

THE CLASH – SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMICAL CHANGES IN TOURISM DESTINATION AREAS CAUSED BY TOURISM. THE CASE OF HIMALAYAN VILLAGES (INDIA AND NEPAL)

Michał Apollo

Pedagogical University of Cracow, Institute of Geography, Poland

Abstract

Natural, social and economic factors all play a part in tourism induced change in the tourism destination area, especially in Global South countries like India and Nepal, where tourism is seen as an important component in the development process. The current study involved interviewing (n=162) the local population at three Himalayan villages: Sucto (India), Nagarkot and Birethanti (Nepal). Thus, the opinions and views of local communities concerning tourism industry are very important elements in the creation of the development process, as a negative attitude towards visitors can seriously limit development. The unique nature of the Himalayas has led to a considerable sociological evolution of these diverse mountain communities, which are very sensitive towards foreign influence. This delicate ecosystem is being invaded by increasing levels of tourism activity. This paper has proven the progressive nature (stadiums) of the interactions: initial, indirect and final, thus presenting that a tourist destination area that is more developed only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future. The process (tourism) that generates such a large transformation must be taken into consideration when developing plans to protect the environment.

This paper concludes that local communities must: 1) look more critically upon the quality of the natural environment; 2) constructively combine the new with the old and not lose themselves (tradition, culture, etc.); 3) develop new or redevelop old in situ services to ensure tourists have a worthwhile stay; 4) maintain control of the local tourism market, because when locals see no material benefits from tourism, they may develop open hostility towards visitors; 5) maintain the division of social roles, mostly to control the diversity of employment. At the same time, tourists should: i) have knowledge of the culture, customs and living environment of the local community to minimise foreign influence and not annoy the

locals; ii) behave as at home with respect to the customs and moral norms prevailing in their own living environment; iii) dress appropriately for the cultural circle of the destination area; iv) respects the principle of 'Leave No Trace'.

Keywords: *tourism impact, culture, nature, economy, Himalayas*

Paper Type: *Scientific paper*

Introduction

Nature-based outdoor leisure activities have been increasing since the 1960s round the world (Boyle and Samson, 1985; Cordell and Super, 2000; Jin-Hyung et al., 2001), and this trend is expected to continue (Ryan, 2003). Mountains, with their remote and majestic beauty, are among the most popular destination for tourism (Mieczkowski, 1995), which can be a key factor in promoting the overall improvement in the locals' quality of life through initiatives in economic development and environmental conservation (Nepal, 2003). However, the increasing volume of tourists presents a serious threat to both the quality of the natural environment and the unique cultural identity of local communities. Note that mountain areas

are home to some of the poorest people in the world, and are generally inaccessible, fragile and marginalised from political and economic decision making (Messerli and Ives, 1997). For ages, most mountain ecosystems remained in isolation from the outside world (Apollo, 2014a), thus helping mountain communities protect their traditional way of life (defined as medieval way of life by Craig-Smith, French, 1994). Currently, in the upper reaches of the mountains, a delicate ecosystem is being invaded by increasing levels of tourism activity. As a consequence of the increase in tourism, the pressure on naturally fragile ecosystems is growing and can lead to a serious collision (clash) between the totally vulnerable *defenceless* environment and bringing changes to the tourism industry.

The Himalayas, as a highest mountain chain on Earth, seems to be an excellent example when observing this clash, mainly because that over the last few decades, each element of the Himalayan ecosystem has been bombarded by the unknown; and what is even more important is that this process is currently running. Environmentally, the Himalayas are very heterogeneous and are mostly marked by contrast (e.g. ecological differences, changes in land relief), record landmarks (e.g. it has 10 out of 14 of the world's 8,000 metre-plus mountains and 100 summits of over 7,200 metres) and diversity in the natural environment (e.g. a vegetation belt) (Andreychouk, 2012). The unique nature of this region has led to significant sociological evolution of those incredibly differentiated mountain communities

(Apollo, 2014a; 2014b). While much of the region lies on the border between two of the largest countries (India and China), there are a number of small mountain kingdoms, each with their unique cultural identity.

This paper is the result of the study on literature and a long-term follow-up in dozens of countries around the world concerning the tourism phenomena, but most of all, it is a case study of three Himalayan villages: Sucto (India), Nagarkot and Birethanti (Nepal). The main purpose (hypothesis) of this work is to prove the progressive nature (stadiums) of the interactions: initial (Sucto), indirect (Nagarkot) and final (Birethanti), mostly in case of natural, social and economic changes. These factors all play a part in tourism-induced change in the Himalayas (Baumgartner, 1979). The research results have been combined and described based on the well-known literature models of R. Butler, G.V. Doxey and G. Budowski.

Background: Theory and Research

Tourism is a common phenomenon occurring in both developed and developing countries. The steady increase of the tourism industry in the global economy is inevitable for rich countries and, at the same time, is a chance for poor countries, mainly because it is the countries which offer services at lower prices that absorb the entire demand (Medlik and Middleton, 1973; Kale and Weir, 1986; Goodall and Bergsma, 1990; Go and Govers, 1999; Apollo, 2014c). Originating from the French word *tour* (Towner, 1985), tourism has been defined in various ways by many authors (Burkart and Medlik, 1974; Leiper, 1979; Przeclawski, 1993; Urry, 2002; Cooper, at. al., 2005; Weaver, 2006; Cooper, 2013; Hall and Page, 2014). Tourism is a mirage - a phenomenon connected with the leisured society at play and no less an industry than iron and steel manufacturing in its environmental impact (Leiper, 1990). According to A. Burkart and S. Medlik (1974), conceptually, tourism has five characteristics: (1) tourism is an amalgam of phenomena and relationship rather than a single entity; (2) these phenomena and relationships arise from a movement of people to, and a stay in, various destination. There is a dynamic element (the journey) and a static element (the stay); (3) the journey and stay are to and in a destination outside the normal place of residence and work, so that tourism gives rise to activities which are distinct from those of

the residents and working populations of the places through which tourists travel and in which they stay; (4) the movement to the destinations is of a temporary, short-term character; (5) destination are visited for purposes not connected to paid work - i.e. not to take up employment. A useful working definition of tourism is that of D. Airey and M. Nightingale (1981), which states that tourism is a temporary, short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, along with their activities during their stay at the destinations.

The issue of the impact of tourism on destination areas in local communities and the natural environment was spotted in the early 1970s. Is worth mentioning, among others, the famous book *Tourism: Blessing or Blight?* by G. Young (1973) or the excellent elaboration *Tourism: physical and social impacts* by A. Mathieson and G. Wall (1982) and its upgrade, with a detailed case study, *Learning to live with Tourism* by S. Craig-Smith and C. French (1994). In all the above works, the influence of tourism on many spheres of the human environment (i.e. nature, society and culture) has been described.

Tourism always causes changes within the destination environment. This influence, which affects various aspects of life, is described by scholars, governmental organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (reports), as well as residents and tourists themselves. In each point of view, the influence may be positive, neutral or negative. However, is very difficult to clearly (without doubt) indicate the direction of that changes The evaluation which is derived from each of the above mentioned groups may be different and probably will be different. It is quite obvious that each opinion will always be subjective.

