

## Debate about Šumava National Park in the Czech Chamber of Deputies

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### Abstract

This mixed research design study combines three different methods of corpus pattern analysis in order to comprehend the way in which the non-intervention principle towards ecosystems in core areas of Šumava National Park is utilized in legislation and parliamentary plenary debates. We summarize legislative proposals related to the Park, report on their legislative process and describe the evolution of wording and language nuances in different bills. This study also focuses on the content of the corpus of debates about Šumava National Park in the Chamber of Deputies between 1990 and 2013 and concludes that politicians use the situation in Šumava to support their political strategies, referring to the non-intervention principle only implicitly. Analysis of these two datasets presents basic patterns related to the non-intervention principle. The study concludes that the scientific approach and reducing political influence on the territory gradually disappears from the content of parliamentary debates as well as from the mission statement in particular bills related to the Park.

### Key words

protected areas; Šumava; National Park; discourse; Parliament; politics

### Abstrakt

Tato studie je založena na kombinovaném designu výzkumu a používá tři metody CPA analýzy (Corpus Pattern Analysis) – jejím cílem je pochopit způsob, jakým se princip nezasahování do ekosystémů v nejdůležitějších oblastech Národního parku Šumava promítal do právních předpisů a parlamentních plenárních rozprav. Shrnujeme zde legislativní návrhy týkající se parku, ukazujeme související legislativní procesy a popisujeme vývoj vyjádření tohoto principu a jazykové odstíny jeho užití v různých předpisech. Tato studie se také zaměřuje na obsah korpusu debat o Národním parku Šumava v poslanecké sněmovně v letech 1990 až 2013 a dochází k závěru, že politici používají situaci na Šumavě většinou na podporu svých politických strategií, a na princip neintervence odkazují pouze v této souvislosti. Analýza dvou souborů dat předvádí základní vzorce využití principu neintervence. Studie dochází k závěru, že vědecký přístup, který by mohl snížit vliv politických zájmů v území, postupně mizí z obsahu parlamentních debat, a stejně tak i z celkového smyslu konkrétních návrhů zákonů týkajících se parku.

### **Klíčová slova**

chráněná území; Šumava; národní park; diskurs; rozmluva; parlament; politika

## 1. Introduction

More than twenty years of ongoing discussion about Šumava National Park (ŠNP) is remarkable in terms of balancing the environmental, social and economic pillars of sustainability grounded in the requirements of local nature conservation authorities, representatives, contractors and other local stakeholders, and is the focus of a study by Zdeňka Křenová and Jaroslav Vrba (2014). From the time of its establishment in 1991, ŠNP has served as a test case for a very extensive debate in the Czech Parliament about the limitations associated with nature conservation and management of wilderness areas. Šumava differs significantly from any other protected area in the Czech Republic due to its potential to nurture wild mountain forests across large areas, which in itself can cause controversy (Furlong 2006). As the vast part of forests at Šumava grown into the final phase of their life cycle at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the bark beetle population became an important issue of park management. Proponents and opponents of human intervention were present from the moment the park was established: among scientist, among local as well as national policy makers and even the general public (STEM 2008). The central point in these debates may be the question of the principle of non-intervention, further examined in this text.

The principle of non-intervention does not, in the Czech context, have any formal legal or scientific definition (Čížková 2011, Zatloukal et al. 2001). In scientific circles, however, it is understood as a principle of "passive management in selected areas, which people can enter for educational purposes, but otherwise ecosystems are not interfered with" (Kindlmann et al. 2013). This understanding is close to the meaning ascribed to non-intervention in other countries (Arnold 1998). Kindlmann defines passive management, or "abandonment to spontaneous development", negatively in contrast to active management, yet without proposing an actual definition of passive management. Although the non-intervention principle is not clearly defined and causes considerable social and political controversy in the media (Činová 2012), acceptance of the principle of non-intervention while forests in parts of the ŠNP are influenced by bark beetle infestations is a significant requirement of the Czech expert ecological community (Šantrůčková, Vrba 2010). This controversy has not been claimed solely by the media, but is also reproduced by non-profit organizations (Bláha 2002), nature conservation bodies (Stöckelová 2001), and citizens through professional collaboration, public debate and civic protests (Librová 2013) for nearly two decades. Analysis of twenty media articles by politicians and environmentalists assessed by Michal Hořejší (2012) about Šumava using the discursive-historical method has shown that the discourse "is clearly defined by the central dispute concerning management of local spruce forests". In texts analysed by Hořejší, two topics dominate: the first is "an interpretation of what natural phenomena are actually occurring in the National Park", while the second is "a reconciliation of this with the institution of the National Park". Essential concepts of the forest transformation and of the natural state of wilderness appear in this media debate, among other topics (Hořejší 2012). Based on this analysis, the principle of non-intervention can be considered at least one of the crucial elements of the debate about Šumava in the public sphere, and is closely related to the growth of the bark beetle population in the Šumava mountains. Stöckelová (2004) presents a similar point when she says that "a key element of the dispute about the strategy against bark beetle in the ŠNP are questions about what is natural, how is nature established and what a national park should actually protect."

