered by the park? It's because they can't sell their land and plots. As for me, it turned out better now...” 	Does not want to sell land

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There are many locals who are complaining. You have locals who can't build, who have their own property and are seeking to build their own structure but don't get permission. But again, it's a matter of money. You have to submit a request to Belgrade and get it approved. Then you have to transfer it from agricultural land to building land; it's all about money. But now they don't allow large areas, only 50-100 square meters. But I'm not very well-informed about it.” • “The ones who want to sell their plots are the ones who complain the most about the park, wanting to take the money. But if they were able to sell, the demographic structure of the population would change significantly.” • “There are many people who have moved to Cajetina, Uzice, Zlatibor, and now they are looking to sell their land in the village.” • “You know, everyone would sell, many would sell. But I'm not in favor of selling your inheritance and then someone else comes... Then it's no longer Semegnjevo, it becomes another village. There's a possibility that a mosque might be built here if the selling of plots continues. I actually like the fact that people can't sell.” • “The park is good for me precisely because there is no construction. This way we have peace and tranquility. When you don't have your locals, your own people around you in the village, it's not the same anymore.” • “Look, we were building around the church, constructing a small restroom next to it. Immediately, representatives from the nature park came to halt the construction. I had to write to Belgrade, requesting confirmation that we could build a restroom next to the church. It didn't cost anything. They simply provided their consent, i.e. approval to proceed with the construction.” 	<p>If you have money and can convert your land from agricultural to construction land you could succeed</p> <p>Against people selling their land</p> <p>Many live in towns and want to sell their village land which they do not need anymore</p> <p>Does not want random or foreign people to buy the land and move in</p> <p>Wants the locals to stay, does not want to lose the tradition</p>
Local village representative nr. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He says that people do not want to buy land in the park, exactly because of the difficulty of getting permits, so people who have land inside the park and may want to sell it are automatically financially damaged. • He says it is difficult to get construction permits. And that construction and development is not allowed. • He points to an area in the third zone and says that “people here cannot build anything”. 	<p>Cannot sell land inside the park – nobody will buy</p> <p>Idea that people simply cannot build or do anything on their land in NPZ</p>
Local village representative nr.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A major drawback for the municipality is the issue of construction; a lot of resources are wasted when you can't do anything.” • “Let me tell you, I have a really nice piece of land down there, by the Katusnica river. I used to think about building something there, like a wooden-style house with a swimming pool and all that... but now, well, that's a different story...” 	<p>Municipality also loses money</p> <p>Plans he had are less possible due to the park</p>
Local woman nr. 2 (lawyer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[In the II and I zone of protection] it is practically impossible to get the permit.” • “People cannot build anything. Reconstruction is allowed, but the building of additional new objects is not.” 	<p>Impossible to get a permit in zone I and II</p> <p>No building at all</p>

Cajetina municipality mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In that first zone, it is prohibited to change the land use. You cannot, for example, convert a pasture into a meadow. If it's a meadow, you cannot turn it into a field. This restriction deprives the local people of potential income.” • “[...] Now, someone in those areas might want to engage in tourism but doesn't have the opportunity to develop their land for construction [...].” • “So, because of NPZ, they (the local people) cannot expand their economic facilities on their own land, if they don't have pasture, if they can't convert it into meadow, if they don't have the opportunity to increase the number of livestock, then they simply don't have the income.” • “And imagine that you cannot expand your residential property. What does that mean? Now, these people, the long-time residents, are completely endangered. It means that they cannot or will have to sell at a lower price if someone wants to build on that land, knowing that only a building up to 60 square meters can be constructed. Naturally, they won't be able to sell it at market price but will have to lower it. The long-time residents are severely affected by this situation.” • “These people in areas outside the nature park are very wealthy individuals. On the other hand, those who have plots of land within the nature park are poor. They now understand how the nature park has affected them. Even in the spatial plan, there are designated construction zones in villages where people can exercise their rights and build. So, people now recognize and understand what the nature park has done to them.” • “Investors who have purchased large portions of land within the nature park and its zones will indeed face problems. According to our plans, they had the possibility to build, but now the rules have changed without any apparent reason. This means that investors now must go through extensive procedures and incur significant costs by dealing with ministries.” 	<p>Changing land use from pasture to meadow to forest may be an issue for people</p> <p>Tourism is stopped or at least contested</p> <p>Contested farming</p> <p>Cannot sell or will have to sell at lower price</p> <p>Max. 60 square meters?</p> <p>Having land inside the park is a big disadvantage to those who have land outside the park</p> <p>Investors lost money</p>
Local man nr. 2 (a hunter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “One person from Cajetina told me that he wanted to build a cottage in one of the Zlatibor villages, which is in a park. He said that the permit from the park to construct it would cost 700 euros, so he gave up.” 	<p>People giving up construction due to the permit fees</p>
Local man nr. 6 (a journalist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The state says, "No, no, this is now your parcel..." but what can I do with it? Nothing. And the land taxes keep coming. Okay, it would be fine if they could say, if your parcel is in the first zone of protection, you are exempt from paying taxes because you can't do anything on that piece of land. Everyone in Serbia who owns land or property must pay taxes to the state. It all depends on the municipality, what they decide to levy taxes on.” 	<p>Cannot do anything on the land parcel in NPZ</p> <p>Suggests cancelling taxes on land in NPZ</p>

Nature Park “Zlatibor” regulation text (prohibition and restrictions)	Code
<p>Zlatibor has been designated as a Nature Park, hence as an: <i>“area of well-preserved natural values with predominantly preserved natural ecosystems and picturesque landscapes, intended to preserve the overall geological, biological and landscape diversity, as well as to meet the scientific,</i></p>	

educational, spiritual, aesthetic, cultural, tourist, health and recreational needs and other activities in harmony with the traditional way of life and the principles of sustainable development”

(Definition of a nature park in the Article 34 of the Law on Nature Protection Official Gazette of the RS”, Nos. 36/09, 88/10, 91/10 – correction 14/16 and 95/18 – other law).

1st protection regime:

PROHIBITED:

- use of natural resources and construction of facilities;
- uncontrolled visits and exploration, movement outside existing roads and specially designated trails.

RESTRICTED:

- work and activities for scientific research and monitoring of natural processes;
- controlled visits for educational, recreational and cultural purposes that are not contrary to the goals of preserving natural values;
- implementation of protective, remedial and other necessary measures in the event of fires, natural disasters, accidents, the appearance of plant and animal diseases and pests, with the consent of the Ministry.

2nd protection regime:

PROHIBITED

- Construction of vacation homes and other family vacation facilities
- Construction of public ski resorts
- Construction of wind turbines
- Construction of mining facilities
- Exploitation of mineral resources, peat, and materials from riverbeds
- Industrial fishing
- Construction of facilities for recycling and incineration of waste and landfill sites
- Alteration of terrain morphology or works that could destroy or disturb the geomorphological and hydrological characteristics of the area
- Diversion of water and alteration of hydrodynamic characteristics and flow regime of rivers and streams, as well as all other works and interventions that may affect the modification of the hydrological regime of underground and surface waters
- Construction of hydrotechnical facilities (dam-reservoir), damming and regulation of watercourses, as well as the construction of hydropower plants on watercourses or their parts that are of a gorge or canyon type or where reservoirs enter gorge and canyon parts of watercourses
- Change of the purpose of water land
- Construction of septic tanks of the permeable type and any discharge of waste and effluent water into watercourses and land
- Actions and activities that would destroy, modify or disrupt the geomorphological and hydrological characteristics of Gostilj and Skakavac waterfall
- Clearcutting in the zone and at the transition from forest to non-forest areas
- Clearcutting for the reconstruction, i.e., direct conversion of devastated and degraded stands
- Implementation of interventions and activities that adversely affect habitats or strictly protected wild species of plants and animals, whose presence has been determined by research in the area. Restrictions and prohibitions are defined by prescribing protection measures within the special protection conditions for given species and their habitats.

1st protection regime:

Nothing is allowed, no use of any nat. resources and no construction at all

No vacation homes

No groundwater wells

- Excessive opening of the forest complex and construction of a network of forest roads;
- Cutting down and destroying munika trees, as well as destroying the understory;
- Placing signs and other information on trees;
- Uncontrolled collection of medicinal plants;
- Setting fires, except in designated areas;
- All types of fishing in the source areas of Katušnica, along the entire course of Ljubišnica, Bele reke, Dobroselička reka and along the course of Uvac river within the boundaries of the protected area, except for fishing for scientific research purposes;
- Fishing for river and stream crayfish, as well as fishing for chub and vimba vimba;
- All actions and activities that endanger fish fauna and disrupt their spawning, growth, feeding and movement;
- Destruction of bird nests and activities that disturb birds during the breeding season (March-July);
- Collection and trafficking of all species listed in the Regulation on the Control of Use and Trafficking of Wild Flora and Fauna without permission from the ministry responsible for nature protection;
- Collecting, damaging, capturing, killing and disturbing all species of plants and animals listed in the Rulebook on the Proclamation and Protection of Strictly Protected and Protected Wild Species of Plants, Animals and Fungi;
- Formation of landfills in the area of karst sediments of natural assets;
- Formation of borrow pits or opening of quarries;
- Surface exploitation of mineral raw materials;
- Conducting geological research that involves the construction of research facilities (drilling, excavations, cuts, incisions, etc.).

Limited collection of medicinal plants

No setting fires – although slash and burn is a thing

No fishing – only for research allowed

Foraging and collecting of protected plants

RESTRICTS

- traditional use of stone, clay, and other materials for local needs;
 - formation of forest and agricultural monocultures;
 - introduction of foreign species that may harm the local plant and animal life in the protected area;
 - underground exploitation of mineral resources - the entrance to mining areas must be located outside the level II protection zone;
 - capturing water sources for the needs of existing households;
- management of forests and forest land specified in forest management plans, as well as the management of near-natural forests to ensure the maintenance of existing forest ecosystems, improve their composition, structure, and health status, preserve the diversity and origin of trees, shrubs, and other plant and animal species in forest stands;
- less intensive forest harvesting in multiple stages;
- research on the natural spread of munika and the application of breeding measures to enable natural regeneration, formation, and preservation of munika stands, as well as increasing the number of its offspring;
- implementation of appropriate biological measures against phytosanitary and entomological diseases of forests;
- activities related to the improvement of populations of rare and endangered plant and animal species;
- controlled visits for educational, recreational, and cultural purposes;
- conducting activities within scientific research and monitoring of natural processes;
- implementation of appropriate measures for fire and erosion protection;

Restricted “capturing of water sources”

Restricts:
building tourist accommodation facilities, hospitality, and tourist infrastructure

- removal of low-growing vegetation according to the terrain's topography to enable unobstructed passage along gorges and canyons.
- From building tourist accommodation facilities, hospitality, and tourist infrastructure to building smaller facilities for presenting natural values or traditional-style facilities;
- From constructing transportation, energy, communal, and other infrastructure, residential and economic buildings for agricultural and forestry farms, to facilities that do not negatively affect the favourable position of animal or plant species, their habitats, natural values, landscape beauty, and swamp areas;
- From building facilities for conventional breeding of domestic animals and wildlife within existing rural households;
- To the use of chemical agents for the use of artificial fertilizers on cultivable surfaces, and for chemical agents for plant protection with the consent of the Ministry;
- Fishing, recreational and scientific research;
- Hunting, sanitary hunting of wildlife.

constructing transportation, energy, communal, and other infrastructure, residential and economic buildings for agricultural and forestry farms

building facilities for conventional breeding of domestic animals and wildlife within existing rural households

3rd protection regime

PROHIBITS:

- Establishment of landfills;
- Opening of new technical stone quarries within the protected area, except if the material of such or similar characteristics cannot be found outside the boundaries of the protected area, or it is spatially and temporally strictly limited and used to improve living conditions of the local community (construction and maintenance of local roads, etc.);
- Exploitation of mineral resources in zones of immediate and already protected water supply sources, in areas or near areas intended for tourism, in or near the protected environment of immovable cultural goods.
- destruction and collection of strictly protected and protected plant and animal species,
- clearcutting of forested areas,
- cutting of individual old trees with impressive dendrometric characteristics,
- removal of native vegetation and introduction of invasive alien species, disturbance of fauna and collection of eggs,
- fishing during closed season for brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) - from October 1 to March 1, and chub (*Squalius cephalus*) from April 15 to May 31. Minimum size limit for caught fish: brown trout - 25 cm, rainbow trout - 25 cm, European grayling - 15 cm, chub - 20 cm, and gudgeon (*Gobio spp.*) - 10 cm.
- fishing for river and stream crayfish (*Astacus astacus* and *Austroptamobius torrentium*) is restricted.