The largest number of tourists commonly comes from developed countries (Global North countries, see Haynes, 2002; Solarz, 2009), while many tourist destination areas are located in developing countries (Global South countries). Most of the Global South countries (previously called Third World countries) have excellent and cheap tourism products, defined as a bundle of activities, services and benefits. This bundle consists of five components: attractions at the destination, facilities, accessibility, image and prices (Medlik and Middleton, 1973; Goodall and Bergsma, 1990; Go and Govers, 1999). Also, among the key factors determining the travel destination, as research literature shows, there are the availability of things to do and see, the costs related to these activities, the local climate and the availability of accommodations (Kale and Weir, 1986). Please note that tourists do not go to Global South countries because the people are friendly, they go because a holiday there is cheap, and that cheapness is, in part, a matter of the poverty of the people (Crick, 1989). Simply, Global South prices, which are on a much lower level than the tourist's country, attract tourists like a magnet. That is why developing countries are much more vulnerable to these changes in both socio-cultural and natural aspects.

A review of literature indicates that many host communities perceive tourists of different nationalities to be different and behave in different ways (Pizam and Telisman-Kosuta, 1989; Reisinger and Turner, 2003; Kozak and Tasci, 2005) Especially

when tourists originating from Global North countries are visiting residents of Global South countries, i.e. people from different social and cultural circles. Many scholars also note that when on holiday, tourists behave more freely and differently than at home (Kozak and Tasci, 2005) - they are in the play mode (Reisinger and Turner, 2003). Many tourists not only do not respect the social and cultural values of the host communities, but they also, which is even more important, treats the trip as an exemption from the obligation to respect the customs and moral norms prevailing in their own living environment. Such attitudes can generate - especially in Global South countries - the two extreme approaches (as well as many indirect approaches) from the local population to foreigners. These approaches can be divided after L. Nettekoven (1972) to (1) closed (hostility or at least distrust for tourists) or (2) open (look up to the West). In the first case, the xenophobic behaviour of the host may lead to isolation and/or internal conflicts in the future, while the other may favour uncritical infiltration of an outside influence.

Also, programmes concerning environmental protection (e.g. pollution) are somewhat at odds with the objectives of the economic community of Global South countries. Advocated in Global North countries, the concept of sustainable development stands at opposition with the main development objectives of countries lying below Brandt's line. In practice, when expenditures on environmental protection are low (as with many Global South countries), the symbiotic relation between tourism and conservationists and the lack of negative social changes within the destination areas are possible only when the number of tourists is small e.g. lack of sanitary sewage or waste disposal process). And thus income, which is strictly connected with the number of visitors, stops the development process. Assumptions of sustainable development, although bringing about good ideas (legitimate for the Global North), effectively block the development process in Global South countries.

Implementing sustainable development process is necessary, though not at any price. Without adequate financial help from Global North countries (which does not exist or is at a pretty low level), Global South countries are not able to implement all Global North guidelines. K. Marx (1867; 2015) in 1867 wrote that the country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future. Unfortunately, the above claim is still actual. It is necessary to give support to continued economic growth, especially in the Global South countries, but only to growth that is environmentally sustainable within planetary boundaries (SDG 2: Achieve economic development within planetary boundaries). This recommendation is one of the ten Sustainable Development Goals (SDN) as recommended by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network (UN SDSN) (see Sachs, 2015).

But what does development mean? Everyone, or almost everyone, is for development. More often people use this word as a slogan for what they simply considered to be good (Payne and Phillips, 2010). H. W. Arndt (1987) noted that if you ask educated citizens from both developed and developing countries what they understand as the desirable purpose of the development process, you will receive astonishingly different answers.

Mostly because all players (hosts, tourists and scholars) have a different point of view towards tourism, as well as to development and changes to the destination area which is connected with tourism industry.

For many people (including some scholars), a Maasai man using the Internet on his tablet in his village in the African savannah would be an example of the negative impact of the tourism industry; however, from the point of view of that Maasai men, it would be not only positive, but also unequivocal proof of development. Another example could be the road construction around Mount Annapurna, which of course has a large influence on the natural and visual quality of environment, but it will also improve the quality of life of the locals.

Accordingly, there is multifaceted clash between the intact natural environment with local communities from one side and the tourism industry on the other side. In summary, people and places untouched by globalisation collide with the globalisation brought on by tourists. For that reason, the opinions and views of local communities are a very important element in the creation of the development process, because a negative attitude towards visitors can seriously limit any kind of development (Williams and Lawson, 2001).

The influence of tourism on destination areas can be seen in two main areas: (1) the local community and (2) the natural environment. (1) The tourism development process and its impact on the local communities are described by well-known models by R. Butler (1980) and G.V. Doxey (1975). The first relates to the reception areas (Fig. 1), while the second to the people living in them (Fig. 2). (2) The relationship which can exist between tourism and conservation of the environment (Fig. 3) has been identified by G. Budowski (1976).

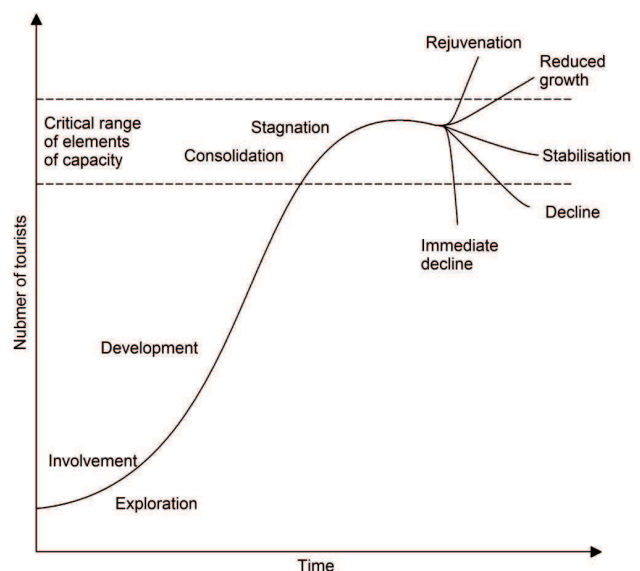


Figure 1. The R. Butler model of a tourist destination area life cycle.

For explanation see R. Butler (1980) or (for polish language) M. Apollo (2013).

Source: redrawn from R. Butler (1980)

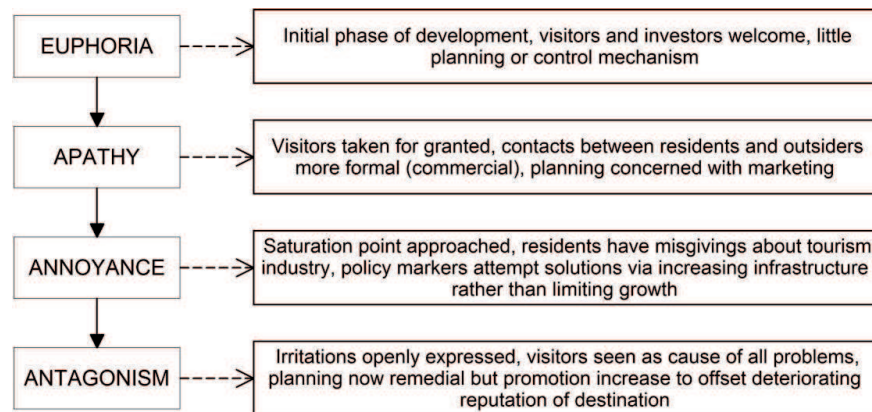


Figure 2. Host attitude towards visitors.

For explanation see G. V. Doxey (1975) or (for polish language) M. Apollo (2013).

Source: after G. V. Doxey (1975)

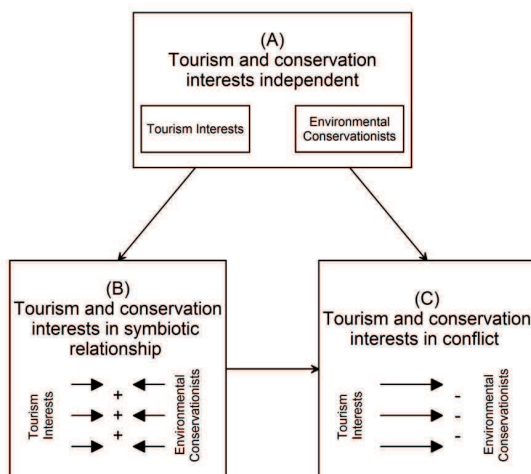


Figure 3. Simple tourism interest and environmental conservation model.