There have been numerous repeated attempts to solve managerial and political issues linked to the ŠNP by a dedicated, ŠNP-specific bill. Those who submitted the bill publicly present it as an effort to resolve the controversy associated with the principle of non-intervention by setting "clear rules". In their opening speeches in the Chamber of Deputies, promoters of the individual draft bills present the main argument as follows: "It is

necessary to establish clear rules of law" (Zajíček 2001a), "[The Act] defines concrete protective conditions" (Máče 2001a), "[by the Act] rights and obligations will be set within the area of the highest level of nature protection" (Kužvart 2003a), "[the aim is] to avoid collision in environmental management" (Filip 2007a), "the problem lies in non-conceptual application of the non-intervention principle of forest management" (Smutný 2011), "the proposal [...] aims at one fundamental thing: to provide clear rules" (Chalupa 2013).

We have used the stenographic records and legislative proposals that appeared in the plenary session of Deputies in the Czech Republic between 1990 and 2013 in the following analysis of the debate on the principle of non-intervention in the ŠNP. We will focus on whether the topic of non-intervention actually dominated the debate concerning the ŠNP in the Chamber of Deputies or not, and which factors and contexts influence the debate about Šumava the most. We may also be interested in the non-intervention principle as a concept that assumes complete dominance of scientific aspects and conservation requirements over any other political intentions such as financial goals and economic development (Meyer, 2004).

### 1.1 Context: proposals for legislative regulation of the National Park

We shall briefly discuss the development of legislation which has a direct influence on the Šumava Mountains area. Governmental regulation, which established the Krkonoše, Podyjí and Šumava National Parks (ČSFR, 1991) came into force in May 1991. In June 1992, the Act on the Protection of Nature and the Landscape (ČNR, 1992) was introduced, replacing the previous socialist legislation (NSRČ, 1956). Although this act had been amended thirty-three times by June 2013, the definition of national parks and their basic conservation conditions has been retained without any significant changes. The crucial formulation of the Act is that "[a]ny use of national parks is subordinated to the preservation and improvement of natural conditions and must be in accordance with scientific and educational objectives related to their declaration." Between 1991 and 2013 there were in total seven attempts to specify conservation conditions of the ŠNP by a specific bill. In 2001, the neoliberal Civic Democratic Party (ODS) made the first attempt. The government issued a negative statement on this proposal due to its low legislative quality, indirect amendment of several other acts and a legal conflict with the declaration of the protected area. The proposal was rejected during the first hearing. Another bill was also presented in 2001 by the Social Democrats (ČSSD). This time the government issued a negative statement on the inconsistency in the definition of park management and non-compliance with various acts. The Social Democrats bill failed in 2003 during the first hearing. Four years later, in 2007, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) also had a bill rejected during the first hearing. In the view of government the proposal had not been properly discussed and prepared. The government also reacted negatively to a proposal issued by the Pilsen Regional Council, which was presented and withdrawn in 2008 and submitted for a second hearing in the spring of 2013. The last studied proposal was prepared by Environment Minister Chalupa in 2013, which received a negative response from the Legislative Council of the Government. This proposal was nevertheless supported by the government as an alternative to the Pilsen Regional Council proposal. In May 2013, this bill received its first hearing, but the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies in August 2013 halted any subsequent debate. From this short inventory we can see that the legislation related to the ŠNP is, in the view of the Legislative Council, often poor and inadequately supported by the government. Moreover, proposals have frequently also been objects of political agreements and deals. The controversy surrounding the proposals repeatedly ensures a lack of support for the bills in pre-election periods, and thus their ultimate rejection. This is a fea-

ture shared by the Senate bill on ŠNP, rejected in the autumn of 2014, but which is not a subject of this study.

## 2. Methods

As the non-intervention principle is the core demand of the biological and ecological scientific community (Šantrůčková, 2010), as well as a highly socially controversial topic as documented in the text above, we hypothesize that non-intervention has had a strong influence not only on the wording of legislative proposals, but has also influenced the nuances of political speeches in the Parliamentary arena. These influences can be both direct and hidden (Small 2011, Johnson 2007), thus diverse methods for their exploration are needed. We also hypothesize that the content of the debates and legislative acts is not only influenced directly by the events and development in Šumava, but that complex linkages and political tactics or strategies shift these influences into forms which are not easy to decode (Morrow 1994, Hay 2002).