Foraging and hunting of protected species

LIMITS/restricts:

- management practices prescribed in special forest management plans for all management units located in protected natural areas;
- construction of energy facilities and mini hydropower plants with a maximum capacity of 30 MW, excluding watercourses with highly ravine and canyon-like valleys (such as the Dobroselica River, Ribnica, Jablanica);
- daily catch limit for recreational fishermen is up to 5 kg of native fish species, and for individual species and number of specimens (e.g. for trout and other defined species - 3 specimens collectively; for chub, along with other species - 10 specimens collectively).

RQ2sub2 park fees: How do the local people perceive the “resource users” fees NPZ charges?

Participant	Quote/Note	Codes
Cajetina municipality mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “And that is the problem... now, with these inspections, people have to pay fees to the nature park for anything they do, even we (the municipality) have to pay fees for any activities we undertake in the park. And everything we do, whether it's building roads, asphalt work, or organizing cultural events in the villages, we have to pay fees to the nature park. We make efforts to find sponsors and ways to help people stay and support them in the rural areas, but Srbijasume charges us for something they haven't invested in. It makes no sense.” "hey charge for everything, including cultural events. Even the gondola is required to pay for parking spaces. If we need to build a new road or asphalt an existing one, we have to pay for them. If we organize a cultural event in Jablanica, such as a village competition, located within the park's zone, we have to pay fees to the nature park and inform them about the event.” “Well, it's not transparent [how much money NPZ collects annually and monthly] They use it for themselves. We don't know how much they charge or what their tariff is for specific events. They just come and present us with a bill, saying that we must pay, for example, 18,000 dinars for the maintenance of the village competition (in Jablanica). I honestly don't know how much they charge individuals or local people for such things.” “Well, in general, those fees should go to the local population, rather than being used for personal income of those inspectors who, I must say, were created as just another bureaucratic institution that exists solely for themselves to collect those fees and distribute them as personal income.” “Because that money goes to Belgrade. It's classic centralization. It doesn't stay with the local population. But what the people pay as compensation for the development of construction land to the municipality stays here. It all remains here, and we reinvest it in infrastructure, such as roads, the reconstruction of the water supply network, the construction of the gondola, or future projects like the construction of water supply systems. Everything stays here.” 	<p>Fees for “everything”</p> <p>Serbiaforests invests nothing in the events but still takes the fee</p> <p>Cultural events, roads, gondola cable car pay fees</p> <p>Accusing NPZ/Serbiaforests individuals for taking/stealing money for themselves – as personal income</p> <p>Calls NPZ a bureaucratic institution that collects money/fees for personal incomes</p> <p>Says all the NPZ fees money goes to Belgrade, nothing stays for the locals/community development</p>
Local man nr.1 and Local village representative nr.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LVR1: “We (Gostilje Waterfall Organization (GWO)) don't pay fees to the park because we have a contract with the park since we are older than them. They have been fair to us. We are here, we must maintain it, they just monitor and oversee that everything is alright.” LM1: “And we are also an example of successful and cooperative collaboration to them. They haven't encountered anyone in the Municipality of Cajetina like us.” LVR1: “And so, it is stated in the contract that we do not have to pay any fees to them. They made that contract and sent it to us to sign. It's a contract of cooperation. They are not responsible if something happens... There are also 	<p>Not paying fees – special contract</p> <p>The one example of good cooperation between the locals and NPZ</p> <p>NPZ made the contract (dictates conditions)</p>

	<p>things they tell us verbally, and we do them, not everything needs to be in writing.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LVR1: “But instead of paying fees, GWO must buy all wood and wooden products (benches etc.) from Serbiaforest, and we had to put up a sign which advertises Serbiaforest. This was specified in the contract [...] The wood and products we buy from Serbiaforests are expensive and of bad quality.” • LVR1: “Well, there have been news reports about them considering charging an entrance fee to the nature park... that's something that could happen. Just because they're not doing it today doesn't mean they won't do it tomorrow. They would charge tourists based on license plates. If it's a license plate from Belgrade, then they would charge. So even a local person with a Belgrade license plate would have to pay. Now, can you explain to me where they would put toll booths? It's a joke. They don't have anywhere to put toll booths.” 	<p>Contractually obliged to buy all wood-products from Serbiaforests</p> <p>Possibility of charging for the entrance fee into NPZ</p> <p>Local people could end up having to pay (if they have a Belgrade license plate)</p>
Local man nr. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “NPZ charges fees for when people want to meet inside the park, events in nature and for rule breaking fees as well.” • “But the money they earn from the fees goes to the private pockets of Serbia Forests and their company. They buy cars (10 cars) which could end up everywhere in Serbia.” 	<p>Fees for events and social gatherings</p> <p>Fees money goes into private pockets</p>
Local man nr. 6 (a journalist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “People wanted to organize a competition at Ribnicko Lake in 2017/2018, and these officials gave them an exorbitant amount of money to pay. The amount was too much, so the people decided to cancel the event.” 	<p>People cancelling events due to high fees</p>
Local man nr. 2 (a hunter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “X told me that at one point Serbiaforests had 70 million dinars in their account. And then they didn't know what to do with all that money, they had to spend it, so they bought 10 Lada Niva cars. They took a few of them and gave them to the nature park in Ivanjica or wherever.” 	<p>NPZ earns a lot of money from fees</p> <p>Spends the money on all Serbiaforest areas in Serbia</p>

RQ3 Power and inequality

RQ3sub1 Decision making power: To which degree were the local people part of the decision-making process regarding the NPZ creation in 2017?

	Quotes/Notes	Codes
3 rd of June 2017 (Notes based on a meeting video)	<p>On June 3, 2017, representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, along with the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, were supposed to give a presentation on the proposed regulation for the declaration of the nature park.</p> <p>Even before the representative of the ministry started addressing the attendees, it was noticeable that people were dissatisfied, agitated, and uncomfortable. It was difficult</p>	<p>Wrong that the state can just come to a place and decide to make it a park? It should come from the bottom up.</p>

<p>Public discussion organized by INCS and the ministry of agriculture and environmental protection</p>	<p>for the ministry representative to speak as everyone was talking at the same time, and there was already discontent among the locals.</p> <p>First, the assistant to the minister, Erdeljan, addressed the audience. The representative of the ministry introduced the people beside him, his team, the chief of the sector for protected areas and ecological network of Serbia (Aleksandra), the chief legal officer in the Ministry of Environmental Protection (Dragana), the chief of the Institute for Environmental Protection and Protected Areas (Dragana), and other colleagues from the institute.</p> <p>Erdeljan: "The government has proposed a regulation for the declaration of the nature park. We have had meetings with representatives of the municipality of Cajetina, where we have reached a 99 percent agreement on the regulation we will discuss today." ... "We had a meeting with the municipality during the preparation of the regulation, and especially in the last ten days, and I would have liked the mayor and his associates, who were present at the meetings, to be here." ... "Currently, 6.54% of the territory in Serbia is of 'national interest' and protected. According to the spatial plan of the Republic of Serbia, the government's plan is to increase this to 12% by 2020. This is one of the tasks we all must accomplish together, as it is a condition for joining the European Union."</p> <p>People constantly interjected with loud comments here and there, expressing opposition and discontent.</p> <p>After this, representatives of the "expert" services began their presentations. However, there were noisy interruptions and objections from several attendees. Consequently, the presentation was interrupted after 15 minutes. But what the government representatives managed to present looked like this:</p> <p>Firstly, the chief of the sector for protected areas and ecological network, Aleksandra, addressed the audience: "Good day to everyone. I believe that we should have met more often with you, in addition to what the assistant to the minister mentioned, in order to discuss this matter. Because what brings us here today, I think, and I believe you will understand, is something that should primarily benefit the local population and local self-government. Through our discussion today, we will focus on the possibilities that this regulation offers to the local self-government and the local population, rather than just prohibitions and limitations." ... "I would like to briefly touch upon the history of the idea of protection. Back in 2005, the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia (INCS), as the expert institution of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, conducted an assessment of the area as part of its regular duties entrusted by the state and transformed it into a study, which was submitted to the ministry." She holds the study in her hands.</p> <p>Audience: "Why is protection happening only now and not in 2005, for example?"</p> <p>Aleksandra: "In the meantime, the Law on Nature Protection came into force, and as the responsible authority for issuing this regulation, we returned the study to the institute for further refinement in line with the new provisions of the Law on Nature Protection. In December 2015, the institute provided us with a new study that was aligned with the law, and a new monitoring and assessment of the area were conducted. In accordance with the Law on Nature Protection, the ministry initiated the protection process by posting an announcement on January 14, 2016, on the initiation</p>	<p>Noticeable discontent among locals</p> <p>Referring to the previous meetings with the local government</p> <p>6,5% > 12% protected areas by 2020 (a doubling)</p> <p>One of the conditions for joining the EU</p> <p>Lasted only 15 min</p> <p>Admitting they should have met with the locals more often</p> <p>Saying that NPZ should "primarily benefit the local population and the municipality"</p> <p>Refers to the 2005 study</p> <p>Law on Nature Protection comes</p> <p>New study aligned with the law in 2015</p>
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of the protection procedure. Legally and formally, it doesn't mean anything, but it signifies the reservation of that area and future plans. Moreover, all plans made prior to that period were taken into account. Afterward, we began drafting the regulation for the declaration of the protected area and informed the public about the initiated protection. You had the opportunity to lodge complaints, provide comments..."

People: When?

Aleksandra: The announcement of the public review was published in...

Audience: Carefully. Listen carefully!

Aleksandra: You talk and can't hear me... The announcement of the public review was published in the daily newspaper "Novosti".

Audience: On which date? You published it on May 19. But it says that the proposal was made on May 10. You published it nine days later. Is that right? Just tell me if I'm correct?

Aleksandra: "Yes, you're right. The public review was initiated on May 10 and lasted until May 29. Nonetheless, you had the opportunity, and still have the opportunity, to submit comments and suggestions regarding the protection regulation. We will accommodate anyone who comes, and you don't have to come to Belgrade; you can do it at the local self-government. We have also published an announcement about the public discussion that will last two hours, from 2 pm to 4 pm today, and we will listen to everyone." ... "The rest of the regulation for the declaration includes provisions related to the future manager of the protected area. INCS proposed that the manager, and I emphasize that this is a proposal, should be Srbijasume, as the largest user of that area."

People: As the largest forest cutter, right? They are currently cutting 5,000 cubic meters (about twice the volume of an Olympic swimming pool) of forest in the protected area.

Erdeljan: Well, we can't have a discussion like this...

People: Alright... You will speak for an hour and a half, and then we will have ten seconds here?

Erdeljan: Please be reasonable...

People: How can we be reasonable when you are taking away our heritage from all of us...

Erdeljan: We are not taking anything away... I don't know what you're talking about.

People: You are taking it away... You will restrict us... No fishing, no this, no that...

The situation becomes very noisy. People stand in an accusatory position.

Next, Dragana Ostojevic, the representative of INCS, takes the floor.

Dragana O.: "I have the honor to present to you the study that the institute has been researching with the help of all of you for 15 years. I will introduce you to the natural values of Zlatibor and remind ourselves why we are protecting the Zlatibor mountain."