For explanation see S. Craig-Smith and C. French (1994) or (for polish language) M. Apollo (2013).

Source: redrawn from S. Craig-Smith and C. French (1994)

The ideas of R. Butler, G. V. Doxey and G. Budowski provide further insight into the tourism process. By combining them, some conclusions can be drawn. In the early stages of tourism development, little harm is inflicted on the local environment, social interaction may be mutually beneficial, and the local population may be very enthusiastic about tourists and tourism. Unfortunately, the next stages of tourism development, e.g. numerous limitations for hosts and visitors, can adversely affect the satisfaction of tourists and locals. This process results in over-development, overuse and antagonism, and tourism ultimately becomes an exploitative resource-destroying industry (Craig-Smith and French, 1994).

Study area

The arc of the Himalaya extends over 2,400 km from west-northwest (Nanga Parbat at 8,125 m) to the east (Namche

Barwa at 7,755 m) and lies between the Western and Eastern Syntaxis bend (Wadia, 1931), feature two rivers: the Indus and the Tsangpo-Brahmaputra, described as syntaxial rivers by P. F. Friend et al., (2009). From the north, the chain is limited by a 50–60 km-wide tectonic valley called the Indus-Tsangpo Suture (Valdiya, 1998). Towards the south it is ringed by the very low Gangetic plain (Le Fort, 1975). The range varies in width from 350 km in the west (Kashmir) to 150 km in the east (Arunachal Pradesh) (see Apollo, 2015a).

Various scholars have divided the Himalaya by their own criteria (Burrard, 1934; Bordet, 1961; Chatterjee, 1964; Gansser, 1964; Karan, 1966). The easiest way to divide the Himalaya range is into three meso-physiographic regions, i.e., western, central and eastern (Chatterjee, 1964). According to R. L. Singh (1971), these regions can be further subdivided into eight subregions, however with some modifications (e.g., without the Purvanchal region).

The Himalaya range is spread across six countries (India, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan and China), which are home to four distinct ethnic groups—Indic people, Tibetans, Afghan-Iranians, and Burman/Southeast Asians.

The number of hikers, trekkers and mountain climbers (mountaineers) has grown very fast around the world. The Himalaya are home to over 52.7 million people and had 46.8 million visits in 2011 (Apollo, 2015a; 2015b). A huge part of that number is domestic visitors (45.3 million), mostly pilgrims visiting sacred temples located in the High Himalaya (e.g., Amarnath, 3,888 m; Manimahesh Lake, 4,080 m; the complex of four temples at Chota Char Dham, 3,048–3,553 m). In total, about 4.7 million people visit the High Himalaya each year (Apollo, 2015b).

The study involved three Himalayan villages: Sucto (India), Nagarkot and Birethanti (Nepal) (Fig. 4). The selection of research polygons was preceded by pilot studies and observations that took place during several of the author's trips to the Himalayas between 2006–2013. All locations chosen for the study are accessible by road transport, and each of them lies at the beginning of a hiking route.

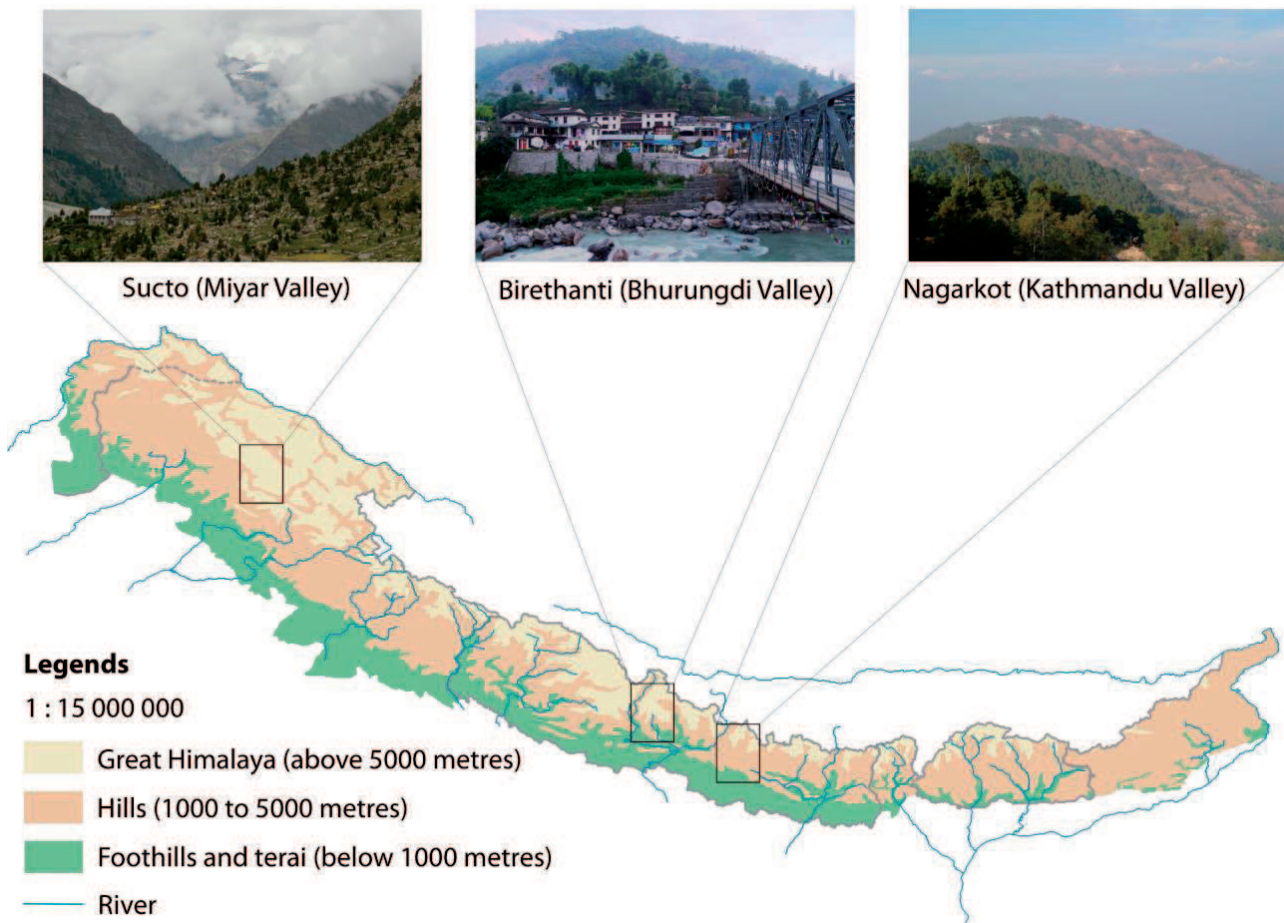


Figure 4. Location of Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti.