To understand the development of the political approach toward the non-intervention principle in the legislative regulation of ŠNP, we have to focus on various levels of political reality: from the expert and broad discussions presented above to more specific ones. Because of the nature of the described phenomenon, a mixed methodology approach is needed. A combination of quantitative and qualitative components in empirical research has frequently been used in recent literature (Greene, 2007; Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). This paper represents a primary level mixed methods study in which we collect qualitative and quantitative data directly through observations, primary source analysis and analysis of plenary debate transcripts, and combine these diverse data into single study outcomes. As the particular methods differ in regard to the approach of similar previous studies (Hayevert 2013), insight into these is offered below.

This mixed methodology design gives us a specific look into these layers of reality: first we will describe the development of particular legislative proposals by policy research of primary sources. Secondly, we will gain an insight into these proposals by content analysis of the sections where the National Park mission is defined. Legislative proposals were accessed from the public database of Czech legislation, which is part of the webpage of the Czech Parliament – [www.psp.cz](http://www.psp.cz).

In the second part of the paper we will investigate how the non-intervention principle is related to the content of the plenary parliamentary debates concerning Šumava. Parliamentary plenary debates are transcribed in full for the whole period under study and are accessible at the webpage of the Czech Parliament. To collect the studied data we used two overlapping methods: we accessed and downloaded complete transcripts of debates concerning bills related to Šumava National Park. The second method was to search for transcripts in this database, which included the word "Šumava". The entire word corpus of debates since 1994 was analysed using quantitative analytical methods provided by Voyant Tool software. In these debates, we follow the most important topics which lead to the further description of two issues: dispute over land use and description of the discussion on political communication strategies in relation to ŠNP.

This research design allows us to understand the main political topics in the Czech Parliament related to Šumava and how they were manifested in the text of legislative proposals and plenary speeches. This will also offer us a better understanding of the position of the non-intervention principle in these political debates.

### 3. Results

We have developed three sets of results. Each of them will be presented in a separate section. First, we focus on the development of the proposed mission of the National Park in relevant bills. Second, we analyse the corpus of parliamentary debates and use word occurrence analysis. Finally, we describe these parliamentary debates by way of content analysis. These three different approaches will be drawn together in the final discussion and conclusion.

#### 3.1 Development of the proposed mission of the National Park

The introductory part of the bills stating their purpose and subsequently the mission of the National Park has the biggest legislative importance. We collected these mission statements from all the relevant bills and applied content analysis methods, focusing on both conceptual and relational analysis. We concentrated on the definition of semantic units where nuances concerning nature protection and sustainable human development were most often contradictory or mutually exclusive.

Based on the analysis of the structure of sentences and word occurrence in the first paragraph of the first section of Acts describing the mission of the Park, we can trace the progression and interconnections of the particular bills. From this analysis it is clear that until 2008, Decree 163/1991 was formative for the bills. In this decree, the focus on nature conservation in the Park mission was described in 32 words accompanied by a claim that "use of the national park for tourism and recreation [is possible as far as it is] not worsening the state of the natural environment." Some of its formulation has also been adopted in Act 114/1992 Coll. and especially Act 163/1999 Coll. concerning the Czech Switzerland National Park (unlike its original version from 1995 with quite different wording). By a combination of wording of the Decree and Act 163/1999 Coll., two bills by Máče and Zajíček were created in 2001 that influence the wording of most of the subsequent bills.

The bill proposed by ČSSD MP Máče (2001b) is subsequently reconstructed in the bill by ČSSD MP Kužvart (2003b) and KSČM MP Filip (2007b) in 2008. This bill adopts the Decree emphasis on "the protection or restoration of auto-regulatory functions of natural systems." This formulation gradually weakens in subsequent bills and finally disappears in the bill of MP Filip. Even there, nevertheless, the mission of the Park remains exclusively focused on nature conservation. Wording focused on "use of the national park for hiking and recreation" taken from the aforementioned Decree by MP Zajíček (ODS) proved to be resilient. Although his bill was immediately rejected it was used as a part of a complex amendment to Máče's bill. Thus it refers in the Park mission statement to the "fulfilment of scientific and educational goals" and the newly "sustainable development of life of the local population". From the previously key phrase about natural auto-regulation there remains only the mention of "protection of natural processes." Although this bill was also rejected, the majority of the text is later reflected in the design of the proposal of the Pilsen Regional Council in 2008. That proposal is further revised in a version submitted in 2011, in which a conservation element is shortened into one phrase about "protection and conservation of the typical character of the landscape" and the human use of the Park was expanded to support "sustainable development of territorial administrative units". Compilation of wording from previous bills can be clearly recognized in the bill of the Ministry of Environment in 2013 (even though the source originates in the Ministry's political opponents). Its wording was directly related to the simultaneously debated proposal of the Pilsen Region in which nature conservation goals are completely lacking in the Park mission, which were replaced by a stress on urban development. A second major source of wording

of the Ministry proposal is a simultaneously submitted bill on Křivoklátsko National Park, which does not even contain a mission statement.