People: What are you protecting it from? Whom are you protecting it from? People start shouting. You made a deal with Serbiaforests...

Aleksandra: (Raises her voice to be heard) Just to let you know, we are here because of you and us. We will interrupt the public discussion...

People: Just so you know, you won't establish the nature park as you intend... these people here will all mobilize, believe me... Then we'll see Serbiaforests..

Erdeljan: Again, I want to emphasize that the ministry accommodated 99% of the objections raised by the local self-government. Not just accommodated but accepted them as justified.

January 2016: the protection process was initiated

May 10th – 29th was the public review time. But the municipality published the info 9 days later (19th) on their website. People had less time to write their complaints than they should have had.

Saying that they will be accommodating to everyone and that they will listen to everyone – but they do not do that

People accusing Serbiaforests of cutting way too many trees in the area that will be part of the park

Accusations of land grab and restrictions

Protection – in situ land grab, they are not actually taking your land, but they are unbaling you from accessing the resources
People do not understand the "protection" concept

Deal with Serbiaforests

People threaten to mobilize against NPZ

Ministry sees themselves as very accommodating

	<p>People discuss protected zones, clearly confused. They don't know where the boundaries will be, how extensive the protection will be, what they will and will not be able to do.</p> <p>Then, Dragana Petras, the chief coordinator of the study, takes the floor and tries to present the study.</p> <p>Dragana P.: "I will acquaint you with the fundamental values and the reason why INCS decided to conduct this study. Zlatibor is a mountain in southwestern Serbia, part of..."</p> <p>People, all at once: "We know, we know. We know where we live. Don't take away our precious time like this. Tell us what we will lose. We're not gaining anything, but what are we losing? Tell us. Do you want to drive us out of here? ... Let me take you there now and show you what a nature park is and what Serbiaforests is doing." (Referring to deforestation at Cigota)</p> <p>Erdeljan: "Since we don't have the conditions to continue this public discussion, please write down all your thoughts on this matter, and we will discuss them, but not like this." They get up and leave, all of them.</p>	<p>All people are confused regarding protection zones and rules. This has not been explained to them.</p> <p>INCS rep. Ignorantly starts presenting info about Zl.to the local people</p> <p>People want to know; what will we lose?</p> <p>Refused to hold the meeting because people loudly disagreed.</p>
<p>INCS employee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We were very accommodating and listened to the local government's wishes during the meetings in the public consultation phase spring 2017. There were complaints regarding the Gondola, those were addressed. We had a meeting in the municipal building where we agreed to take away a part of the second zone of protection just for the sake of Gondola cable car." • "Serbiaforests are big managers of protected areas in Serbia. Serbiaforests manage many and huge areas in Serbia already, so it was natural to give the management job to them. For bigger public goods, Serbiaforests are the managers in Serbia." • "There were two studies done in the region, one in 2005 and one in 2015. The study in 2005 was mainly a biological one with little information regarding other things." 	<p>Claims to be accommodating; especially for the Gondola</p> <p>Serbiaforests as managers is their go to when they create PAs</p> <p>Serbiaforests – state monopoly on management of PAs</p> <p>Mentions studies prior to gazetting</p>
<p>NPZ management employee nr. 1 and nr.3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Well, the proposal for the management comes from the Institute for Nature Conservation. Now, it's the Ministry that decides whom to entrust with the management. That's why there was drama between the Cajetina municipality and Serbiaforests, I don't know the details, and I don't want to get into that. But I assume that the Ministry chose Srbiaforests for management because they manage the largest areas of protected regions in Serbia. Simply put, they have experience in these matters. I presume that's what determined Serbiaforests as the manager of Zlatibor." • E3: "The map was changed because of the Gondola, in order to accommodate the municipal plans." • E1: "Yes, the second version of the map was changed because of the Gondola. The second zone of protection around Ribnica Lake was moved a bit so that the cable car area could be in the third zone of protection, not the second like it was originally planned." 	<p>Ministry and INCS had both to agree on Serbiaforests as managers</p> <p>Did the municipality want to be the manager?</p> <p>Gondola accommodation</p>

<p>Cajetina municipalit y mayor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They contacted us when they needed our plans. This means the planning documentation, which also implies that we need to align our plans with the Nature Park’s regulations. However, they do not recognize our plans, so all our plans have become irrelevant. The spatial plan was already prepared, which means we now had to change all those plans, including the spatial plan and the plans for general regulation, to adapt to their requirements. They don’t pay us anything for that. Essentially, it means that our assembly’s adoption of plans doesn’t mean anything, and they completely abused the constitution to ensure that the local government has no influence or say, and the local population has no impact on the decision-making regarding these plans.” • “[...] They practically rendered our spatial plan ineffective [...]” • “During that period from 2005 onwards, they came to us and requested that we provide them with data, but we were always against it. In other words, we were not in favor of it being done.” • “They came and did it without our involvement. It means they were not obligated to inform us about what they would put under park control or which part they would occupy because it was done by a state institution and the Institute for Architecture and Urbanism from Belgrade.” • “But unfortunately, at that time we were not in a position to organize a broader campaign to gather support from as many people as possible and challenge it (NPZ) from the very beginning when it was being adopted. And during the public debate here in our municipality, where people specifically voiced their dissatisfaction and expressed their objections. However, they did not take it into consideration even though they simply had the duty and obligation, according to the law, to respond to the objections.” • “I would have been with them (with the people protesting at the public discussion) if I had been there. We organized the discussion and invited those people who were most affected, we invited them to come and ask their questions.” • “The ministry and INCS had not reached an agreement with us to expand the park. We simply assumed that it would be protected as indicated in our spatial plan.” • “The Institute for Urbanism and Architecture themselves told us that it (NPZ spatial plan and regulation) was not done properly, that they couldn’t work like that. When we adopt plans, we have to inform all the institutions, all the owners. When we change the plan, we hold a public debate, and it is displayed here in the municipality for a month. Everyone has the right to comment, and we make it public. Every landowner can come here and ask, “Why didn’t you include my parcel in the plan for development? The neighboring one can be developed, but mine can’t?” That’s why our plans take a long time, they are adopted, modified, and adjusted. We fight for it. We adapt the plans to the people’s needs.” • “Because when we adopt plans, every landowner, every interested party, can submit their objections, and our commission is obliged to officially respond to those objections. They need to explain why they were not accepted or why they were rejected. That’s how all our plans are adopted. But they didn’t 	<p>Putting local governments spatial plans out of power/ineffective</p> <p>Not compensating for the money it takes to change the plans</p> <p>Local population had no impact on the decision making</p> <p>Against NPZ since 2005</p> <p>No involvement No information</p> <p>State has more power than municipality</p> <p>Unable to organize a bigger campaign against NPZ at the time</p> <p>Municipality invited local people to participate in the meeting</p> <p>Says there was never an agreement reached (like the ministry says)</p> <p>The spatial plan for NPZ was not done right, hence the local gov. boycotted the public discussions and other meetings with the state spatial planners</p> <p>People were not consulted properly</p>
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	<p>bother to respond to the people here when they came and asked them questions. They ignored everyone.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “No survey was conducted among the population, who did not know what NPZ entails and what a nature park is, because of that.” • “They don't respect the law. They didn't provide us with the map in time for us to see and inform the population about the exact area designated for protection. The public insight was already underway. They have to inform us in advance so that we can inform the citizens in a timely manner and submit our objections.” • “NPZ is the ministries and relevant state institutions persistently attempt to make Zlatibor their own playground, without asking the local population about their fate. Therefore, we will certainly exercise all legally provided possibilities to ensure that this is done in accordance with the law.” (Milan Stamatović, video statement in 2017) • “We never even had the option [of municipality being the park manager rather than Serbiaforests] offered to us. They never talked about who would manage the nature park.” 	<p>“They ignored everyone” and their complaints</p> <p>No survey conducted Uninformed local people</p> <p>Municipality was not provided with the protection zones map in time</p> <p>NPZ - “states playground”</p> <p>Exercising all legal possibilities</p> <p>Mayor not aware of the talks that municipality could be the manager</p>
<p>Local man nr.1 and Local village representative nr.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LM1: “How did they go through your land without asking? They didn't seek your consent; you didn't allow them... nothing was done.” • LVR1: “[Shrugs...] My piece of land is in the second zone, near the Katusnica River. [There I am allowed to do] Nothing. Actually, I have no idea. I haven't asked because I'm not doing anything. If I were doing something, I would have asked.” • “During the establishment of the park, the municipality probably should have had a say in its creation, but there was a poor connection with the authorities.” • “In the municipality, nothing was discussed about the boundaries before the public discussion. [...] At the discussion, they brought some maps, books, and documents. The people started expressing their discontent, questioning who they were and what they were doing there. One person provoked the situation, and I can't recall if water was thrown at them or not. Then they packed up and left. They were supposed to schedule another public discussion, but they never did. The room was full, around 80 of us. We came from all sides.” 	<p>Confused how NPZ can just “take” someone's land and put it in a park without their consent</p> <p>Not aware what he can do in his second zone</p> <p>Bad relations between the gov./municipality at the time (2017/18)</p> <p>Remembers someone throwing water at the ministry reps at public discussion</p> <p>Second public discussion was supposed to be scheduled</p>
<p>Spatial planner (municipality temporary employee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The way these public consultations in Serbia work is as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The planners must organize an early public consultation meeting where they provide information regarding the project (lasts for 15 days) 2. Then they have a general public consultation meeting where they present their plans and ask for complaints and insight (lasts for 30 days) 3. These complaints and insights can be sent in the form of a letter to the planners and the planners must answer every complaint. • “For PPPN Zlatibor there were very few complaints sent in.” 	<p>Explained public consultation legal rules NPZ did not have the early public consultation meeting</p> <p>Few complaints sent in</p>

Local man nr. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The municipality informed the people, and there were meetings prior to the NPZ declaration. There were five representatives from the villages who attended meetings at the municipality in Cajetina. However, they were mostly against it.” 	Municipality informed people about the park, not the state People were against it
Local man nr. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Well, [I only found out that my land is within NPZ] when they started putting up signs and marking the area. Nobody came to inform the people. There were no gatherings, no community meetings to provide information. They could have said, "People, we propose to protect this land, this beauty of Zlatibor. Let's do something for you. Let's buy it from you." Buy it. Buy it from the farmers, from the people. You can't just take it away from them Even to this day, nobody has informed me that my private property is part of a nature park. That I have no right to do anything.” 	<p>Found out he lives inside the park when the signs were put up in the village</p> <p>Nobody informed the people</p> <p>No community meetings or gatherings</p> <p>Suggests that the state could have bought peoples' land</p> <p>Says the state just took the land from people (even though it is his on paper)</p>
Local man nr. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “NPZ was gazetted without proper consultation of the local people.” • “There are bad relations between the local municipality and the government (park).” 	No consultation Gov. Vs Municipality
Local man nr. 6 (a journalist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I found it [NPZ map] while searching on the website of the Ministry of Construction. You could find documents stating the area size and technical specifications, but there was no actual map available. No one really knew how the nature park would look like. It took me about a month of intensive searching and googling until I found something that could be considered as a starting point for a map.” • “The map was designed in such a way that you can't see where the municipality area is or what is happening within it. It required using Adobe Photoshop to see how the designated area fits within the boundaries of the municipality. At one point, you realize that more than two-thirds of the municipality's territory would be included in the park.” • “So, there was a lot of tension and conflict between the two sides. The public discussions that were supposed to take place in the parliament regarding the nature park were interrupted by the citizens. There was no proper debate, and the representatives from the ministry even left the scene due to the anger and frustration of the people.” 	<p>Difficult to find info about NPZ in 2017</p> <p>No one knew what the park would look like or where it would be</p> <p>Bad map 2/3rds of the municipality in the park</p> <p>Lot of tension and conflict at the time</p> <p>No public debate/consultation</p>

RQ3sub2 Power, state politics and inequality: What is the local people's view on the amount of power they have as well as on the state politics?