Source: completed by the author: Himalaya map redrawn (with modifications) from D. Zurick and J. Pacheco (2006); Sucto photograph by M. Zoladek, Nagarkot and Birethanti photograph, both by author

Sucto (Miyar Valley, Western Himalaya, India)

Located in Himachal Pradesh at an elevation of 3,448 meters, the village of Sucto ($32^{\circ}52'59''$ N, $76^{\circ}50'59''$ E) receives 605 mm of rainfall a year, and the average temperature varies from -7.0°C in winter to 14.6°C in summer (average 5°C) (climate-data.org). The village is home to 37 people making up 6 families (Padigala et al., 2011). Sucto is the last village in the Miyar Valley which is connected by road, thus most tourists start their trip in this place. During the summer months, the daily bus service operates between Udaipur (on the Chandra-Banga River) and Sucto. However, the availability of the connection depends on the condition of the road. The locals are mostly involved in farming and pastoralism. In the village, there is only one family which is quite open to tourists. They have prepared one room in their home and make it available to tourists. Sucto is a tourist gateway for the Miyar Valley, which is extremely charming, for both trekkers and mountain climbers, who define it as the Valley of Flowers at Lahoul. According to a police station officer in Tingrat, approximately 700 people visited Miyar Valley in 2012.

Nagarkot (Kathmandu Valley, Central Himalaya, Nepal)

Nagarkot ($27^{\circ}43'20''$ N, $85^{\circ}31'24''$ E) is a village located 32 km east of Kathmandu (Bhaktapur District) at an elevation of 2,174 meters. In Nagarkot, the average annual temperature is 14.9°C ($7.7-19.5^{\circ}\text{C}$), and approx. 2,287 mm of precipitation fall annually (climate-data.org). At the time of the 2011 census, Nagarkot had a population of 4,571 and had 973 houses in it (NPHC, 2012). Nagarkot is well connected with Bhaktapur by local bus. The trip is nice, although it takes a long time (18 km: 1.5–2 hours), and the buses are often very overcrowded. The Nagarkot area presently comprises more than 35 tourist hotels, lodges and resorts offering 543 tourist room and 991 tourist beds for visitors (DDCB, 2010). It is known for its view of the Himalayas. Five of the ten Himalayan 'eight-thousanders' can be seen from here, including Annapurna (8,091 m), Manaslu (8,156 m), Shishapangma (8,013 m), Cho Oyu (8,153 m) and Everest (8,850 m). The average amount of tourists arriving in the peak months (September–November) is 673, while only 200 come during the slow months (February–September) (Rai, 2013). According to this data, no more than 4,000 visitors stay at least for one

night; however, that number is most likely doubled when including one-day visitors.

Birethanti (Bhuringdi Valley, Central Himalaya, Nepal)

Birethanti (28°18'74" N, 83°46'30" E) is located at the foot of the Bhuringdi Valley (Western Development Region) at approx. 1,025 meters. Birethanti is situated close to the Pokhara Valley (the area with the highest rainfall in Nepal) and receives 2,105 mm of rainfall a year. The average temperature in Birethanti varies from 12.2°C in winter to 24.0°C in summer (climate-data.org). Birethanti, the start and end of several treks into the Annapurna foothills, including the Annapurna Sanctuary or Annapurna Circuit trek (or part of it, like the Poon Hill trek). The village offers several locations for accommodation and restaurants (various standards), a bakery and even an art gallery. Besides this, Birethanti as the main point of entry to the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) and has tourists checkpoints where the ACAP permit and TIMS (Trekking Information Management System) card must be presented. As per the statistics provided by the Nayapool Information Centre of the ACAP, 50,500 internal and foreign tourists visited Birethanti in 2013.

Table 1. Characteristic of the examined group

	Sucto	Nagarkot	Birethanti	TOTAL
date of research	July 2013	December 2012	November 2013	
n	6	96	60	162
age (y)	n/a	42.5 (± 29.5)	45 (± 22)	42.5 (± 29.5)*
male	n/a	68 (71%)	34 (57%)	102 (64%) *
female	n/a	28 (29%)	26 (43%)	54 (36%) *

*w/o Sucto population
Source: own table

The questionnaire contained questions concerning the topic mentioned within the title of this paper, i.e. social, environmental and economic aspects of the impact of tourism within the destination areas, including: (1) when tourism within the destination was born, and what is its size today; information about the relation between tourism and: (2) local society; (3) natural environment; (4) economy.

The data received from respondents were converted into percentages and presented graphically. However, to check the hypothesis concerning the progressive nature (stadiums)

of the interactions (initial, indirect and final), the point of view of residents on each topic (questionnaire part) was described on the same graph. By combining answers from all three locations on the same graph, a trend line can be plotted. With added trend lines, it is much easier to note some relationships and prove the hypothesis mentioned above.

To determine best fitted regression model for gathered data there have been checked the R-squared value (coefficient of determination). In general, the higher the R-squared (range: 0–1), the better the model fits data. Logarithmic regression analyses were performed to identify the mathematical models (presented on the graphs) that best approximate the relationship between

Methodology and limitation

Test results are highly dependent upon a survey method. A direct face-to-face interview is the most commonly used approach at tourists sites (Forster, 1989) and was employed in this study. However, a self-administered questionnaire was given to those who preferred to complete the questionnaire by themselves. The survey was prepared in two languages: for Indians (Sucto) and Nepalese (Nagarkot and Birethanti). It should be noted that due to the level of reading and writing skills, most of the interviews were carried out face-to-face. The average literacy rate for the entire Himalayan arc in 2001 was only 68.53% (Apollo, 2015a).

A total of 162 usable questionnaires were finally collected from the locals, among which 102 (64%) were male and 54 (36%) were female (Tab. 1). Please note that this data does not include the Sucto population. Each of the 6 questionnaires collected from Sucto were completed by entire families. These individuals are characterised by distrust, which is very common within small mountain communities. The on-site survey was conducted in the period from December 2012 to November 2013 in the area of the Himalayan arc in the three localities: Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti.

changing points of view of residents and the place where they live. For this study, the R-squared value stays between: 0.9–1.0 at 7 trend lines; 0.8–0.9 at 5; 0.6–0.8 at 8; and below 0.6 at only 4. Also, a logarithmic trend line is a best-fit curved line that is most useful when the rate of change in the data increases or decreases rapidly and then levels out, and the received data presents this type of relationship.

The lack of availability of statistical data is very common in the Himalayas (the data exists; however, only governments have access to it, and there is no public access) (see Pradhan, 1996), and thus this study was completed mainly by obtaining information from the locals. This was possible with the help of Tashi Dorje (Sucto), Krishna Prasad Dotel (Nagarkot) and Sushil Dotel (Birethanti). Their help was invaluable and necessary in completing the research, not only for translation, but also to reduce the distance between the locals and the author and to increase their openness.

Results

The birth of tourism

According to literature - in all three villages (Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti) - the first tourists appeared in the 1960s (1969,

1965, 1968, respectively). Locals provide a much later date in this matter (2010, 2007, 1990, respectively).

In the Miyar Valley (Sucto), this was a mountaineering expedition (Indo-British) in 1969 to the highest peak of the valley - Menthosa, 6,408 metres (Challis, 1970); however, until approximately 2010, it was mostly mountain climbers (the author visited this valley in 2006, 2012 and 2013). Nagarkot, well known for its gorgeous view of the Himalayas, came into contact with tourists before 1965, as by the year 1965, the number of beds available for tourists in Nagarkot had already reached 4 (Satyal, 2004). Locals indicate the year 2007 as the year when the first tourists came. Please note that in 1981, Nagarkot had already been visited by 1,924 tourists (Pradhan, 1996). In 1950, a French expedition made the first ascent of an 'eight-thousander' peak, i.e. Annapurna I (8,092 m), and thus this region become more popular. It started in 1977 when the Annapurna Circuit Trek was established. In 1983, 24,198 tourists arrived in Nepal for trekking and mountaineering (Nepal, 2003), and 21,119 of them visited the Annapurna Region (Nepal, 1999). Locals focus on the 1990s, probably because in 1992, Birethanti was connected to Naya Pul (New Bridge, see Fig. 4), shortening the Ghandruk route via Birethanti by two and half days (Nepal, 2003).