The weakening of formulations regarding conservation demands in the mission statements of these bills coincides with the later formulation of "Subject of Conservation" and "Conservation Objectives" in the text of these bills. In these passages, however, nature conservation is characterized by a list of sub-aims that include the cultural landscape, but does not include complex protection at the ecosystem level. The problematic legal wording and significant diversion from nature conservation ambitions related to non-intervention management is also visible in the official letter regarding the bill proposed by Chalupa, by member of the Law Committee of the Ministry of the Environment and professor of environmental law Damohorský (2012). In conclusion, we can state that assurance of the "non-intervention principle" in the proposed legislation (although it has not yet come into force) is becoming continuously worse, with a trend toward increasingly focusing on the development of urban areas in the Park.

### 3.2. Parliamentary debate on Šumava

In the second empirical part of this paper we shift our focus to Parliamentary plenary debates, which constituted and also advocated the above bills. To understand this body of text, we also used content analysis. Because of the extensive amount of text, software classification (via Voyant Tools software) was used to categorize the text, which was then analysed.

All stenographic records of parliamentary plenary debates made by the Secretariat of the Chamber of Deputies are divided into segments representing 10 minutes of plenary speech. Text with occurrence of the etymon "Šumav", can be found in a total of 221 such segments. Between 1990 and 2000 only 38 segments where "Šumav" was mentioned were found, compared with 181 segments between the years 2001 and 2013. The whole corpus of 221 segments was examined via content analysis, as described by Krippendorf (2004). Out of 221 segments, 69 segments were part of the discussion about individual bills regarding Šumava National Park. In 24 segments, Czech Switzerland National Park was discussed mainly in reference to Šumava. The remaining 128 segments were not directly related to discussions about the parliamentary bills. From the data it can be calculated that bills about ŠNP were presented in the plenary for over 11 hours. Šumava was mentioned outside the debates on these bills for about the same amount of time.

Although the term "non-intervention principle" (princip bezzásahovosti) appears in the plenary of the Chamber of Deputies very rarely (since 1990 it has been used only three times in relation to Šumava), when we use contextual analysis to describe the debate, the non-intervention principle seems to be its central issue, although it is mentioned less specifically. Instead of the term non-intervention during debate, the word "conservation" is used in total 188 times, and the term "nature, is in total used 147 times. Technical terms like "the zone" or "zoning" appeared 132 times, the term "frontier" 97 times, and the terms "development" 64 times and "agricultural" 30 times. Lagging far behind it, as the 314<sup>th</sup> most common word was "natural" with 23 occurrences, and 19 occurrences of "bark beetle". From these descriptive statistics it is obvious that *natural management* is not explicitly a prevalent topic of debate, but associated common concepts are very clearly present.

The full corpus of the extent of 56,362 words was further analysed by quantitative descriptive statistics using Voyant Tools. After removal of typical stop words, the content analysis pointed to the three most distinct and interconnected thematic areas: the issue of "protection", which is further linked with the concept of "territory" and supplemented by

topics concerning economic recovery. In contrast, the term "protection" is associated with the term "nature". According to these identified issues of debate, the substance of the dispute concerns the intervention or non-intervention method of the management of the area.

