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Titel der Diplomarbeit

“Eco-Tourism as an Instrument for Sustainable
Development in National Parks?
An Analysis of the National Park Thayatal“

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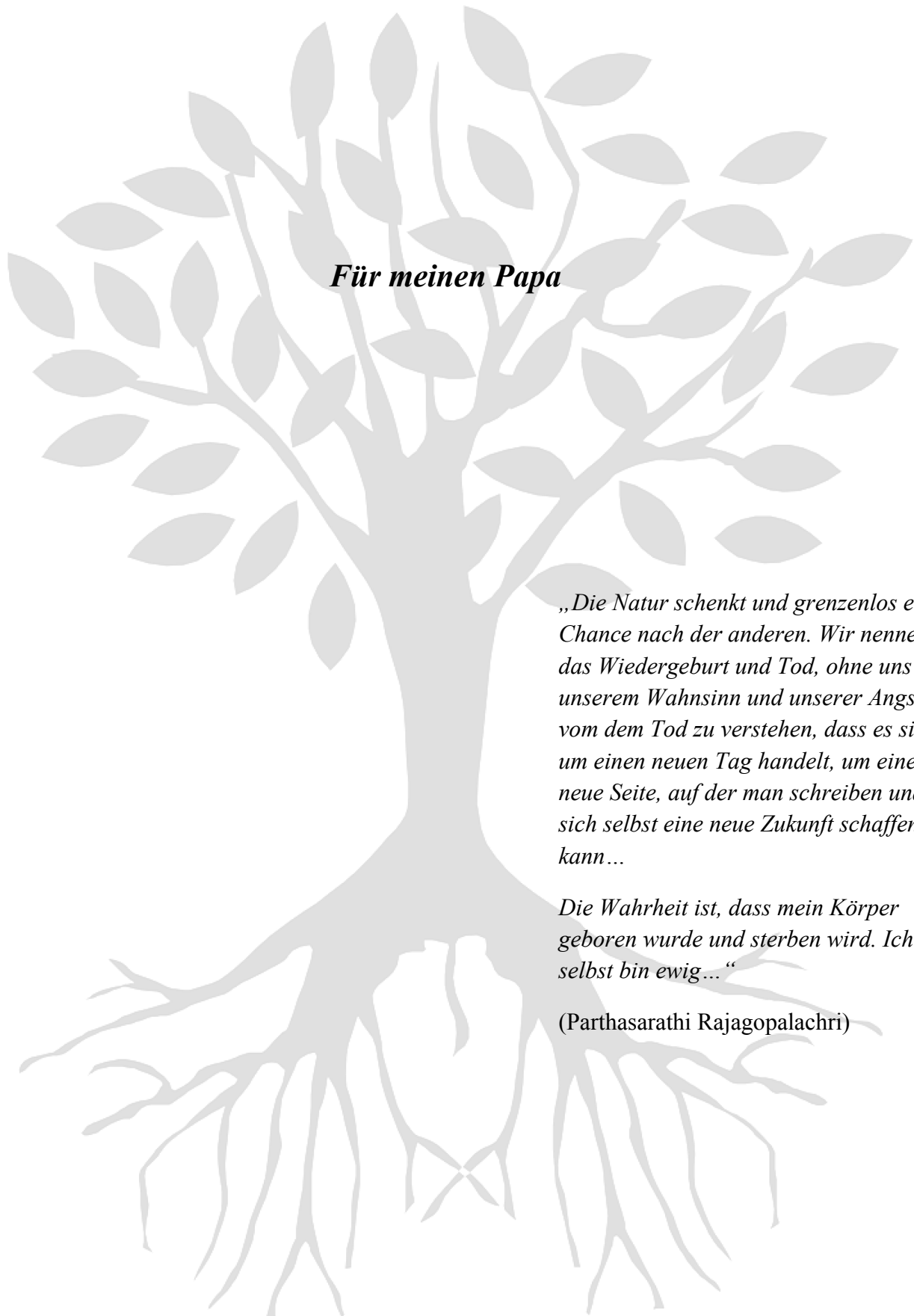
Mariana Huber

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Für meinen Papa

„Die Natur schenkt und grenzenlos eine Chance nach der anderen. Wir nennen das Wiedergeburt und Tod, ohne uns in unserem Wahnsinn und unserer Angst vom dem Tod zu verstehen, dass es sich um einen neuen Tag handelt, um eine neue Seite, auf der man schreiben und sich selbst eine neue Zukunft schaffen kann...