Very similar is the case linked to the quantity of tourist traffic in the three villages (Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti) (Fig. 5), which was lowered by locals by up to 71% (71.4%, 65.0% and 70.3%, respectively). Note that the indications of the local population are very similar, even when the number of tourists is different in each study population (200 vs. 700, 1,400 vs. 4,000 and 15,000 vs. 51,500, respectively).

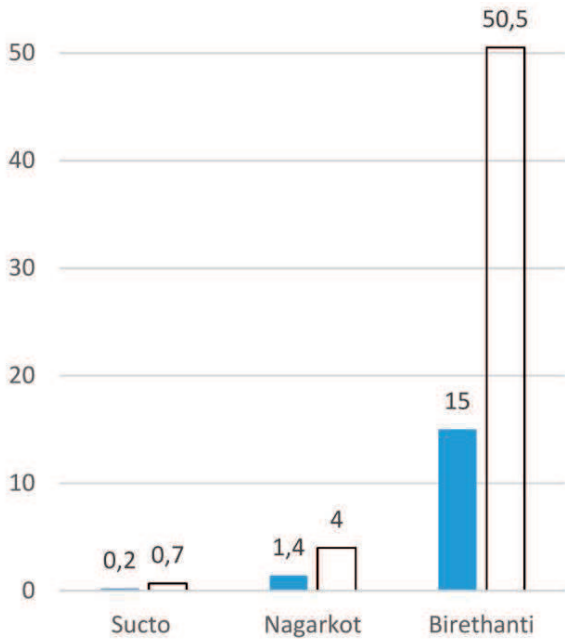


Figure 5.

Number of tourists (in thousands) visiting destination areas in the opinion of hosts (■) and government authorities (□).

Source: own figure

Tourism and the local community

Tourists' knowledge of local culture, tradition and customs is one of the important elements which influence the feelings of locals towards tourists. In Sucto and Nagarkot, most of the residents believe that most tourists know and respect their culture (90% and 71%, respectively), while in the case of the more crowded Birethanti, this was only 42%. Lack of knowledge about local customs, etc. amongst tourists was indicated by 10% of the researched Sucto population and by 29% and 58% of the tested population of Nagarkot and Birethanti, respectively. However, a large percentage of respondents (18% Nagarkot and 31% Birethanti) classified tourists' knowledge about local culture at a sufficient level, but at the same time suggested that tourists still do not respect local tradition.

Figure 6 presents the opinions of the study population concerning knowledge of culture among tourists and shows the line of trends between the three locations. The results clearly show a high correlation between the significant decrease of that knowledge and the increase in lack of knowledge with an increase in the number of tourists.

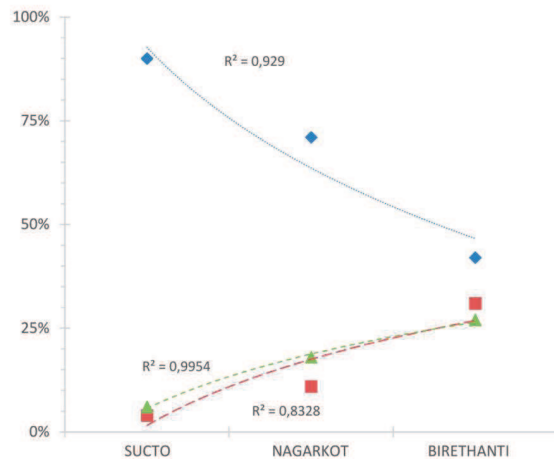


Figure 6. Logarithmic trend lines presenting the relationship between knowledge of tourists about local culture and chosen places (Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti).

Explanations: tourists who know and respect (◆), know but do not respect (■), do not know (▲) local culture. Source: own figure

Almost everybody from the study population took some models (patterns) from the tourists, and later those patterns were combined with their own local culture. Interestingly, this also applies to people from the age of 65 and older. Commonly, elderly people are considered to be more distrustful of the new than younger individuals. However, anyone who has met with the high-mountain people know, that not only old people shows huge interest e.g. about new technologies, clothes, etc., but also the level of this interest is the same like in younger people, and sometimes at even higher (Apollo, 2013). However, further studies in this matter are necessary.

Individuals from all the villages (Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti) adopted some influence from tourists. Most of the answers focused on style of dress (12%, 18% and 25%, respectively), lifestyle (10%, 40% and 38%, respectively), spending

of free time (23%, 5% and 4%, respectively) and worldview (12%, 35% and 31%, respectively). A total lack of adopting patterns from tourists was declared by 42% of the Sucto respondents, which is most likely connected with the small amount of tourists.

Figure 7 presents the opinions of the study population concerning models adopted from tourists and shows the line of trends between the three locations. According to this, it can easily be seen that the number of people who do not adopt any pattern are decreasing from 42% to zero (Nagarkot and Birethanti), while the number of respondents adopting the lifestyle, worldview and style of dress from tourists are increasing as the tourist industry grows.

Tourism and the natural environment

To investigate the satisfaction of respondents concerning the quality of the natural environment, a simple Yes/Now question was used: *are you happy with the condition of the natural environment where you live?* In nearly all the villages (Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti), people were satisfied with the quality of the environmental (100%, 94% and 91%, respectively). However, when different questions on the same matter were asked, the answers were not as unambiguous. Thus, to investigate the level of quality of the environment, a ten-point scale was used, where one it represents very clean, and ten is very dirty. Figure 8 presents the respondents' answers and their evolution: from nearly all

answers close to 'very clean' or 'clean' in the case of Sucto to an obvious referral to 'moderately bad' in the case of Birethanti. Note that there was no indication of 'dirty' or 'very dirty' in all three places.

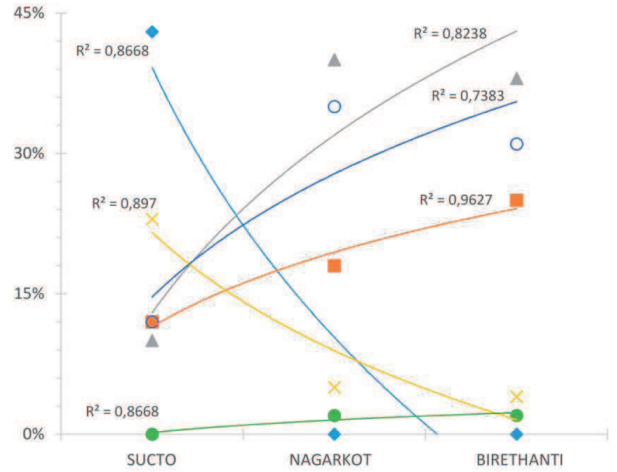


Figure 7. Logarithmic trend lines presenting the relationship between the patterns implemented by tourism and chosen places (Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti).