Name of legislative text	Governmental regulation on establishing a National park Šumava and determination of the conditions for its protection	Act on Nature and Landscape Protection (Zákon o ochraně přírody a krajiny)	Proposal by Deputies Tom Zajíček, Jiří Vlach and Miroslav Kalousek on the enactment of the Šumava National Park and amending Act 114/1992 Coll., On Nature and Land. Protection, as amended	Proposal by Deputies Miroslav Máče and others on the enactment of the Šumava National Park and amending Act 114/1992 Coll., On Nature and Landscape Protection, as amended	Complex amendment to Bill 937/0	Proposal by Deputies Miloš Kužvart and others on the enactment of the Šumava National Park and amending Act 114/1992 Coll., On Nature and Landscape Protection, as amended	Proposal by Deputies Vojtěch Filip, Kateřina Konečná, Marta Bayerová, Ivana Levá and Pavel Hojda on the enactment of the Šumava National Park and amending Act 114/1992 Coll., (...)	Proposal by Assembly of the Pilsen Region on the law to enact Šumava National Park and amend Act 114/1992 Coll., On Nature and Landscape Protection, as amended	Proposal by Assembly of the Pilsen Region on the Šumava National Park and amending Act 114/1992 Coll., On Nature and Landscape Protection, as amended	Proposal by Ministry of the Environment on the enactment of the Šumava National Park and amending Act 114/1992 Coll., On Nature and Landscape Protection, as amended
Code	Gov. reg. 163/1991	Act 114/1992 Coll.	Bill 936/0	Bill 937/0	Complex amendment	Bill 471/0	Bill 379/0	Bill 636/0	Bill 435/0	Bill 999/0
Start	-	-	10.7.2001	10.7.2001	9.1.2002	18.12.2003	30.1.2008	13.11.2008	12.6.2012	20.3.2013
End	20.3.1991	19.2.1992	-	13.3.2002	-	-	6.2.2008	-	-	-
Part	§ 2 National Park Mission	CHATPER TWO § 15 National Parks	Part One Šumava National Park §1	Part One § 1 Šumava National Park	PART ONE § 1 Šumava National Park	Part One § 1 Šumava National Park	Part One § 1 Šumava National Park	Part One § 1 Šumava National Park	PART ONE § 1 Purpose, Subject and Objective of National Park Declaration	PART ONE - ŠUMAVA NATIONAL PARK § 1 - Subject and Objectives of Protection
Wording	(1) The mission of the National Park is to preserve and improve its natural environment, mainly the protection and restoration of self-regulatory functions of natural systems, strict protection of freely living animals and wild flora, maintaining the typical appearance of the landscape, the implementation of scientific and educational goals, as well as the use of the National Park for hiking and recreation, not worsening state of natural environment.	(1) Extensive areas, unique on a national or international level, which considerable part consists of the natural or by human activities little affected ecosystems in which plants, animals and inanimate nature are of exceptional scientific and educational importance, can be declared as national parks.	(1) To protect the extraordinary natural values at Šumava is established Šumava National Park (hereinafter referred to as "National Park"). The mission of the National Park is to preserve and improve the natural environment, protection of self-regulatory functions of natural ecosystems, protection of natural resources, freely living animals and wild flora, use of the national park for hiking and recreation.	(1) To protect the extraordinary natural values at Šumava is established Šumava National Park (hereinafter referred to as "National Park"). The mission of the National Park is to preserve and improve the natural environment, protection and gradual restoration of self-regulatory functions of natural ecosystems, protection of natural resources, freely living animals and wild flora and maintaining of typical appearance of the landscape.	(1) To protect the extraordinary natural values at Šumava is established Šumava National Park (hereinafter referred to as "National Park"). The mission of the National Park is to preserve and improve the natural environment, protection of natural resources, freely living animals and wild flora, maintaining of typical appearance of the landscape, the implementation of scientific and educational goals, use of the National Park for permanent sustainable development of life of local residents, hiking and recreation.	(1) To protect the extraordinary natural values at Šumava is established Šumava National Park (hereinafter referred to as "National Park"). The mission of the National Park is to preserve and improve the natural environment, protection and gradual restoration of self-regulatory functions of natural ecosystems, protection of natural resources, freely living animals and wild flora and maintaining of typical appearance of the landscape.	(1) To protect the extraordinary natural values at Šumava is established Šumava National Park (hereinafter referred to as "National Park"). The mission of the National Park is to preserve and improve the natural environment, protection of natural resources, freely living animals and wild flora and maintaining of typical appearance of the landscape.	(1) To protect the extraordinary natural values at Šumava is established Šumava National Park (hereinafter referred to as "National Park"). The mission of the National Park is to preserve and improve the natural environment, protection of natural resources and ecosystems, freely living animals and wild flora and maintaining of typical appearance of the landscape, the implementation of scientific and educational goals and use of the National Park for permanent sustainable development of life of local residents, hiking and recreation.	(1) To protect the extraordinary natural values at Šumava is established Šumava National Park (hereinafter referred to as "National Park"). The mission of the National Park is next to the fulfilment of protection objectives and maintaining the typical appearance of the landscape, also allows its use for reasons of public knowledge, education, recreation and hiking, and to support the sustainable development of local governments on which administrative territory the National Park lies.	(1) To preserve the exceptional natural values of the most valuable part of Šumava is established Šumava National Park (hereinafter referred to as "National Park"). (5) The mission of the National Park is also the use of the area of National Park for hiking, recreation, scientific research and education, while maintaining the objectives and subjects of protection of the National Park under paragraphs 1 to 4, as well as the sustainable development of local governments.