Participant	Quotes/Notes	Codes
Cajetina Municipality mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I believe we are [the only municipality in opposition to the SPP in Serbia]. Thanks to our sincere approach to the local population and our voters, we managed to have our own revenues in time. Otherwise, if we didn't have our own revenues, they could easily extinguish us financially. But they can't do that to us because we have our own revenues, and we can invest in development.” 	<p>Only municipality in opposition to SPP in Serbia</p> <p>Have their own revenue - development</p>
Spatial planner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Our institutions are dysfunctional.” 	<p>Dysfunctional institutions</p>
Local man nr.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “This is Serbia, a system of combinations. It will be difficult for your mind to understand because you are from a different world. You will have to make a lot of effort to comprehend it.” “There is no hope in such systems.” “SPP members put pressure on the municipality of Cajetina to join SPP. They actually sent a man to beat my friend in the head with a shovel one day, because they do not like opposition and especially because we are running the Waterfall Organization. They cannot stand that somebody who is not in their party is earning money and doing well.” 	<p>System of combinations</p> <p>No hope</p> <p>SPP use of violence, all means to power</p>
Local village representative nr. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “As a country, we haven't made much progress in terms of ecology, unfortunately.” 	<p>Not much progress in terms of ecology</p>
Local man nr. 4, local woman nr. 3 and local woman nr. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The state is behind the money laundering in Zlatibor. The state is behind everything. They're all thieves. Look, I have a pension of 12,000 din (approx. 100 euro) I have a disabled father, and I don't have the right to any assistance.” “The ordinary person is only needed to fight in wars, pay electricity bills, and listen to fairytales during elections.” “They have sold everything Serbian. Look at what the Chinese companies are doing - they are building our roads. We used to have airplanes, trucks, cars... Now we don't have them anymore. They say it's good, but for me, it's not good. No country with foreign capital has ever benefited from it.” “Healthcare has been destroyed in Serbia; everything has become private. Everything is corrupt.” “During socialism, there was livestock purchasing organized in the center of the village every week here. The Zlatibor Agricultural Cooperative conducted the purchasing, and the price was known exactly. You would plan annually what you would breed, calves, cows. The Cooperative also bought dairy products.” 	<p>State behind money laundering</p> <p>100-euro pension</p> <p>Ordinary person disrespected</p> <p>Globalization, Chinese companies and factories in Serbia</p> <p>Foreign capital – bad</p> <p>Privatization and corruption</p> <p>Cooperatives existed and worked well under socialism</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LW4: “Cheese, cream, milk, livestock... you could sell everything. Now you can't sell anything, not even an egg.” • LW3: “The agricultural cooperative was closed around 2000. Around 2000 everything got destroyed, there's nothing left. Everything was privatized, you have nothing.” • Interviewee: “Do you feel that you, as local people, have any power to decide certain matters in the village?” • “We don't decide anything; it's all dictated by the municipality. When you don't have financial means here, you depend on them. If they fix the road, they fix it; if not, nothing happens. But look, it used to be different. For example, in the center, where the school is, it was all built by the people themselves. People back then worked to create something. Now someone comes, takes over, and abandons it. But everything has fallen apart. It means there used to be life, but now it's gone.” • “In Serbia, people don't sing like they used to before. There are no gatherings. We used to sit together every evening, play cards, dance, do something, socialize, and talk. We had parties, organized feasts, but now we have nothing. Nowadays, the main places are clubs and bars in the cities, and that's it. Furthermore, traditional folk songs and chants have disappeared. Serbia neither sings nor mourns anymore. You know, in the past, when someone passed away, we would mourn and sing for them for 40 days. Now even that is gone.” 	<p>You cannot sell anything – bad purchasing price</p> <p>Against privatization</p> <p>Feel powerless</p> <p>Municipality decides everything</p> <p>Before – people organized and built/created things together</p> <p>No more gatherings as before</p> <p>Traditions are slowly dying with the older people</p>
Local man nr. 6 (a journalist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ah, that's it. Power is sweet and being in control is a challenge. There's simply too much money involved, too much power in the game.” • “Moreover, when it comes to government officials, there's another thing to consider. Government officials are fearful individuals, but not fearful of the citizens. They are fearful of losing their positions, so they tend to interpret most regulations and matters restrictively to avoid any problems. At first glance, they will tell you “No, it's not possible, it's not possible” until you find some connection. Once you have a connection and someone from above puts pressure on them, and when you present all the legal documents or serve them with legal notices, showing that you are armed with the law, that's when things start to change. That's when they start searching for minor details and every comma, trying to see how much they can trim off from what you requested. And of course, there's the third factor, which is if they receive an order from above, then the standard phrase always comes up: “Why didn't you say that Pera is your godfather... Pera and I are on good terms... we would have finished it immediately.” • “We are a young country where public interest is not very strong. Public interest is not strong because we are a poor society where people, for petty gains and small benefits, will neglect the public interest. It's not easy at all...” • “Well, the Serbian Progressive Party (SPP) has this flaw. It is an incomplete party where all the power and authority must be held by the party president. The local board of the SNS operates under a system of trusteeship. The party presidency appoints trustees who live here. You have three or five trustees, and they basically do what the team from Belgrade asks them to do. They don't have independent decision-making or working power.” • “The SNS is structured as a party with a pyramid scheme. They operate on the principle of constantly attracting new people in order to have new voters. But you can only achieve that through promises and rhetoric.” 	<p>Power is sweet</p> <p>Too much money and power in the game</p> <p>Government officials – fearful individuals</p> <p>Right connections will get you anything</p> <p>Orders from above</p> <p>Weak public interest</p> <p>Self-interest over community best</p> <p>SPP – all power and authority is held by the party president</p> <p>System of trusteeship, no independence</p> <p>Pyramid scheme</p>

Local village representative nr.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We are used to building everything without permits, whether it's in parks, owned by the state, or the municipality. We build and dig without any paperwork.” • Interviewer: “What do you think would happen to nature if the government didn't interfere in local affairs?” • Interviewee: “It would definitely be better, that's when you return the management to the local community and municipality. You know, they've done centralization. Everything has been centralized, even this. And everything is in Belgrade. Unfortunately, everything is in Belgrade. What we have done at the waterfall is a prime example of how someone organizes, works, and pays all the bills.” • Interviewer: “Who are the investors building in Zlatibor?” • Interviewee: “They are all part of our mafia, the state mafia. It's the same everywhere, not just in Zlatibor. They are also building in Belgrade.” • Interviewer: “Doesn't the municipality mind that the mafia is involved?” • Interviewee: “How can the municipality fight against it? Or how can we fight against it? As a member of the municipality, the council, the committee, the president, you make decisions about the budget, about directing funds...you do that. But when an investor comes to build something, whether it's an honest one or a tycoon, they go to the officials in urban planning, not to the president. And you don't know what they do... you can't know.” 	<p>Serbian people dislike permits, used to building without papers</p> <p>Against centralization</p> <p>Management should be returned to the local community</p> <p>Investors in Zlatibor – state mafia</p> <p>Investors and “tycoons” have their ways of avoiding local government</p>
Local man nr. 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They fucked us over since 2000, they ruined everything.” 	2000s privatization Neoliberal privatization
Local man nr.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We want to join the EU, but I don't understand why or what they have to offer us. What values do they bring us? Not tradition for sure.” 	Against EU

Participant	Quote/Note on Inequality	Codes
Local woman nr. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “... However, if a politician comes along who finds Semegnjevo appealing and wants to build here, they will allow him to do so. Not just in Semegnjevo, but anywhere. [Because of his power, money, and connections]” 	A politician (person in power) can get all approvals to build easily
Local man nr. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “All this stuff about the nature park is nonsense. If you're on good terms with those people from the nature park, they won't bother you. But if someone comes here, someone who doesn't know how to handle things, then they will use that to exploit him in some way for sure.” 	If you are on good terms with NPZ you can get away with anything
Local man nr. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Local people cannot make one fence, but rich people with money can make hotels.” 	Local vs. Rich difference in what you can/cannot do

Local man nr. 6 (a journalist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “So, in our case, natural resources are a great thing for individuals who have the right connections.” • “Now, for the second zone of protection, they have created a kind of formulation which, how should I put it, goes like this: if I like you, it can pass, but if I don't, it can't. These are so-called permitted constructions of visitor centers and educational centers. What does that actually mean? It means that someone like Pera can build something we'll call a visitor center, but in reality, it could be a café. But only if Pera has connections. If Pera doesn't have connections, we will say that the visitor center (café) cannot be built there.” 	<p>Having the right connections</p> <p>Second zone – some can get a permit, other cannot</p> <p>“If I like you”</p>
Local man nr. 2 (a hunter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “But here in our park, the way it works is that if you come to build something and it's not allowed, you call the director or someone from Belgrade, some influential person, and they come and sort everything out for you, allowing you to proceed with the construction.” • “Nikola Pekovic (an influential basketball player turned businessman) was in Semegnjevo and announced some construction plans for the future. He will obtain the necessary permits without any problems, and it's certain that the construction will involve more than just stone and wood; He will most likely use concrete...” 	<p>Call the director - they sort everything out for you</p> <p>An influential, powerful, person will get all the papers they need to develop – no doubt</p>

RQ4 Power and narratives

RQ4sub1 NPZ employee's narrative: What is the narrative told by the NPZ's employees and management?

Particip.	Quote/Note	Codes
NPZ management employee nr. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A forest has to be cut selectively from time to time. Forest management is a science. Serbiaforests take only so much from the forest, they take only how much is allowed. Forest managers make plans and decide how much can be cut.” • “Private forests are the problem... people do not care, and they destroy everything.” • “We turn a blind eye to some of their [the locals] actions, we are not so strict with the local inhabitants.” • “If there was not for the ZNP, all of this region here [pointing out of the car at the big wide open fields and hills of ZLatibor] would be houses now.” • “If some houses are built illegally, without the permission papers from the state, the park rangers give them a notice to stop building until they get the papers, and if they do not ever get the necessary papers, the park gives them a notice to demolish what they have built so far. Usually, people demolish their own stuff 	<p>Sustainable cutting Scientific and managerial approach</p> <p>Blaming individuals</p> <p>Claims NPZ is lenient towards local people</p> <p>Afraid of development of too many houses in the park</p> <p>Ranger patrol for construction permits</p> <p>Demolishment notice</p>

	<p>before the demolishing agency has to come and do the job for them. Which also costs a lot of money.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We have 5-6 rangers.” • “The local municipality government and NPZ have bad cooperation, but the park can collaborate with some of the other branches of the local government (KJP). The tourist organization and the local municipality dislike us, the NPZ/Serbiaforests.” • “We are only responsible for checking whether everything is being implemented according to the prescribed conditions.” • “We had the cancellation of a building permit last year, that is, we reported it to the inspection. A woman built supposedly garages and a summer kitchen at the Tornik Mountain. But those are not garages... it's an apartment, one, two, three, four rooms. We reported it, the inspection came out, and they ordered her to make changes to the building permit. So, they wouldn't issue a demolition order, that's... She called me angrily, saying, "Who are you to prove what I use it for?" I said, "I won't prove it, but people will come to verify." It's the same with the Tribalion now. We will all take turns this weekend to see where they are going. They have to follow forest trails and roads, and not get of the prescribed paths. It's a mud racing competition. We simply must be present, and it's different when you are there.” • “So, you can see if they deviate from the pre-determined and agreed upon conditions, and if they do, goodbye next year... We had motorcyclists who placed plastic tapes all over the park and didn't remove them. They were obligated to do so according to the conditions, and we warned them three times, but in the end, we had to go and remove them ourselves. So, the next time they ask for conditions, we will be the first to call and say they won't get them. And don't let me tell you what mess they made... But there are indeed some responsible people who comply with the rules as well...” 	<p>Dislike and bad cooperation with the local government</p> <p>Controlling the region, making sure that everyone is following the law</p> <p>Cancelling a building permit</p> <p>Controlling a mud racing competition</p> <p>They can be the ones that block events form happening if they decide not to give the “conditions” paper – probably INCS</p>
<p>NPZ management employee nr. 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We are a slightly complicated company; our headquarters are in Belgrade. So, all the decisions need to go through Belgrade and come back to us. The Ministry sends the decisions to our headquarters in Belgrade, and then the headquarters forwards them to the protected areas responsible for that.” • “When we inspect the park, we are obligated to verify if people are complying with the construction requirements. That is also very important. In the unified procedure, when people build houses, I don't know if they informed you, but building permits are obtained through a unified procedure where the applicant submits a request to the Municipality of Čajetina or the Ministry, depending on who is applying and how they are applying. They practically obtain everything from that one place, meaning the processor of the building permit requests all the necessary documents from the relevant institutions in the area where they are working. Whether it's Srbijasume, Srbijavode, Protected Areas, EPS, etc. They call them holders of public authorizations, meaning both EPS, water management, Srbijasume, and ministries. They send requests to all of them, and once they gather all the information, it's called location conditions. It contains 	<p>All information and money go through the headquarters in Belgrade</p> <p>Controlling weather people have construction permits</p> <p>You cannot get the construction permit without submitting the location conditions to INCS</p>