Explanations: locals who adopt from tourists: nothing (◆), style of dress (■), lifestyle (▲), spending of free time (×), worldview (○), other (●).
Source: own figure

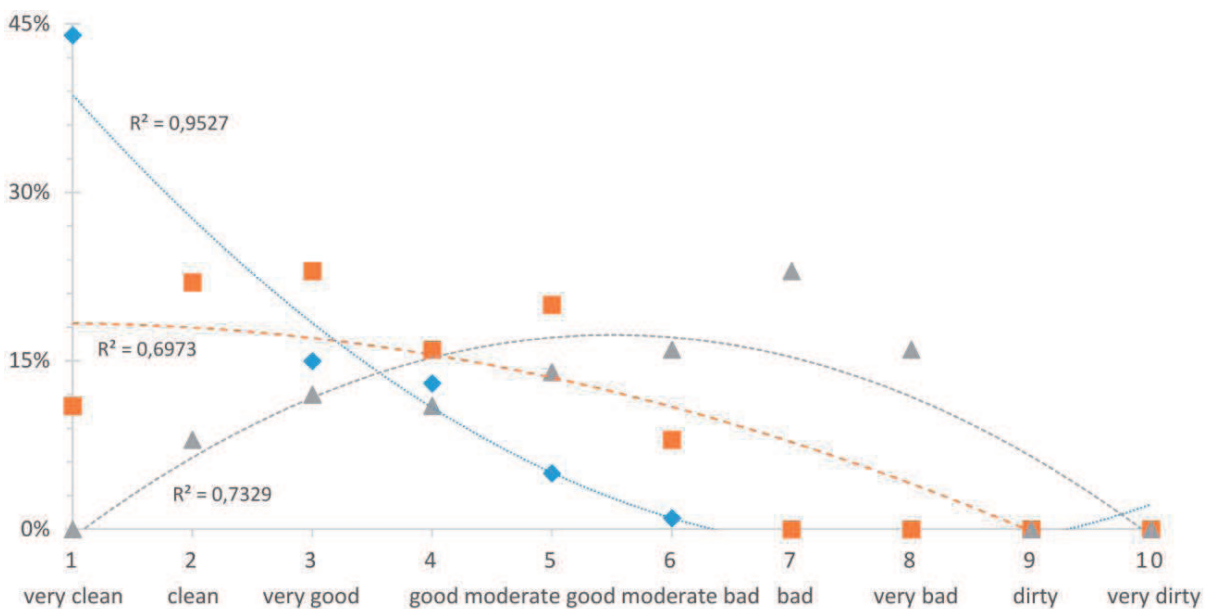


Figure 8. Logarithmic trend lines presenting the opinions of respondents concerning the quality of the natural environment (where they live) in a ten-point scale for Sucto (◆), Nagarkot (■) and Birethanti (▲).

Source: own figure

Figure 9 presents the opinions of the study population concerning quality of the environment and shows the line of trends between the three locations. A tendency can easily be noticed:

a decline of positive ('clean' environment) evaluations with an increase in the number of tourists, and appropriately increasing negative opinions about the environment.

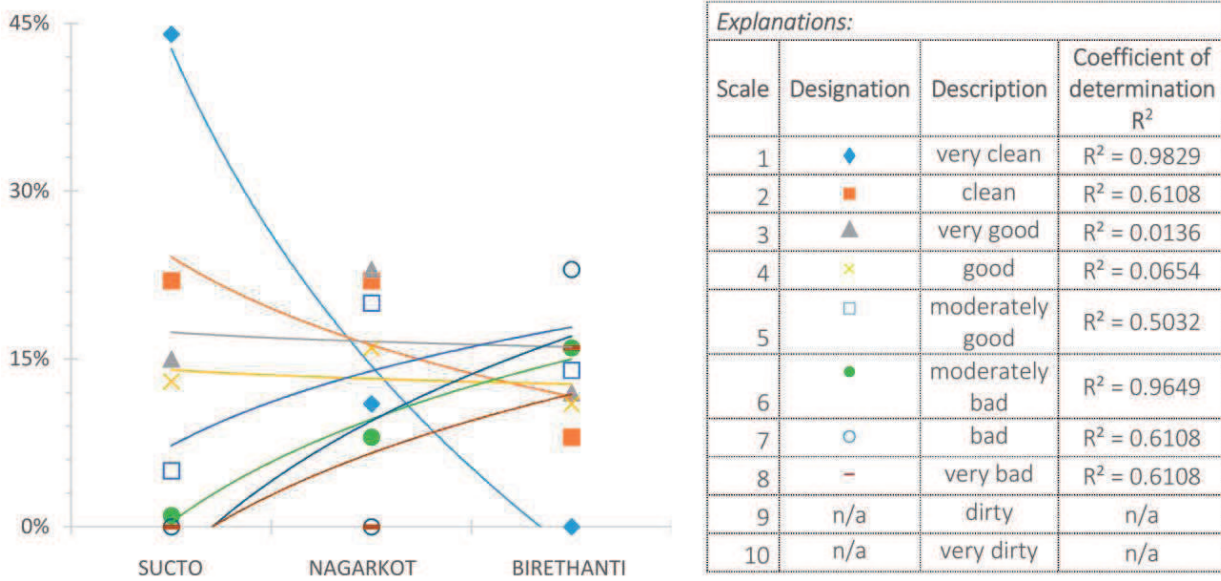


Figure 9. Logarithmic trend lines presenting the relationship between the level (ten-point scale) of environmental condition and chosen places (Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti).

Explanations: in the table on the right. Source: own figure

Very unusual opinions of residents were presented in the case of blame for pollution (Fig. 10). In each village (Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti), the locals themselves took the blame (88%, 84% and 55%, respectively), mainly due to the deep honesty of high mountain communities. But what is even more important, in Sucto and Nagarkot, no one pointed to tourists as the cause of pollution, and in the case of Birethanti, this was only 8%. Villagers also mentioned authorities (government and administration) as a group which should be blamed for pollution (8%, 16% and 18%, respectively). Most of the locals have a very good understanding of environmental protection; however, they simply have no idea what to do with the rubbish (personal communication, 2012; 2013). Most of the time, they burn it or throw it away into the river or bury it.

Figure 10 presents the opinions of the study population concerning: who is guilty for the environmental condition - residents, tourists, agencies (e.g. trekking, climbing) or authorities (e.g. government) - and shows the line of trends between the three locations. Comparing the three villages, locals more frequently blame others (authorities and tourism agencies) for environmental pollution from the increasing number of tourists.

Tourism and the local community in the economic perspective

The tourism industry is a carrier of development (especially in Global South countries), mostly through the massive influence on region economy. In the case of Nagarkot and Birethanti, nearly all respondents were employed in the tourism industry (89% and 93%, respectively). In Sucto, this was zero (Fig. 11a); however, locals sometimes work (i.e. seasonal jobs) for tourists. For a small fee, they can arrange transport (e.g. porters, pack animals) or accommodation. It is worth noting that in 2015, the tourism-based project Impact Miyar began. This is a collaboration between White Magic Adventure and

Menthusa Sangathan of the Miyar Valley to empower the locals here by using the many varied resources of the valley to develop community-based trekking/climbing activities for visitors.

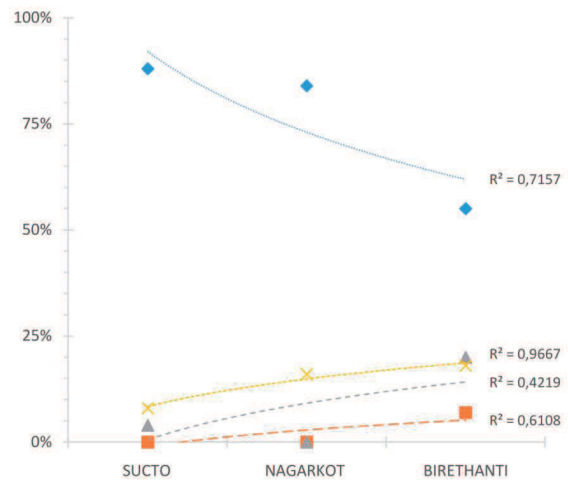


Figure 10. Logarithmic trend lines presenting the relationship between groups responsible for pollution (in the opinion of respondents) and chosen places (Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti).