**Table 1.** Šumava National Park mission statements in particular Bills with a focus on protection (orange) and development (yellow). (Source of data: <http://www.psp.cz/>)



**Graph 1** Words with highest occurrence in parliamentary debates on bills related to Šumava National Park and their interconnections in the corpus. On the left are the numbers of the legislative Acts and years in which they were a matter of debate. The size of the spots relates to the frequency of the occurrence of a word. (Analysed by software: <http://www.voyant-tools.org/>)

To find out what topic dominated the debate about Šumava in the Czech Chamber of Deputies more generally, we need to focus on the larger group of 77 segments of text which are not necessarily part of the debate on individual bills of the ŠNP. From the context of these stenograms it is evident that members of parliament use Šumava as an example of a marginalized region, allowing them to concentrate on the topic of social stratification, a major concern in Czech political debate (Šafr, Häuberer 2008). The Šumava region is therefore used in this context as a symbolic reference; politicians use its powerful symbolic and emotional ties to oppose their political opponents as it helps them to define the external enemy: during the communist period this mainly related to the Soviet political bloc, but contemporaneously also as the dividing line where legal intervention crosses over from the EU. The Šumava region also symbolizes positive ideas such as political dissent or personal courage as a reference to an escape route from the country during the communist era. As such, Šumava is a highly politicized region in plenary debates and it can be argued that Šumava is a politically controversial topic even without the issue of natural conservation. This politically symbolic aspect therefore enters and interferes with the conservation debate.

This quantitative analysis brought us a rough understanding of several facts: Šumava was discussed more frequently in Parliament after the year 2000 than in the preceding decade. Representation of Šumava in the parliamentary debates is highly politicized and emotional even without reference to nature protection. The topic of “non-intervention” is implicitly present, but hidden within a variety of other concepts making it more difficult to understand the attitudes concerning it. By synthesising different related terms we can assume that it was one of the important hidden concepts of political discussion at the time.

### 3.3 The political dispute over land use

Important parts of the overall image are also debates not related to specific bills. Of the analysed body of text of these plenary debates mentioning Šumava, out of the debate

about specific bills on ŠNP only 17 segments are directly dedicated to the environment in Šumava, while 36 segments are partly related. Of these 53 segments, 43 refer to nature conservation, natural processes in forests or bark beetle. In 28 segments the text refers to land use, agriculture and forestry. The scope of debates on environmental protection in Šumava is thus considerably smaller than the range of discussions devoted to other topics. This thematic distribution correlates with the distribution of debates on parliamentary bills mentioned above. The basic descriptive statistics of terms used in this debate has been mentioned above.

There is four times more space devoted to conflict of political competence than to issues related to the non-intervention status of the area: who is more competent to determine the future of Šumava - local or national representatives? Interpretation of this conflict can be found when we look closely at the specific content of these debates: the differences and disagreements between local authorities and the Ministry of Environment in fact reflect differing preferences concerning land use. We may illustrate this with ministerial quotes in relation to suggested land use:

František Benda (ODS), Minister of Environment, chemist:

"It's a symbol (*agriculture*) that will help attract tourism to the area. It is a thing that will not endanger the economy in that region, but on the contrary it may be beneficial to the area of the national park."

Libor Ambrozek (KDU - ČSL), Minister of Environment, botanist:

"[...] we could also argue that if the minister does not allow logging in Šumava, [it is reasonable] to abolish the National park, and so on. I think it would lead to an entirely logical proposal for the abolition of the Ministry of the Environment."

Although the first quote has significantly greater focus on economic profit and the second quote expresses emotions associated with efforts to ensure environmental protection, both quotes reflect the ambition of the members of national bodies to influence the future course of events in Šumava. As a counterweight to this position there are members who aim to favour the local people's role in decision-making about their surroundings.

Jan Látka (ČSSD) MP, electrical engineer; interpellation to Minister Bursík:

"We have been informed that bark beetle is an obstetrician of a new and healthier forest, as formulated by a certain group of "would-be experts" ("takyodborníků"). Fortunately proper forest specialists and most of the Šumava municipalities struggle against irresponsible adventurers who have totally destroyed Šumava forests with their experiment and want Šumava to become a wilderness."

Miroslav Beneš (ODS), MP, energy engineer; interpellation to the Minister Ambrozek:

"[I believe that the minister] will accept the views of [those] who do not want to live in a museum, who do not want to live behind the Iron Curtain, as they did in the recent past, but who want to live behind an increasingly growing green curtain, I believe he will hear these opinions and join the Šumava mayors who want Šumava to be green, not Šumava - due to the decision of administrators - that consists of dry, partly fallen trees, which will be destroyed during the next few decades."