	<p>everything, what is allowed and what is not, and then the project is submitted, and the building permit is issued.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Our rangers are doing many other tasks that they shouldn't be doing. Their job is strictly to patrol the area and monitor the work being done on the field. The construction of furniture should be handled by another department, but a large percentage of their working time is spent on building that furniture.” • “I always say this, these forests you see, large areas of these forests are state-owned. Serbiaforests was established in the 1990s, but before that, there were smaller local forest management units that managed these forests. Everyone can see when the foresters cut down trees. And people say, "You foresters cut down everything." So, the logging of forests is practically a visible form of management and caring for the forest. I mean, the old-growth and natural forests are original and natural. We manage the forests in a responsive manner, which means we derive all benefits from these forests, including economic benefits. But not at the expense of other forest benefits. We don't just go for ruthless exploitation to cut down the forest until there's nothing left. We manage in a sustainable way, ensuring that the forest is always renewed. So, in this area, there will always be forests, unlike private forests that..." [are clear cutting everything] • “No, no [we do not have any biologists or other experts working in the NPZ team]. We only have foresters. As for their knowledge [of biology and ecology], I don't know... Well, we manage a large area, nearly 42,000 hectares. The Tara National Park, which has a smaller area, has employed two biologists and a geologist, and in my opinion, there is a need for hiring such professionals. But unfortunately, our management structures don't prioritize that.” 	<p>Ranger's job is to patrol the area and monitor work done in NPZ</p> <p>It is not ranger's job to build furniture</p> <p>1990s Serbiaforests take over smaller local management units</p> <p>Managing forests in “responsive manner” and “sustainably”</p> <p>Deriving “economic benefits” from the forest</p> <p>Accusing private owners of clear cutting</p> <p>No employees who understand ecology and biology... only foresters</p>
<p>NPZ management employee nr. 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We have made a lot of improvements to the region, not only did we make new hiking trails, but we have also built a lot of outdoor furniture all throughout the park. “ • “As far as Srbijasume is concerned, regarding the areas where they manage protected areas, nature parks, and so on, they have never changed the manager anywhere so far. I have been working in Srbijasume for a long time, and I know quite a bit about those management units. There was one case where they changed managers, and at that time, it was a Tourism Organization or Association, like Kusturica had up there. That's about it.” 	<p>Bragging about hiking trails and wooden benches... only example of investment in the park...what about investing in the local people?</p> <p>Bragging about being good manager all throughout Serbia</p>
<p>NPZ management employee nr. 1, 2 and 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E1: “It's nonsense that they included Vodice in the protected area. I assume someone forced them to do it. I mean, there's no reason.” • E3: “Hopefully, we can remove what we think should be excluded.” • E1: “We should propose that..” 	<p>Proposing to exclude Vodice, the most populated village in NPZ, out of the park</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E3: "The issue of Vodice was already discussed in those meetings we had with representatives of the institute, the ministry, and so on. And it can be done during the revision of the park, in 10 years. So, in 2027." E2: "Park management can be changed whenever, but it's not a rule to change it after 10 years." 	<p>Revision in 2027 (10-year revision)</p> <p>Park management organization can be changed anytime</p>
<p>Park ranger nr.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "This park is a cake, and everybody wants a peace." "I was blackmailed into going to the SNP party meeting in Belgrade in May 2023 by my bosses, by people higher up than me. So were all the other employees of Serbiaforests and NPZ rangers. I was the only one from NPZ who refused to go. Days after the meeting was done, I was informed that, as a punishment for not going to the meeting, my salary would be lower. I.e., they we from now give me salary based on my education prior to university. Now I am just waiting to see what my next paycheck will be like." "It is like this everywhere in Serbia, in every state/government institution. You should write it how it is in your thesis, do not sugar coat anything." 	<p>NPZ = a cake</p> <p>Blackmailed to join the SPP party meeting in Belgrade – got lower salary contract because of declining</p> <p>Rotten system Wants me to represent the truth</p>
<p>Park ranger nr.2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I am not happy with the time we spend building furniture outside. I think that it would be better if each ranger did what they are good at. X, for example, likes to talk to people and is good with all the beauracracy stuff. I much prefer to spend time out in the wild. And I am good at biology and species recognition. They just do not seem to need these kinds of skills in the NPZ." "There is a lot of corruption, money laundering and embezzlement in Serbiaforests." 	<p>Is good at biology/ecology but his skills are not needed</p> <p>Corruption, laundering and theft in Serbiaforests</p>
<p>My field observati on and diary notes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note taken during the first week of my field studies: "Funny enough, Ana mentioned that there were some unpleasant people in the park, who often argue with the park management, and that I should avoid them. They said that it would be best if they took me around the place, showed me everything from their perspective and like so, I could avoid the "unpleasant" people. Obviously wishing to control the narrative. Note taken three months in the research: "I visited Bosko (parka manager) at his office. We had a serious conversation. He wanted to know why I ask so many questions regarding the park's economy. Everything was smiles and flowers until I started asking about money. He was defensive and very inquisitive and asked me to explain my thesis questions to him once again. I think this is the first time he realized the seriousness of my thesis." One of the days I joined rangers in the field I wrote: First thing on our itinerary was to set up a round mountain table close to the village of Semegnjevo. The reason for setting up the table was to develop more access to the villages and nature. Mainly for tourists. So we were heading in cars towards that area where the table was to be set up. The man whose property the table was to be set up at wanted the table to be as far away from him as possible. He did not like the idea of tourists passing through his fields or being too near him. So he suggested that 	<p>NPZ hoping to control the narrative</p> <p>Mentions "unpleasant people"</p> <p>Defensive NPZ management towards me once they realized how critically I am researching them</p> <p>The local man wanted the wooden table as far away from his house and fields as possible</p> <p>The table did not bring him any benefits at all</p>

	the table be set up on a small hill a couple of hundred meters from his fields and house.	
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Participant	NPZ on “Resource users” fees – quotes/notes	Codes
NPZ management employee nr. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I find it a bit strange that you're only asking me about the things the municipality pays for, but many entities are obliged to pay, not just the municipality. Let me read to you who pays. A1 Serbia (formerly VIP) pays, Cetin Beograd (a company that maintains Telenor base stations) pays, Ski Resorts of Serbia pay for the surface of the slopes, for each snowmaking machine, the lake used for artificial snowmaking, every tourist facility, every garage... all occupied space, practically they pay fees for that. Then we have El Paso City, we have Gold Gondola, we have Swisslion Takovo, the Zlatibor Tourism Organization for parking. Then "Emisiona tehnika i veze" pays, they are the repeaters at the top of Tornik, a company that broadcasts TV programs. So, they pay for that facility... Then the railway infrastructure pays for the railway passing through the protected area, 17km. Kraljeve Vode pays based on false information. Well, I mean, it doesn't matter, those are the data provided for the inspection, but they are simply inaccurate data. Knowing how much water they sell and export. Then Electric Power Distribution Serbia (EPS), Uzice branch and Nova Varos branch also pay, as well as Telekom Serbia and Electric Power Industry of Serbia, which is the largest payer because they manage the transmission line. [...] Electric Power Industry of Serbia pays the most, followed by EPS.” • “According to the fee regulations, we can collect fees for the gondola. For transportation, traffic, transport, pylons, cable car, annual fee - paragraph. So, here it is, the cable car for people transportation. The cable car route covers this and that area. And they (the municipality) pay a certain amount per hectare. So, it's all calculated. The professional services of our company went to the field with representatives from their company, and they went through the entire cable car route, they saw how many pylons the cable car has within the protected area, measured the base of the occupied space, and based on that, the fee is determined. So, together they said, the cable car route in the protected area is this long and this wide, based on which we pay this much per hectare. There is even a protocol signed between the representatives of the public company Gondola and the Zlatibor Nature Park, or Srbijasume...” • “I think it was signed and decided in 2021, but I'm not sure. Here's the document, the protocol of agreement between Gold Gondola and the park. Everything is written, who was present in the field, Bosko, the representative of Gold Gondola, another person from Srbijasume. They went to the field together and determined the occupied area, location, inventory of the object, number of cable car pylons. They agreed that there are 21 pylons... the area below the pylons...” • “This protocol went to the Srbijasume directorate in Belgrade, the legal department made a decision based on which they pay us the fee. But in order to issue that, an opinion must be made first, based on which the company paying the fees has the opportunity to submit objections within 8 days if they believe that what is stated in the protocol is not right. And based on those 	<p>Municipality pays for the small part of fees to the park actually</p> <p>Many state owned and private organizations pay</p> <p>Fees for the gondola cable car are high</p> <p>Protocols prior to deciding the price of the fees</p> <p>Filed inspection, commission and contract signing</p> <p>Possibility of filing objections to the fee suggestions</p>

objections, a new commission will go out. So, without a joint field visit, no protocol is made, and no payment decision is issued.”

- “Now, after all that (referring to the field meeting and all), a conclusion is made... Our legal department within Srbijasume creates a conclusion for each company that is obliged to pay the fees. The process for fee payment is initiated... For example, for El Paso City, the cowboy town. This conclusion is made based on the minutes we sent, and there is an eight-day period to address any issues regarding the conclusion. If no response is received within eight days, a decision is made that includes all the information about what is being paid and what the payment is for.”
- “I can't tell you [what the fees are invested in] in detail, but they are invested in furnishing, what has been done with furniture, and the development of 300 kilometers (about 186.41 mi) of hiking trails. I think that trail project cost around 3 million. [...] The development of those hiking trails, um, I think it's not yet completed. All the trails are now marked, signposts and directional signs are placed, and information boards at the beginning of each hiking trail. These are circular trails; you can drive to the starting point which is also the end of the trail. X oversaw the project for all those trails. The funds are used for the signboards, marking, and trail improvements. Most of the work was done by hiking clubs. X worked on the project, and his hiking club did most of the work. Two other hiking and mountaineering clubs were also involved. They worked together on everything. The signboards are still being frequently updated and renewed.”
- “We pay Serbiaforests for the furniture and signs from these fees. It's not something that comes to us for free. Everything has its price, and we pay it through our internal invoices. Because all the money we receive, all the money from the fees, is held in a separate account managed by the Directorate. As a forestry enterprise and a nature park, we don't have direct access to that account. In order to receive the funds from that account, we have to justify our expenses through our invoices for the work we have done in the protected area (and for the things we buy for Serbiaforests), and then they transfer the money to our account.”
- “So, we can't receive the money until we justify it with invoices for the work we have done in the field. We have a working unit that has the necessary machinery. They maintain the roads in the protected areas, and they provide us with the specifications of the work they have done, and based on that, we withdraw the funds. We even purchased machinery like bulldozers and trucks, which are used to maintain the protected area. They also work in other areas, but a significant portion of their time is spent within the protected area. And we bought those trucks using the fees from the protected area.”
- “We have to utilize all the fees we receive in that year; we have to. Whatever we don't use, we carry it over to the next year, but every coin has to be justified. So, every month, I prepare a detailed breakdown, whether it's salaries for the guards or invoices we received for something... every coin has to be justified. And no one else can spend those funds, only our company can use them. But as I said, we have to justify them to know how those funds have been utilized.”
- “The decision regarding fees is based on the law, specifically the article on fees for the use of public goods. So based on the law on fees, we create the

Fees investment

Wooden outdoor furniture (made by Serbiaforests) - place to money launder

Hiking trails + sign boards

The fees money account is in Belgrade, managed by the directorate

Must send all invoices to BG to receive money

Buying bulldozers, trucks –stuff they use for tree cutting... with the fee's money

Call it “park maintenance”

The machines they bought with fees money are also used outside the protected areas

Justifying how the fees money is spent...

decision for all our protected areas. Each protected area has its own decision, so we can adjust the prices in accordance with the law on fees. The law on fees sets the maximum prices that can be applied. That's it. Based on that, we conducted a revision of our decisions around 2018, presumably because the law was changed around that time."