Explanations: residents (◆), tourists (■), agencies (▲), authorities (✕). Source: own figure

Figure 11 presents the structure of tourism-based employment (in Nagarkot and Birethanti) and focuses on four elements: accommodation (47% and 34%, respectively), transport (21% and 23% respectively), gastronomy (14 and 19%, respectively) and other sectors of tourism chosen by respondents (7% and 17%, respectively). Also in Figure 12, the line of trends between these elements and two locations (Nagarkot and Birethanti) has been shown. Comparing the two villages, a significant decline in the accommodation sector can be noticed, while the sectors of gastronomy, transport and other show a slight increase.

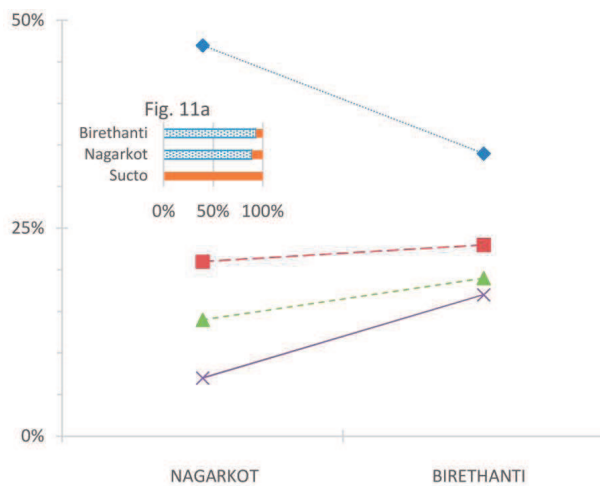


Figure 11. Linear trend lines presenting the relationship between the type of employment in tourism and chosen places (Sucto, Nagarkot and Birethanti).

The small bar graph (Fig. 11a) shows the percentage of people employed in the tourism industry (blue dotted bar).

Explanations: accommodation (♦), transport (■), gastronomy (▲), other (×).
Source: own figure

Discussion

Below, the results of this study have been summarised with the well-known models of

R. Butler, G.V. Doxey, and G. Budowski (described above). Each of the villages illustrates different (other) stages of these models. By knowing the progressive nature of these changes, which are strictly associated with the number of tourists, it will be easier to plan their development - sustainable development.

The evolution of the tourist destination area life cycle (Butler's model)

The results have shown that every village is at a different stage of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC). With most visitors belonging to alternative tourism, Sucto is at the exploration stage. Most of the tourists coming to Sucto (Miyar Valley) come for climbing or trekking, thus most of them organise the trip by themselves. However, some signs (e.g. the Miyar Impact project or the one-room accommodation option) show that this stage can quickly move to the *involvement stage*. The second village chosen for this study - Nagarkot the stage of *exploration* and *involvement* has already behind it, and now is on the move to *development stage*. Mass tourism has begun to increase rapidly, as is evidenced by the large percentage (1/3 study population) of respondents indicating that tourists do not respect their culture and local traditions and customs. Additionally, 18% of respondents believed that tourists are doing this consciously, as they have sufficient knowledge about this. Furthermore, some signs of the *consolidation stage*, and perhaps even the *stagnation stage*, can be seen. In other words, Nagarkot has entered the *critical range of capacity*. This can be one of the most important times for Nagarkot, because future development may depend on these present decisions. Successful redevelopment of *in situ* services (i.e. accommodation, gastronomy, transport), as well

as more care placed on conservation of the environment, could result in renewed growth and expansion, as shown by curve A. On the other hand, decreasing the competitiveness with other areas (i.e. better *in situ* services can be found in Bhaktapur) would result in a marked decline. This is an extremely large threat for the region, where 89% of the respondents declared working within the tourism industry. The village of Birethanti, which is visited yearly by more than 50 thousands tourists is in the stagnation stage. As a gateway to the Annapurna circuit, Birethanti is a place that must for tourists who wish to go for this trek. However, Birethanti currently stands before a large threat. Namely, Birethanti, with good lodging, a nice and quiet location on the Mori Khola River, begins to be the only mandatory stop for registration. More often, tourists are just passing through the village of Birethanti, mostly to register at the ACAP checkpoint and sometimes for food, and then they move on to Hile or Tikhedhunga, which have much better views. Note that the local Village Committee of the ACAP is trying to retain this developing trend, mostly through two elements: 1) By setting the prices, so prices are fixed to each location (village) - there is no differences in prices for all the lodges and restaurants in a specific village; however, prices increase with altitude, so lodging in Birethanti is cheaper than in e.g. Hile or Tikhedhunga; 2) a strong emphasis on environmental protection, e.g. every village has to care for their own part of the trekking route in the case of cleanliness. This modification and adjustment to capacity levels, as well as continued protection of resources, could allow for continued growth, even if at a much reduced rate, though it will still be growth.

Host attitude towards visitors (Doxey's model)

If by classifying the host attitude towards visitors our point of reference will focus on the locals' opinions with regard to when the first tourist came and on today's number of tourists, in the case of all villages, the hosts are at the first (euphoria) stage. The locals extremely understate both the year when tourists appeared (even by approx. a few decades) and their number (up to 70%). Also, proof that the inhabitants are at the initial stage (euphoria) is that residents do not blame tourists for environmental pollution (see Fig. 10). Thus, a large community of the study group is far away from antagonistic feelings, while blaming the tourists for pollution to the environment would be extremely easy, even as hostile reaction.

However, when looking at the level of visitors' knowledge concerning local tradition (i.e. the cultural erudition level), some differences can be noticed. While in the Miyar Valley (Sucto), most of the visitors are organising trips by themselves - most of them are mountaineers belonging to the alternative tourist group of so-called elite climber (see Apollo, 2014d) - hosts are still looking at them not only with *euphoria*, but also with curiosity. Simply put, they are well prepared for the trip - they are polite, quiet, and, what is more important, they know local customs, tradition and religion. As long as the curiosity of the local population will be met and tourists are not annoying for residents, tourists will be well perceived. In the two other villages (Nagarkot and Birethanti), these feelings are evolving. The percentage of respondents who noted that tourists have

knowledge of the local culture is dropping, while visitors who know the culture, but still do not respect it, are increasing. This shows that hosts' attitude towards visitors is moving to apathy and annoyance. According to M Apollo (2013) in Nagarkot, these kinds of changes can be seen from 16% of the respondents, who consider the tourism industry as a reduction in the quality of life (crowds, noise, pollution). Currently, Nagarkot is facing another challenge, as more often, tourists stay in Bhaktapur and visit Nagarkot only for a day-trip. This results mostly from the fact that the road connection between these two places is getting better each year, and *in situ* services are not good enough. The only way out of this situation is - as was described above redevelopment of *in situ* services (i.e. accommodation, gastronomy, transport) and also to place more care on conservation of the environment. The residents of Birethanti, which is well developed, also show some movements towards apathy, mostly because of the disrespect of their culture by visitors, but also because tourists more often are haggling on the prices of food and accommodation (personal communication, 2013). Please note that accommodation and food prices are regulated by the Village Communities, so there is no possibility of haggling - tourists should know this before arrival so as not to annoy the hosts.

Tourism environment relationships (Budowski model)

Currently, in all three villages, there is no conflict between promoters of tourism and environmental conservationists. While in Sucto and Nagarkot there is currently no interest at all in ecology, in Birethanti, tourism and conservation are enjoying a symbiotic relationship. This coexistence implies that although tourism and the environment are not necessarily directly compatible, there are certain circumstances where these two elements may coexist for each other's benefit (as described by G. Budowski, 1976). Birethanti, which lies within the ACAP and belongs to the Village Development community, has implemented many projects for environmental conservation. In the ACAP, the activities of one group help the activities and aspirations of the other. The tourism industry also provides some financial revenue to help the implementation of environmental protection measures. Currently, the ACAP runs many projects, e.g. Conservation of Resources or Conservation, Education and Extension. As was mentioned above, there is no interest from environmental conservationists in Sucto and Nagarkot, even though there should be. Both villages have a problem with waste. Sucto is at the beginning of this route, while Nagarkot is at the end. In both cases, the locals have a very good understanding about environmental protection; however, they simply have no idea what to do with the rubbish (personal communication, 2012; 2013).