Dispute based on values about land use as is illustrated in these quotes has been converted into a debate about the competence of actors to influence the future use of the area. This procedure may be advantageous especially for the supporters of the status quo.

However, an accusation of inappropriate intervention usually causes a significant reaction among opposing parties, leading to an escalation of personal conflict, which is a well-known and frequently described process (f. e. Zucchini, 2011). Opposition to authoritarian measures proposed by the central authorities is traditional in the Czech Republic (Illner 1992) and continues practically throughout the whole debate on the national park.

Based on our analysis of the wording of the political debates, we may better understand the reasons why the topic of "non-intervention" is not presented in its clearest form. As we have shown, politicians may feel more comfortable in a debate related to their political competences, which hides the factual content related to intervention in the area.

## 4. Discussion

Engaging in debate in the discourse of the struggle over political competence (which was analysed above) is the prevailing, but not the only possible model of communication. Politicians also use other available opportunities to relate to the topic (Meyer and Minkoff, 2004). To maximize their political opportunities, different communication strategies in parliament are used. Our results thus may be compared to other statements which we selected as significant examples of different rhetorical categories and styles in parliamentary debates. Within these examples, we identified three communication patterns, which are less frequent than in the aforementioned dispute over land use, but still represent a significant feature of political debates. Even though the main focus in the communication strategies described below is devoted to personal experience, the perception of the general public or struggle for political competence in most of the identified quotes (and definitely in those mentioned below) clearly present the topic of "non-intervention", which is used as a supportive argument. Description of these "other communication strategies" provides an opportunity to understand the previous results in the context of the debates and interpret them in relation to our main research question (concerning the role of the "non-intervention" principal in discussions about Šumava in the Czech parliament).

### 4.1. Other political communication strategies

In the parliamentary debate on the ŠNP, we can identify another three prevailing types of argument: firstly, an approach based on personal experience, which can be represented by the statement of Jiří Papež (ODS), an MP and electrical engineer, who, during the debate on Act 937, said: "As a true Šumava patriot I do not want someone from Prague or elsewhere to come and give advice on how we should behave, how to live and farm in Šumava. We have experienced enough of these advisors during past decades and we have lived with the results of that until today. Is it unfortunate that the common sense of local farmers has faded away." This style of speech does not take into account the professional point of view, and on the contrary the lay point of view is given priority, based on one's own or mediated emotions primarily anchored in local traditions of area management. This approach is often not chosen for populist reasons, but rather from the standpoint that the politicians should take into account their personal perspective first of all (Jagers 2007, Inglehart 1995).

The second type of statement that is to be found in parliament is based on the position of the representative of the general public. It places a distinct emphasis on the public interest, which serves as a supportive argument as well as the overall goal. An example can be found in the speech of parliamentarian Václav Hanuš (ODS), who introduced himself as a forestry employee: "Do not intervene in the name of nature. To grant exemptions, if the exemption is ever granted, is pointless and only serves to benefit the extrem-

ists. The result will therefore be exactly the same in the whole Šumava - dead forests and subsequent wrangling over whether to log or not, or leave the wood in the forest et cetera. I think no one wants to take this risk in the name of conservation. The forest is not a factory, and if something goes wrong, it is not remedied in a year, but in a hundred years." These contributions can be also characterized by the use of an authoritative technical and economic style of reasoning about natural systems (Getz 2001), awarding technology a higher degree of vitality than is present in natural systems.

But perhaps the most interesting is the argumentation approach derived from the political competence dispute. For example, Vladimír Doležal (ODS) states: "This basically means that we, as parliamentarians, give a blank cheque to the administration of the national park, so they could set restrictions without limit on owners and establish economic measures [...] in the ŠNP with possibly incalculable consequences". Recognising the autonomy of wildlife is undoubtedly a political act which requires a commitment to a long-term approach and ambition to guard the territory from other interfering plans. In this context, any fast changes to management of the territory should not occur. However, even this position is political and as such expands the sphere of political matters (Stöckelová, 2001). Of course, in this case, a non-intervention approach based on expert preferences limits the possibilities of political arbitrariness to influence the local environment. The struggle for power and influence on the development of the area, as mentioned above, not only limits material political power, but also symbolic power. This capacity and ambition of science to affect not only land administration, but also quite independently determine the extent of such influence is highly controversial even in countries where wilderness protection is better established compared to the Czech Republic (Hinchliffe, 2008, Konopásek, 2006).