Die Wahrheit ist, dass mein Körper geboren wurde und sterben wird. Ich selbst bin ewig...“

(Parthasarathi Rajagopalachri)

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List of abbreviations

AMA	Agrarmarkt Austria Marketing
ESCAP	The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GDP	Gross domestic product
IUCN	The International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUOTO	The International Union of Official Travel Organizations
NAFTA	The North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
ÖEZA	Österreichische Entwicklungs-Zusammenarbeit (The Austrian Development Cooperation)
PATA	The Pacific Asia Travel Association
PEP	Pan-European-Program
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNECE	The United Nation Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	The United Nations Environment Program
UNWTO	United Nations Tourism Organization
WCED	The World Commission on Environment and Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WTTC	The World Travel and Tourism Council

I. Introduction

„Zukünftig wird es nicht mehr darauf ankommen, dass wir überall hinfahren können, sondern ob es sich noch lohnt dort anzukommen“ (Hermann Löhs c.f. WLO n.r.)

Hermann Löns makes the argument, that in the future it will not matter anymore, that we can travel around everywhere, but rather if the travel destination is worth visiting. The increasing traffic infrastructure and the appearance of low-cost airlines makes worldwide travel affordable to almost everyone in industrialized countries. For tourists, this development has positive effects concerning costs, but the increasing number of tourists and the further accessibility of regions involve risks for the environment – because of resource exploitation - and for the locals as well. Especially in the sector of tourism, with the cross-linkages to many other branches and the intercultural components, the economical, ecological and social effects cannot be easily explored separately. However, this paper concentrates on the interactions between tourism and the nature. The trends show a strong tendency towards nature-tourism. Thus, where tourism occurs, the natural environment has to be maintained and tourism has to be managed in a sustainable way so that the region remains attractive for tourists and for locals. One possible strategy of combining nature conservation and tourism is the concept of ecotourism. The idea of ecotourism sounds promising regarding the sustainable tourism development and the protection of resources. But whether this idealistic concept is applicable in reality is questionable and has to be specifically investigated. Even the examination and declaration, if a tourism project corresponds to the criteria of ecotourism has to be investigated thoroughly. Nature-tourism is rising and many countries combine nature protection – e.g. the dedication of an area into a National Park – and tourism. National parks stand under the law of nature conservation, but include in their management plan also a duty to provide tourism and leisure activities for tourists. Therefore, national parks constitute a potential area for providing ecotourism and build the focus for the present paper.

All these reflections about the topic tourism lead to a discussion of the combination of tourism and nature conservation. The area of the National Park Thayatal will be considered as a case study for the interaction-field tourism – nature conservation and the applicability of the concept of ecotourism as an instrument for sustainable development in the National Park

Thayatal. The selection of the investigation area is drawn upon the considerations, that the National Park Thayatal is a beautiful area with some tourist attractions, but registering a low number of tourists.

These considerations give rise to the following research questions:

- In which points are the two fields - nature conservation and tourism - competing with / supporting each other?
- To what extent does the concept of ecotourism constitute a chance for the tourism development in the National Park Thayatal?

This paper assumes that the implementation of ecotourism implies substantial potential to create a positive development for a region on the three levels of sustainability – economy, ecology and society. But, the focus is on the ecological effects of tourism, for two reasons: First, tourism in national parks can just be implemented, if it does not harm nature. Secondly, ecotourism – as its name implies - can only happen - among other criteria, which will be discussed in detail later on - in an ecologically friendly way. For these reasons, the ecological impacts of tourism have to be examined before constructing a concept of tourism in a National Park.

The paper is divided into four parts: the introduction, the terminology, concepts and area of conflict, third the case study and last but not least the research questions will be answered and a conclusion of the presented material will be drawn.

First, a definition and history of the development and the concept of the term *sustainability* is given within the second part of this paper. Second, a general overview with some relevant facts and figures concerning the tourism sector and the keyword *sustainable tourism* is presented. Third, at the end of the discussion about the broad range of the definitions and criteria of ecotourism, definition and criteria relevant for this paper are outlined. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) and two Austrian projects, involving approaches according to the principles of ecotourism, are presented. In the fourth point of the second part, the definition of a National Park and essential criteria and objectives are constructed. In chapter five the relationship between tourism and nature conservation is highlighted, by continuing with the impacts of tourism in a protected area. For the sake of completeness, an overview of the economical and social impacts is provided. The ecological

impacts are looked at in more detail. To analyze the ecological impacts a framework will be established with three relevant criteria for investigation: the cause of the impact, the affected element and the result on this element and the influences on the intensity of the tourism impact

This framework is adopted in the National Park Thayatal and is explained in part III of this paper. Based on the investigation of the ecological impacts of tourism to the National Park Thayatal, the concept of ecotourism is used to assess whether the area could benefit from a more intense cooperation between nature conservation and tourism through the implementation of ecotourism.