It has to be mentioned that more often, tourists have no environmental awareness. Even visitors who follow alternative tourism and respect the principle of 'Leave No Trace' or 'Pack It In, Pack It Out' fall into this category. More often, they shift the responsibility for disposal of rubbish to porters, guides or locals simply by entrusting them with their own waste. Most of the time, they burn the garbage, throw it away (mostly into the

river) or bury it. However, in this case, all the blame for littering is placed exclusively on the tourist, as tourists provide no other option to the host communities.

Conclusion

This study provides a broad view of issues related to tourism in three reception areas where tourism began approximately at the same time (1960s), though at various intensity (i.e. the number of tourists). According to the above results and comparisons of these three location, the progressive nature (stadiums) of the interactions was spotted, i.e. initial (Sucto), indirect (Nagarkot) and final (Birethanti). Thus, paraphrasing the words of K. Marx (mentioned in the introduction): the tourist destination area that is more developed only shows, to the less touristic developed, the image of its own future.

The process (tourism) that generate such a large transformation must be taken into consideration during developing plans to protect the environment - without it, one cannot speak about the sustainable development of these areas.

Figure 12 shows the nature of changes between stages (stadiums). This knowledge can prevent incorrect changes, while knowing the directions of the trend (the real ones and those recommended), they can be compared to one another. In this way, the process of sustainable development can be properly oriented, e.g. if locals decrease the number of visitors, they will do that on every stage. Time or the number of tourists will not change this knowledge (or will change it only to a small extent). This knowledge can be improved only through education.

Recommendation

Simple suggestions for local communities:

1. Local communities must look more critically upon the quality of the natural environment, because today's tourists, as proven by P. Goode, M. Price and F. M. Zimmerman (1999), wish to escape from urban pollution, noise, crime and other related stress to the relative calm mountain environment.
2. Local communities must constructively combine the new with the old and not lose themselves (tradition, culture, etc.), which is as important as the natural environment and the landscape for tourists.
3. Local communities have to develop new or redevelop old *in situ* service (i.e. accommodation, gastronomy, transport) to ensure tourists have a worthwhile stay.
4. Local communities must maintain control of the local tourism market, because when locals see no material benefits from tourism, they may develop open hostility towards visitors.
5. Local communities must keep the division of social roles, mostly to control the diversity of employment. In a time of crisis or natural disaster (e.g. the earthquake in Nepal in 2015, heavy monsoon rains in Garhwal in 2013), a lack of tourists may result in a humanitarian crisis in places where people employed in the tourism industry are dominating in the employment structure.

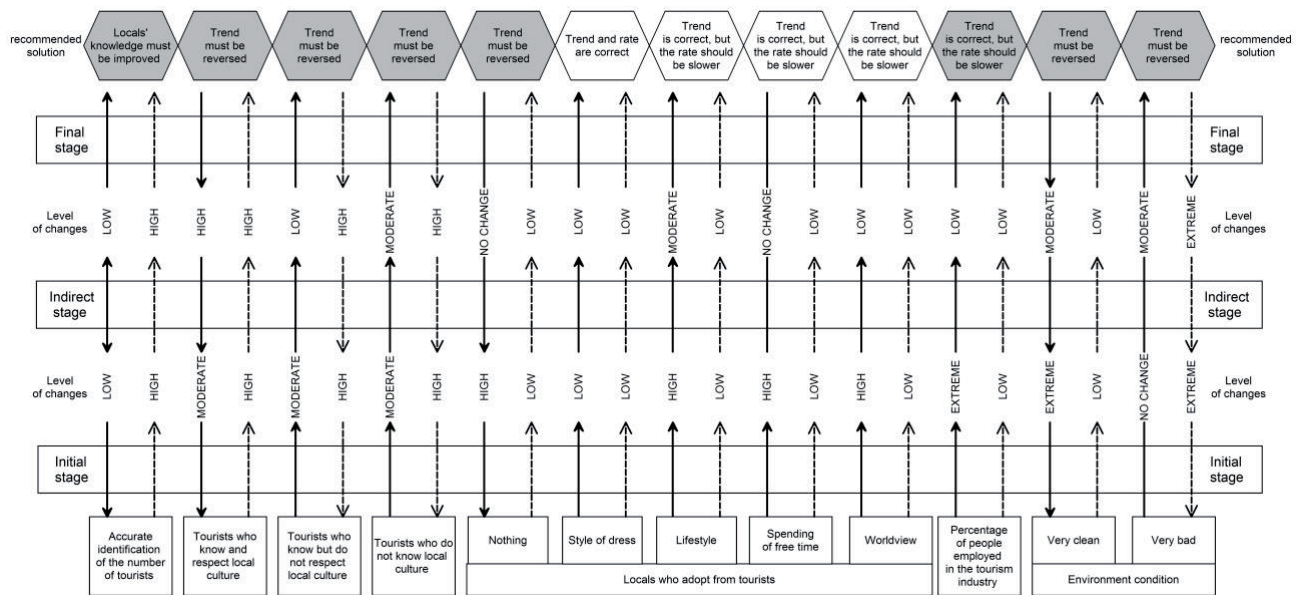


Figure 12. The nature of changes between initial, indirect and final stage (stadium) with the direction (trend) and level of that change and recommended solution (grey means an extremely high level of change).

Explanation:

direction (trend) of changes: upward trend (↑), downward trend (↓) and stagnation (→);

real trend (—), recommended trend (----);

level of changes between neighbouring stages: no change (0–1%), low (2–10%), moderate (11–20%), high (21–30%) and extreme (over 30%).

Source: own figure

Simple suggestions for tourists:

1. Tourists should have knowledge of the culture, customs and living environment of the local community to minimise the foreign influence and not annoy the locals.
2. Tourists should behave as at home with respect to the customs and moral norms prevailing in their own living environment. Unfortunately, as many scholars note, tourists on holidays behave more freely and differently than at home (Kozak and Tasci, 2005) - they are in the play mode (Reisinger and Turner, 2003).
3. Tourists should dress appropriately for the cultural circle of the destination area, e.g. some female trekkers dressed in little more than swimwear have caused local service guides embarrassment (Craig-Smith and French, 1994) and have annoyed locals.

4. Tourists from both groups, alternative and mass tourists, should respect the principle of 'Leave No Trace' or 'Pack It In, Pack It Out', and what is even more important, tourists should carry out their rubbish by themselves to the larger cities. Locals have no idea what to do with the waste, so they burn it, throw it away (mostly into the river) or bury it.

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Michał Apollo

graduated from the Pedagogical University of Cracow, with M.Sc in geography, and PGCert in global development at the Warsaw University. Assistant at the Pedagogical University of Cracow, Institute of Geography, Department of Tourism and Regional Studies. Enthusiastic researcher (research field: System: man – high-mountain environment), traveler (visited more than 60 countries on 6 continents), mountaineer (several, new climbing routes, including first ascent on two Himalaya peaks: in 2006, Masala Peak, and in 2012, Forgotten Peak), photographer (few photo exhibitions) and science popularizer (few hundred of pop-science lectures).

E-Mail: apollomichal@gmail.com

Address: Pedagogical University of Cracow, Institute of Geography, ul. Podchorążych 2, 30084 Krakow, Poland.