## 4.2. Methodological issues

In this paper we described the Czech political debate related to ŠNP from various perspectives: the legislative processes leading to the proposal of particular bills, focusing on content defining the purpose of the Park, and the content of plenary debates. This represents an important but only partial understanding of the content and approaches related to debates about ŠNP in the Czech parliament. To get a fuller picture, we should use the semantic analysis methodology and get information directly from the legislators in order to be able to confirm definitions of terms and concepts which they use. These may be valuable tasks for further research as they are beyond the scope of this study. As non-intervention is politically controversial, it would be useful in the future to discuss the appropriate degree of favour afforded to the professional public as regards determining the management of protected territory and wilderness areas. Appropriate spatial and time scales when such management is applied is also a question which begs further investigation (Konopásek, 2008, Alphandéry, Fortier, 2001).

Although there may be some discrepancies between the analysed datasets, we are able to discuss some of the results which the collected data offer. In the introductory part of the paper we stated that setting clear rules for non-intervention is consistent with the reported motivation of all those who submitted bills related to the ŠNP and also visible in terms of social demand. Legislative proposals, however, are generally of poor legislative quality and are often rejected due to their controversies: bills proposed by regions or particular parliamentarians often lack the support of the government and legislative committee. They are proposed without previous professional discussion and the supporting argumentation that normally comes with bills proposed by the government. The controversy may be connected with the fact that during the parliamentary debates the central theme of non-intervention is not discussed directly and is overshadowed by practical issues such as

the definition of zones or economic interests, and particularly tourist development of the area.

Although we claim that issues related to the non-intervention principle may play a significant, but hidden role in these debates, reference to these issues with a relatively high level of social desirability is often highly influenced by the self-image of politicians and other speakers. Our ability to claim strong conclusive answers is thus significantly weakened. Analysis of these debates is also principally limited by the scope of the surveyed data as it does not include unofficial meetings, meetings of parliamentary committees or other occasions and factors which may significantly influence the opinions and voting patterns of the legislators.

## Conclusion

This multi-method analysis was performed in order to explore the fields of political debate and political proposals as a constitutive part of 25 years of stagnant debate about National Park Šumava. That particular debate represents one of most significant disagreements between actors in the sphere of science and policy-makers in the public sphere since the collapse of socialism in the Czech Republic.

This study is based on the analysis of different datasets – legislative bills on Šumava National Park and the body of parliamentary debates related to Šumava. Even though the plenary debates and wordings of legislative proposals have been analysed in their entirety, this scope of the surveyed facts certainly influences the outcomes of the study.

The tendency to explain postponement of a bill's submission and delays in legislative procedure with the argument that there is a need for a deeper parliamentary debate about Šumava is a spurious argument because parliamentary discussions are usually by nature either legislatively technical or highly emotive. Issues concerning the non-intervention principle are mostly neglected. In addition, the specific demands of the local population, relating to the marginalization of the region or to administrative problems in local authorities, are also ignored. These public demands are usually not directly linked to nature protection, and therefore they cannot be satisfactorily solved within that debate. Based on the quantitative analysis of the debate on six bills and other conversations carried out between discussions, we have come to the conclusion that the main factual dispute in the parliamentary debate about the use of the ŠNP land is engulfed in heated disputes over the division of competences between the central government and local governments. Parliament thus abandons its role to thoroughly debate the local impacts of its policies. To obtain an upper hand in the debate we identify three strategies which allow parliamentarians to avoid giving binding and substantive responses: referring to personal experience, falling back on the position of being a representative of the general public and disputing political competence.

The non-intervention principle is a point of professional and scientific conflict between biology and forestry experts about Šumava National Park. In our paper we hypothesized that the non-intervention principle should be a formative aspect of political debates and policy proposals.

This was confirmed only partly. The direct debate about the extent of intervention is almost absent from parliamentary forums, but is contained implicitly in most of the discussed topics. The current state of the bark beetle population in Šumava is influencing the shape of the debate indirectly, mediated by use of different strategies of political commu-

nication. As issues related to the division of competences are not presented openly and transparently, the debate is protracted.

The views of experts are not considered by most policy-makers to be relevant. Based on the evidence of the presented research, we can argue that most policy-makers prefer to be influenced by lay opinion rather than by scientific expertise concerning Šumava National Park. Continuous failings in political debates about ŠNP may be then partly explained by the fact that decisions on this issue have to be political, and the relationship between science and policy in the Czech Republic is not yet adequately established (Stöckelová, 2004).

The analysis of the description of the mission in various bills brings us to the conclusion that references to the non-intervention principle have over time been gradually replaced by the emphasis on the economic development of the area. The evolving language in legislative proposals therefore is in line with the trend of practiced political rhetorical strategies where references to conservation are minimal. "Setting clear rules" meaning the suppression of nature conservation demands may not lead to stabilization of the current situation in the Šumava. As noted above, the primary political concerns of local residents are often not focused on significantly different topics than nature conservation and the non-intervention principle.

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