- "So, you have a law that grants us the authority to collect fees from those who are obliged to pay. Our stance from the beginning was that we wouldn't charge fees to individuals who generate a small income within the protected area. It doesn't make sense to burden them with additional costs. Although the fees may not be a significant amount, we decided not to impose them on these individuals to avoid adding extra financial burdens."
- "Zlatiborske Elektrane (Zlatibor's electric mini hydropower stations) and Putevi Srbije (Roads of Serbia) are examples of entities that are refusing to pay fees. For instance, when you pass through Crni Rzav, the entire Crni Rzav River is piped, meaning that there is no living organism in its channel for 3 kilometers. We have disputes with both Zlatiborske Elektrane and Putevi Srbije. Even Putevi Srbije, which includes state, trunk, and regional roads, should be paying fees. These roads include the main route leading to Montenegro."
- Interviewer: "I was told that the rangers, when passing by El Paso City (cowboy themed amusement park in the park), must close their eyes. How is that possible?"
- Interviewee: "Well, someone must have told them that. It could have been either of the two managers. As for that, we had issues because he [the owner of El Paso City amusement park] didn't want to pay any fees at all. He is quite problematic because he has his own helicopter, which moves around without any rules. They had problems, we learned from the guards in Uvac who manage the colony of white vultures. They had a white vulture killed by a helicopter, and when they described the helicopter, it turned out to be his. However, he didn't want to accept any responsibility because he rents out the helicopter on an hourly basis. He has his own pilot who flies it. So that's all... Now, as for why they were told to close their eyes, honestly, I don't know. And I don't know what they were supposed to close their eyes to because he pays us fees for everything. He is problematic. We agreed with him to charge for fewer beds because he only operates for half a year. During the practical winter period, he doesn't operate at all, so it wouldn't be fair for us to charge him fees for the whole year. We can't charge him annually for the complete number of beds."
- Interviewer: "How come some people pay fees for the beds they offer, and others don't?"
- Interviewee: "Look, it is indeed silly, but we chose him to pay for the beds precisely because he generates a huge income from it and because he has those helicopters that cause problems... and we don't have any other way to somewhat keep him under control. As for private owners... rarely any of them who rent accommodation have registered companies; they do it under the umbrella of agricultural households or something like that, I don't know. So, for now, we don't plan to charge them for beds."
- Interviewer: "Is he the only one who pays for beds in the entire park?"

Law on collecting fees for the "use of public goods". Dictates their maximum prices.

Choose not to collect fees from single individuals who earn little. (Possibly to avoid revolting?)

Bigger organizations can refuse to pay

Hydropower stations bad for the river and its ecosystem

Rangers have been told to close their eyes when driving past El Paso City

Problematic individual with a personal illegal helicopter

Killed a white vulture

He has money and right connections, so rangers can just "let him be"

No other way to keep him under control than "fees"... But that is not really control?

Only person paying for bed fees in the park

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewee: “Yes, he's the only one. Indeed, there's no one else to charge. In that part of the park, you only have two places with beds when you head towards Ljubis. There's Boskova Voda with five bed sets; it's a family-owned business, the man works with his wife and children, so it would be silly to charge them... We don't have many tourist hospitality facilities in that area. On Tornik, there are some, but we charge fees to the ski resort, so we'll see what happens when the owners of the ski resort change..” “There's also this one property owned by Vuk Drašković's (famous politician and writer) brother. Owner of the Swisslion Takovo company. The property is registered under the company. Officially, they don't have apartments, but it's possible that they have something for friends... I assume it's only for friends. They have a huge estate there. Dozens of hectares are fenced off. There's a helipad right next to the road. And he pays some fees, but I think he doesn't have permission for that helipad. The helipad is unofficial. He can't officially obtain permission for that helipad.” Interviewer: “But is the second helipad in El Paso legal?” Interviewee: “No, it is not. But you see, he pays, Swisslion owner pays fees for the helipad... I don't have the solution here, I can't tell you exactly how much he pays, but he does pay...” 	<p>Does not want to charge a family business with very few beds</p> <p>Unofficial apartment - “for friends”</p> <p>Illegal helipad nr. 2</p> <p>Pays fees to NPZ for the illegal helipad</p>
<p>NPZ management employee nr. 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “No [the “Tribalion” competition organization does not pay event fees], but if we had the opportunity, we would charge a fee for that as well. However, it's just... there is some agreement that those things should not be paid for... But we do charge fees for the jeep rallies - off-road competitions.” 	<p>Private agreement between someone that some organizations do not have to pay fees...</p>

RQ4sub2 “Serbiaforests” narrative: What is “Serbiaforests” narrative?

Serbiaforest narrative	codes
<p><i>The enterprise began its operations on October 1st, 1991, in accordance with the Law on Forests, with the aim of managing forests, protected natural assets, and hunting grounds in an integrated and sustainable manner. This is done in accordance with the principles of sustainable forestry and profitability, with the added objectives of increasing forest cover and improving the existing forestry fund in the Republic of Serbia. (From https://srbijasume.rs/)</i></p> <p><i>Mission from the plan 2017-2027:</i></p> <p><i>The company implements the concept of integrated natural resource management, with the aim of providing sustainable use of the natural potential of forest areas and the business capacity of the company, to ensure profits that will enable the implementation of measures for the protection and improvement of the state of forests, as well as the development of the company's business capacity. The economic function of forests implies the use of forest products and the valorization of the general beneficial functions of forests in order to achieve positive business results.</i></p> <p>Corporate management approach:</p> <p><i>Corporate governance in the public enterprise 'Srbijasume' encompasses a set of relationships between the director, the supervisory board, the owner, i.e. the Government of the Republic of Serbia</i></p>	<p>1991</p> <p>Principles of sustainable forestry and profitability</p> <p>Business</p> <p>Profits</p> <p>Economic function forests</p> <p>Corporate Governance</p> <p>Managerial approach</p> <p>Capitalism</p>

<p><i>as the representative of the owner, employees, and other interested parties. Corporate governance also provides a structure through which the company's goals and means of achieving those goals and monitoring results are determined. The aim of corporate governance is to achieve the maximum level of efficiency and profitability of the enterprise. (from the plan 2017-2027)</i></p> <p><i>The relationship between humans and forests, as well as their purpose, has changed over time and has been conditioned by existing socio-economic conditions, which have affected both the state of forests and forest ecosystems, as well as the state of nature as a whole. In the past, due to the denser population of rural areas, forests around the world were exposed to unregulated management, which included grazing, using wood for fuel and construction, as well as for charcoal production and more. (website)</i></p> <p><i>The forest presents a renewable natural resource that offers different potential uses, which are determined by the habitat conditions and the developmental stage. In the last three centuries, forests have been managed based on the principle of sustainable yield (maintaining a balance between forest yield and growth). [...]</i></p> <p><i>The modern principle of sustainable forest management is derived from the principle of sustainable yield, which involves managing and using forests and forest land in such a way and to such an extent that biodiversity is preserved and the productivity, renewal, vitality, and potential of forests are at a level that would satisfy appropriate ecological, economic, and social needs of present and future generations, both at the local and national levels, without endangering or damaging other ecosystems.</i></p> <p><i>Forest management in forest areas of the Republic of Serbia is based on principles of sustainable forest management, where sustainable yield, production, and revenue are ensured, and in the end, sustainability as a balance of use and production is achieved while preserving and improving biodiversity. (website)</i></p> <p><i>State forests, given their specific public function, are considered a specific state capital, and the state as the owner of this capital has two basic interests regarding forests: the value of this capital (forests) must not be reduced, and it must be increased, and the state as the owner requires the realization of multiple benefits from this capital (forests). The basic goal of managing state forests is to ensure sustainable development of the state forestry sector, as well as to create the highest possible additional value of forest products. (2017-2027 plan)</i></p> <p><i>Forest management planning is central in all Srbijasume's activities, and refers to a series of organized activities that utilize a specific methodology for gathering and analyzing data to produce forest management plans and other planning documents. The management unit serves as the fundamental planning unit, and the forest management plan serves as the key planning document. The State Enterprise for Forest Management "Srbijašume" oversees 347 management units, each of which has a current 10-year forest management plan. Typically, 34-35 new forest management plans are created annually. (website)</i></p> <p><i>In economic terms, the production of wood assortments represents the most important core activity of the Enterprise. [...] The production of wood assortments at the Enterprise level has been increasing year by year and the current level of production amounts to just over 1,450,000 m3 of net wood assortments annually. (website)</i></p>	<p>Centralization</p> <p>What is unregulated management according to them? Are they hinting at the tragedy of the common kind of thinking?</p> <p>Forest= a renewable natural resource. Critique the idea of a "natural resource"</p> <p>Their definition of the principle of "sustainable yield" - critique from resilience theory</p> <p>Capital = forest "Capital must not be reduced"</p> <p>As high as possible additional value</p> <p>Serbiaforests' managerial thinking</p> <p>Wood production Growth mindset Wood assortment production-</p> <p>Mechanization – seen as necessary - a primary</p>
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<p><i>Mechanization in forestry is necessary to achieve optimal forest openness (construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of forest roads and railways), as well as for logging, wood processing, and transportation. Investing in innovation of mechanization and equipment for forestry work is a primary determination of the company. (website)</i></p>	<p>determination of the company</p> <p>This is also what some of the NPZ fees money goes to</p>
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RQ4sub3 Institute for nature conservation of Serbia's narrative: What is the INCS's narrative?

	INCS analysis (INCS's and ministry's narrative)	Codes
My field observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The director of INCS was for the first time in the area and kept proclaiming how beautiful it is. It got me wondering, she had no idea about this region, its peoples or customs yet INCS and the state's role to protect NPZ had such a huge effect on the local people. This shows how removed INCS is from the on the ground reality • People from INCS showed what looked like genuine interest in lessening the negative impact of NPZ on the local people and their livelihoods. They seemed to think it was a shame if the local people do not get a permit to build simple houses or develop their agricultural households, lands, subsistence, business. And said that they wanted to figure out how they could make a difference between developers interested in profit only vs local people simply trying to make a living / regarding the building and development applications. They would like to know who is who, so that they could be easier on the local people. That is at least what it sounded like. • Whilst in a meeting with INCS, one NPZ management employee had one specific case to present, a local man trying to build a tiny house on his land inside the park. For some reason, NPZ employee decided to present this man's case specifically and to single it out. Possibly the two are connected somehow, friends, family, money... Anyways, NPZ employee was hoping that the people from INCS could do something to make sure that the man gets approval and a permit to build. This shows how many things in Serbia work... through connections. 	<p>INCS - Setting rules and laws on places and people they know very little if anything about</p> <p>INCS aware of the restrictions imposed on the local people</p> <p>Showing willingness to change/compromise</p> <p>NPZ management employee hoping to get a construction approval for a local man – connections</p>
INCS employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “People can build in the areas predicted for building and development by the municipalities spatial plan, even if they find themselves in the park.” • “I find development and construction is the most problematic and also the biggest issue NPZ has. A lot of it is illegal, since people are not getting permits to build.” • “Development investors are a part of the problem. There is a difference between the local people and the “outsiders” (investors) trying to build something in the area. And that should also be recognized in the papers and be one of the deciding factors in who gets the permit and not.” • “We are there to check the state of the park and the working of the park managers and rangers. We do this every five years, and since it is 2022, it has been 5 years since 2017.” 	<p>Thinks that it is ok that people can build in designated land for development</p> <p>Finds illegal development/construction most problematic</p> <p>Development investors vs. Local people</p> <p>5-year check up</p>

Ministry of Agriculture and Nature Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Currently, in Serbia, 6.54% of the territory is designated as 'republican interest' and protected, and according to the spatial plan of the Government of Serbia, the goal is to reach 12% by 2020. This is one of the tasks that we all need to accomplish together, as it is one of the conditions for joining the European Union." (NPZ public discussion 2017) 	Goal of 12% by 2020 protection
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INCS analysis text and web	Codes
<p><i>Protection of areas is carried out through multidisciplinary field research and evaluation of natural phenomena, processes, objects, areas, resources, and territorial units, as well as through the processing of necessary scientific, technical, planning, and documentation material for the preparation of protection studies as professional grounds for initiating proceedings for the adoption of acts on protection. Additionally, the protection of areas is carried out through revisions of protected areas, professional supervision, determination and guidance of active protection measures, etc. Working on the protection of areas is of a multidisciplinary character, engaging all capacities of the Institute and representing a continuous process of monitoring the state of nature.</i></p> <p><i>Expert supervision and assistance to managers will be directed towards regular monitoring of the state of nature in protected areas, especially in situations where various activities are undertaken that are estimated to threaten, damage or destroy natural assets or their parts. It is expected that through expert supervision and assistance in the conservation of natural resources and their sustainable use, cooperation with managers of protected areas, local communities, local self-government bodies, space and resource users, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders will improve. (From the study)</i></p> <p><i>The Zlatibor Nature Park extends across the territories of the municipalities of Nova Varos, Priboj, Uzice, and Cajetina (Zlatibor district). By developing successful communication and cooperation with representatives of local municipalities, as well as different target groups of the population, a purposeful, controlled, and sustainable use within the management of protected areas would be further defined and ensured. (From the study)</i></p> <p><i>The manager of a protected area is required to inform the public about the proposal of the Management Plan for the area, which includes allowing for public review of the proposed plan. The public review period lasts for 30 days and is organized and conducted by the area manager. As part of the public review process, the manager is also required to hold a public hearing. (From the study)</i></p> <p><i>Public presentations of the Study of the Protection of Zlatibor Nature Park are only part of the necessary communication strategy aimed at gaining support from the local population and local self-government for the natural resource management program and protection principles. During the valorisation of the area and determining all relevant facts, talks were held with representatives of local self-government. Expert collaborators from the Institute visited the municipality on two occasions and met with representatives of the municipal administration of Cajetina. (From the study)</i></p> <p><i>Possible interests and needs of interested parties, primarily the local population, which may have an impact on the implementation and effects of nature protection, have been considered based on</i></p>	<p>How they talk about nature protection</p> <p>INCS is supposed to check Serbiaforests activities</p> <p>Expert supervision – in their words</p> <p>Approach to local people/consultation process</p> <p>Did not last for 30 days as it says here that it should</p> <p>INCS’s communication strategy</p> <p>INCS claims to have consulted these</p>

adopted development documents that are based on strategic development documents of the Republic of Serbia:

*Biomass potentials in the municipality of Čajetina, study (2014),
Local waste management plan in the municipality of Čajetina (2014),
Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Čajetina 2010-2020,
Business (master) plan of the tourist destination Zlatibor-Zlatar (2007),
Local ecological action plan of the Municipality of Čajetina 2013-2017.
(From the study)*

Since the state forests on this territory are one of the main natural values, and since this enterprise has the necessary material, technical and professional capacities, "Serbia Forests" is interested in becoming the manager of this protected natural resource.

*A particular task in the process of protecting the "Zlatibor" Nature Park, as well as in the successful implementation of the protection program, is to raise public awareness about the exceptional natural values of this area. This includes not only **improving the awareness of the local population** as a partner in protection, but also raising awareness among the wider public. [...] The return of Zlatibor as a symbol of **untouched exciting nature** in the citizens' consciousness will contribute to improving the socio-economic effects of protection.*

Identified threats by the INCS

Tourism:

Incorrectly conceived tourism development principles and excessive tourist presence in this area can lead to various types of pollution:

The absence of a system for wastewater treatment from tourist facilities endangers watercourses and soil; The movement of motorized tourists increases the concentration of exhaust gases and noise; Camping outside designated areas, uncontrolled disposal of waste, and fire burning cause soil pollution; Unplanned and massive construction of facilities, transportation, and other infrastructure can lead to the disturbance of the original appearance and authentic values of the natural landscape; Intensive tourist movements lead to increased, and very often uncontrolled, consumption of drinking water and electricity.

To avoid mistakes similar to those in other mountainous areas and ensure sustainable development of all types of tourism, uncontrolled and unbalanced tourism development (construction of tourist capacities, urbanization) should be prevented without appropriate documentation and necessary prior establishment/built infrastructure.

All the time, logging was being done on a larger scale for the extraction of resin, tar, and charcoal. Throughout the Middle Ages and modern times, livestock farming and tar production have depleted the forests of Zlatibor, completely altering the landscape's physiognomy. The once dense pine forests have been replaced by gently rolling vistas with meadows and pastures dotted with scattered pine trees. However, this has led to an intensification of erosion processes, resulting in increased and frequent flash floods that carry the debris of the decomposing serpentized peridotite and fill the

documents about the impact the park could have on the local people:

About who should be the manager

They want to "raise awareness about nature" and go back to "untouched nature" of Zlatibor.

Blaming the local people? Their awareness is just fine.

Untouched, exciting nature...

Their view of history and deforestation: pines/forests everywhere > middleages and modern times, grazing livestock > meadows and pastures

<p><i>riverbeds of mountain streams, forming a series of alluvial fans at their confluence with larger watercourses.</i></p> <p><i>On Rural (ethno) tourism - the development of rural tourism as a tool for economic development and raising the standard of living for rural populations, based on the principles of sustainable development and the preservation of natural resources in rural areas. The development of rural tourism provides opportunities for various tourist activities such as agro-tourism (participation in traditional agricultural activities), nature activities (recreation and leisure, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, cycling, etc.), eco-tourism (visiting caves, waterfalls, springs), cultural tourism (visiting monasteries, archaeological sites, etc.). [...] In order to develop and promote ethno-tourism, it is necessary to equip rural households with hygienic-technical equipment (bathroom per unit of accommodation capacity), educate them in terms of behaviour towards domestic and foreign tourists, build new and expand existing roads, invest in new programs and content to supplement the tourist ethno-offer of the village. This includes organizing ethno-festivals, reviving traditional crafts, and organizing interactive workshops to promote folk costumes, handicrafts, etc.</i></p>	<p>They talk/write about tourism . Especially rural ethno tourism, and how it can be developed but do nothing about it for real....</p>
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EU biodiversity strategy 2030, EU Natura 2000 network of protected areas and Emerald network narrative	Codes
<p>EU on Natura2000 and people: direct quote from the website</p> <p><i>Natura 2000 is not a system of strict nature reserves from which all human activities would be excluded. While it includes strictly protected nature reserves, most of the land remains privately owned. The approach to conservation and sustainable use of the Natura 2000 areas is much wider, largely centered on people working with nature rather than against it. However, Member States must ensure that the sites are managed in a sustainable manner, both ecologically and economically.</i></p> <p>Natura 2000 and landowners (from Natura2000 for Serbia website)</p> <p>One of the fundamental tenets of the protected areas network is to strike a balance between preserving biodiversity and sustaining economic, social, cultural, regional, and recreational activities in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>The overarching goal of the Natura 2000 network is to ensure the continued existence of Europe's most precious and endangered species and habitats, as identified by the EU Birds Directive and the EU Habitats Directive. However, it's crucial to note that Natura 2000 is more than just about safeguarding nature; it's founded on a broader principle of conservation and sustainable utilization, where humans and wildlife can coexist in harmony.</p> <p>Landowners in Natura 2000 sites can benefit from financial support through various grants, enabling them to adapt or improve their activities. In the past five years, hundreds of millions of euros have been allocated towards nature conservation funding programs in Natura 2000 areas, specifically for agriculture and forestry use, land management, and special implementation measures.</p> <p>Ministries definition of why Serbia should implement Natura 2000</p> <p><i>Although the network includes strictly protected nature reserves, Natura 2000 also advocates a broader approach to conservation and sustainable use of protected areas, focused on people working</i></p>	<p>https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm</p> <p>Promotes community-based conservation</p> <p>Natura: safeguradin nature + humans and wildlife co-existing in harmony</p> <p>Grants for Natura 2000 landowners in EU member states</p>

<p><i>with nature. Due to each site's uniqueness, the network prioritizes finding local solutions to local management issues in close collaboration with landowners, stakeholders, and interested parties.</i></p> <p><i>Why is it beneficial for a country to implement the Natura 2000 network? There are several advantages for a country to designate the Natura 2000 network:</i></p> <p><i>One of the primary objectives of Natura 2000 is to preserve biodiversity for future generations, as it is a crucial component in the functioning of the ecosystem. Preserving nature's precious elements should be a top priority for all countries, and having a list of species and habitats that are under specific protection is one step forward in this direction.</i></p> <p><i>The vision of having sustainable development can become a reality with the instrument of Natura 2000, whose coverage area increases over time, aligning with its primary goal of protecting as much natural heritage as possible in Europe.</i></p> <p><i>Another advantage of implementing the Birds and Habitats Directives is the enhancement of legislation. Many laws need to be aligned before and after becoming a Member State, which improves national legislation and ensures nature protection. Furthermore, having legislation that is created on the same basis promotes better coordination and better outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>Natura 2000 creates new opportunities in rural areas through the development of eco-tourism, sustainable agriculture, and the use of natural resources in a manner that does not harm the environment. Natura 2000 can become a significant source of income for local citizens connected with Natura 2000 sites. For instance:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- The development of tourism - the ecological network of Natura 2000 contributes to on-site conservation, maintaining <u>attractive landscapes</u>, and increasing their popularity, resulting in more visitors to these areas.</i> <i>- Once a country becomes a Member State, landowners located in Natura 2000 sites can also benefit, and financial advantages can be expected for the local population that carries out conservation activities in Natura 2000 sites.</i> <i>- The government itself can also gain funding and programs to improve the infrastructure's state (roads, sewage systems, bicycle tracks, education and training programs, competitions, etc.) in the Natura 2000 areas once the country joins the EU.</i> 	<p>Local solutions to local management issues</p> <p>Preserving biodiversity</p> <p>Towards sustainable development</p> <p>Legislative allinment with the EU</p> <p>Eco-toursim, sustainable agriculture etc.</p> <p>Income for the local citizens</p> <p>Attractive landscapes... that is the issue</p> <p>Funding programs for locals and the government</p>
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RQ5 Alternatives and Conviviality

RQ5sub1 Local people's proposed alternatives: What are some of the possible alternatives proposed by the local people?

Participant	Quotes/Notes	Codes
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<p>Cajetina Municipality Mayor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “So, someone deliberately did this, and we have been fighting against it. I hope that at some point we will be able to challenge it. We are not against nature conservation, but we fully understand it. We have our own plans, including a spatial plan for the Municipality of Čajetina, which includes the protection of river courses, springs, forests, and mountain peaks. It aims to protect what needs to be protected. Our spatial plan was developed by the Traffic Institute (CIP).” • “Not everything has to be concentrated in the center of Zlatibor. And why are they now questioning and criticizing the dense population in the center of Zlatibor? It's because people are unable to develop in a broader sense due to the nature park. They are unable to develop and utilize locations on the outskirts and beyond.” • Tijana: “How will you change the regulation? Have you already been in contact with anyone from the ministry?” • Milan: “We have already tried to write something and adapt it to the current situation... to write our objections regarding the special-purpose plans they have made. And, you know, if necessary, they have told us about certain areas that are under forest, like Tornik, the rivers... that if they are in a different zone, we should put them in the first zone. To increase the area under the first zone and say that it's not allowed. But to free up what can be allowed...” 	<p>Hopes to challenge NPZ in the future</p> <p>Propose protection of different areas</p> <p>Wants locals to be able to develop and utilize countryside</p> <p>Wants to change where the protection zones are</p>
<p>Municipality spatial planning employee nr. 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The solution is not to convert agricultural, forest, or meadow land into construction land. It doesn't make sense in rural areas to have a lot of construction land. That's why the spatial plan of the municipality of Cajetina allows for construction on agricultural land (of course, with certain limitations).” 	<p>Construction and development on agricultural land should be allowed</p>
<p>Local village representative nr.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The only option is to try something to adjust those protection regime boundaries, whether it is possible and how it can be done, I don't know.” • Interviewer: “What do you think would happen to nature if the state didn't interfere in local affairs? Interviewee: It would definitely be better if control was returned to the local communities and municipalities.” • Interviewee: “Do you have any questions for the ministry/institute?” • Interviewer: “Can the boundaries be revised in any way? On both sides, both there and here. Somewhere where someone lives, can a zone be changed or something like that without (so that there are no) any consequences? Also, how is it possible that one area is in the first zone, but three meters later there is no zone at all? Or, like here near the waterfall, it's the second zone and then there's nothing immediately next to it.” 	<p>Hopes to change the protection zone boundaries</p> <p>Better if control was returned to the local people</p> <p>Revision of boundaries – makes no sense to have second zone and 3 meters away no protection zone</p>
<p>Spatial planner (municipality temporary employee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The way spatial plan making should be done should start with questionnaires sent to the local people first. It should be done like this, the old way. The local person knows the best, he lives there. There are many smart people from the countryside.” 	<p>Questionnaires to local people should be the first thing</p>

Local village representative nr. 4 (municipality employee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “We are a company that is making an effort, we have educated ourselves and equipped ourselves technically to solve waste-related issues in a proper way. What preceded all of this, in the last four years, is that we applied through the ministry for a project, assistance to local self-governments on the path to the European Union. We received it in the field of environmental protection, and we defined the main assistance for us as the construction of a proper local waste management plan.” 	Recycling and waste separation on the way to European Union membership
Biology teacher, president of the NGO "Circle of Zlatibor"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The local elementary school and the non-governmental organization "Circle of Zlatibor" are assisting Cajetina municipality in developing environmental awareness among children and adults.” “There are numerous obstacles, ranging from low environmental awareness to the large number of visitors to Zlatibor and the lack of necessary infrastructure.” “It is important for children to understand the significance of preserving natural resources and sustainable development, as well as the extent of their own role in it.” 	<p>Environmental awareness among children and adults</p> <p>Perceived issues: Environmental awareness, visitors, infrastructure</p> <p>“Natural resources” and “sustainable development”</p>

Municipality of Čajetina	Codes
<p>From an environmental protection perspective, the development/planning of the municipality of Čajetina can be defined:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development of local communal infrastructure with the goal of preserving and protecting the environment. This includes building a sewage network with a separation system and a waste treatment plant for sanitary wastewater, as well as adequate treatment for collected atmospheric water before it is discharged into watercourses. Building impermeable septic tanks in areas not covered by the sewage network, until the sewage network is implemented (prior to this, the Local Waste Management Plan for the entire municipality's territory, including all villages, needs to be developed). Ensuring an appropriate waste collection and disposal system, collecting and recycling raw materials, and providing district heating. 2. Developing organic production of healthy food. 3. Planning the development of "clean" technologies, with special protection of the environment from possible pollution, developing composting processes and production of organic fertilizers. 4. Developing facilities for collecting animal waste in slaughterhouses. <p>Municipalities plan to decentralize tourism:</p> <p>A precondition for more effective utilization of tourism potentials and further development of tourism is the decentralization of tourist offer, by promoting existing and future tourist sites outside the settlements of Čajetina and Zlatibor, promoting and creating tourist offers that will include attractive locations throughout the Plan region. It is necessary to direct activities towards stimulating the development of tourism potentials, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, with a special focus on the protection of the environment, nature, natural and cultural heritage, and in line</p>	<p>Notice that none of these actions are strict protection of nature, but rather actions on how to live with and within the environment and how to manage it as sustainable as possible in their eyes</p> <p>So here we see the main difference in how the state and municipality see nature management...</p>

<p>with world and domestic demand trends, international market standards, and socio-economic interests of the Republic of Serbia.</p> <p>The concept of sustainable development particularly addresses and directs the development of tourism. Sustainable tourism means satisfying the needs of tourists while preserving tourism resources and the environment for further development and use in the future. In this concept, a tourism product implies harmony with the destination's environment, community, culture, and users. The concept of sustainability is equally necessary for both affirmed and unaffirmed destinations. For affirmed destinations, such as the Zlatibor region, this concept should enable the preservation of those resources that have made them attractive and visited. The development concept will be achieved through the improvement of material resources and adaptation of human resources to the needs of developing modern tourism, in the formation of tourist offers, in accordance with foreign and domestic demand trends.</p>	<p>Made practically impossible by the NPZ</p>
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RQ5sub2 Non-human ecology: How do the local people perceive and talk of ecology and non-human species lives in the area?

Participant	Quotes/Notes	Code
<p>Local man nr. 6 (a journalist)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Now, when it comes to ecology, we've [the municipality] had various ideas. There was a time when the idea of creating a solar panel farm for solar energy on Zlatibor was popular, and at another time, there was the idea of building a tire-burning power plant. This has been the range of ideas since 2008... so we're quite lost in that regard. I believe it largely depends on what seems interesting to politicians at any given moment. For example, we've recently built a wastewater treatment plant... and it's located on Zlatibor. So, ecology and awareness of nature in our area are still at a low level, especially when it comes to the direct conflict between personal economic interests and nature.” • “For example, in 2011, Zorana Mihajlovic was in the Ministry of Energy, and she granted permits for these small hydropower plants that were built in Jablanica. I, for instance, had a completely different view of small hydropower plants. I was convinced, "Oh, that's a great thing! We can have a small cafe or restaurant there. It will harness the water and generate electricity. It's a minimal amount, but you get a double or triple benefit." But then, by chance, I went to film something, and that's when I realized what it actually is. It's actually 5 kilometers of pipes, then a power plant, then another 5 kilometers of pipes, and another power plant. Essentially, you've moved the source of the river 15 to 25 kilometers away from its original location with those pipes because everything is enclosed within them. Meanwhile, they talk about the part of the plant and animal life that needs to remain alive as the biological minimum. Essentially, we should have a biological optimum, not a minimum. What happened? As you were digging those pipes, a lot of soil came out, and you narrowed the riverbed. So, you've stolen another 30-40% of the biological minimum. And from a stream that was maybe 5-6 meters wide, you've created a stream that's maybe 2 meters wide.” 	<p>Ecology in the municipality = whatever seems interesting to the politicians at the moment = profitable?</p> <p>Econ. Interest vs. Nature</p> <p>The devastating effect of mini hydropower plants Kilometers of river in pipes</p> <p>Dislikes the way nature has been affected</p> <p>Wants biological optimum, not minimum</p>

Cajetina municipalit y mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “And the resources are the mineral wealth, forests, and water. So, the land here is valuable because its value increases through construction, which in turn increases the value of the properties and the people themselves..” 	Sees land and “resources” as monetary value, as mineral “wealth”
Local village representat ive nr. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “This land is not fertile, what you see as soil is just dust. It's only suitable for grazing, this land cannot be used for anything else.” 	Land/soil most suitable for grazing (and small-scale agriculture but nothing big)
Local man nr. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “We live on rocks. This is rock. Only livestock can be here. Zlatibor is for barren cattle and fools. People have struggled to survive here. Only livestock, nothing else.” 	Land best for grazing (little soil)
Local man nr. 2 (a hunter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Now nature has been disrupted a bit. Sows used to give birth in March, April... Now they give birth even in September. Something has been disturbed in nature, and it happens that in September you have small piglets, and then the hunting dogs come and kill them. We don't report that to the hunting society, so they don't waste their tags. It annoys me, you know, even though I'm a hunter and I enjoy killing and all that... but when you see a small piglet and a dog comes and suffocates it... or you shoot a small piglet! Well, don't shoot it, brother. But everything has become about killing.” 	Wild boars give birth later in the year than before Resulting in more deaths of small boars (by hunters or their dogs)
Local village representati ve nr. 4 (municipality employee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “There is no recycling system at Zlatibor just yet, but we are planning to introduce a trash separation system, a blue trashcan for paper and dry waste and a green trashcan for wet waste. We also started a trash separation facility for special waste, such as metal, fridges, wood and such.” 	No recycling Trash separation system in planning
Cajetina middlescho ol teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “For the past 20 years, students of Cajetina school have had the opportunity to be members of the environmental section group. Proud of their role, they patrol the school hallways and remind their peers and teachers to turn off lights, separate waste, and protect the environment.” “The municipality is not doing enough about the environmental issues.” 	In school, kids are thought to recycle and turn the light off
Local man nr. 4, Local woman nr. 3 and Local woman nr. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LM4: “But you can't have healthy food at all. You see, you take seeds from the Netherlands, spray them with these chemicals, nothing is healthy anymore. Look, I take corn from Vojvodina and feed my livestock. That corn can't be healthy, it's treated countless times.” LM4: “We have our own seeds, for example, mountain seeds. But there's no one left to work on that. It can produce something small, for example, I have some of that corn for roasting, our domestic one, for flour and little cooking.” LW3: “But we have old bean seeds and such... those are our old seeds, we preserve them.” 	Imported seeds Fertilizer and pesticides – cannot be healthy Mountain seeds – too much work Seeds: corn, bean + They do not spray their veggies/fruits (difficult)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LM4: “And we don't spray them. We have potatoes and this little bit of fruit, we don't spray that... But the time has come when it can no longer survive if you don't spray.” • LW4: “Oh child, the land is poisoned. I know when I was young, there was no spraying (of fruits/vegetables), no planes flying and dropping all sorts of things. It used to yield radishes, beans, corn, pumpkins, and everything you planted grew effortlessly. Now, whether it's “slana” or “tonja” or some other force, it destroys everything.” • LW3: “It's about weather changes. "Slana" is a sudden change in temperature, like if it unexpectedly drops below freezing in the morning. It kills everything. And "tonja" is when it's sunny and raining at the same time, and it destroys the plants. They get soaked and then the sun heats them up, causing them to wither.” • M: “Well, [in the past] it [slana and tonja] did happen, but not like now. We've lost the spring here. There's no longer a proper spring. Due to our high altitude and the large mountains, autumn comes early. We get those sudden temperature drops early in autumn. And in spring, it lasts longer. You can't sow early. There's either constant rain or drought. For example, in our village, we didn't have rain for two months. If you don't have water, you have nothing.” 	<p>for plants to survive all the pest and disease around)</p> <p>“Land is poisoned”</p> <p>Wather changes causing plant death “slana” and “tonja”</p> <p>Lost spring</p> <p>Sudden temeprature drops in the morning – last long into the spring</p> <p>No rain or too much rain (drought or flood)</p> <p>Huge weather variations – little stability</p>
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