At the end, in the last part, the present paper will be summarized, the research questions will be answered and a conclusion for the topic under discussion will be provided.

II. Theoretical Part, Explanation of the Concepts

1. Sustainable Development

1.1. Changes of the global economy

The global system has changed enormously over the last decades. According to the World Bank (2004 : 22) in 2000 were about 6 billion people on earth, that is twice as many as in 1970. In 2000 the increase in the trade volume of exports from developing countries was three times faster than their GDP-growth (cf. WTO 2001). This development was seen as a positive development by international institutions like the World Bank and WTO. According to the neoliberal capitalism the solutions to the world's problems are free trade and a steady flow of goods and capital on free markets (cf. Peters 2006 : 136). Outsourcing of production in low-wage countries, the international division of labor and the production in international value added chains are factors for the rising production of industrial goods in developing countries since the 1970s. But, the expected effect of an adjustment through industrialization has not been yielded by these countries. (cf. Fischer e.o. 2006 : 23 a. 45) Furthermore the nature and the ecological carrying capacity of the planet is widely disregarded in the economic theories. In neoliberal theories "adjustment' almost always involves growth" (Daly 1999 : 4), whereas the new paradigm of sustainable development begins with physical parameters- a finite world, complex ecological interrelations, the law of thermodynamics (cf. Daly 1999 : 4) - and tries to explore how it is possible to find an equilibrium through a change from quantitative to qualitative growth.

Natural catastrophes, climate-change, the demonstration of the rising imbalance between the countries of the north and the countries of the south and the decrease of non-renewable resources triggers that „Sustainable Development“ has become a term in common use over the last decades in several branches as politics, economy, industry, education and many more. Therefore we can find many different and diffuse definitions, depending on the field the author is actually operating in and the origin of the term, which lies in the agriculture and forestry is mainly unappreciated. (cf. Nohlen 2002)

The above material provides an overview of the change of the global economy and shows the importance for a change in the predominant paradigm of growth. Within the next chapters the meaning of the term "sustainability" will be explained. First, the approach of development through growth is explained and then its limits will be outlined. In a further step the three columns of sustainability and the development of this concept are presented.

1.2. Development through economic growth

Since the 1950s and 1960s economic growth has been seen as the solution to the problem of poverty. Perman asserts that, "without economic growth, poverty alleviation involves redistribution from the better-off to the poor, which encounters resistance from the better-off." (1999 : 16) But in any case, the size of the poor group may be much higher in relation to the better-offs, that "the redistributive solution to the problem of poverty is simply impossible – the cake is not big enough to provide for all..." (Perman 1999 : 16)

Thus, the philosophy of modernization-theories bases on a development of the countries of the south following the path of the already "developed" countries for an industrial adjustment to these nations. (cf. Nuscheler 2005 : 78) In the center of the development is the economic-component. With a growth in productivity a growth in the wealth of a nation and wealth of every individual is guaranteed. The fact, that the process of augmentation of production implies an augmentation in the use of resources too, is not kept in mind, because in former times enough land and resources were available. (cf. Altvater 1992 : 71) But, the view on the world situation changed, and a production without limits turns out to be an illusion, which will be explained in the next chapter.

1.3. The limits of growth

Already Thomas Malthus (1766 – 1834), a representative of the classical economy, criticized the approach of growth and demonstrated the ecological limit of the world system. He explains that the population growth has the tendency to be higher than the growth of the production factor land and therefore the production of food will not be sufficient for the rising population. Thus, people are living under the subsistence level, the population growth will

stop for a while and the number of people is decreasing, caused by a shortage of food, famine, epidemics and wars. (cf. Pirker zit. nach Malthus 2003; Nuscheler 2005 : 280)

More than a century later – in the middle of the 20th century – a number of economists and natural scientists put again the focus on the world's limited resources and establish a new approach for explaining the world system. The economist Kenneth Boulding conceptualized 1966 the theory of „Spaceship Earth“. He determined that all interactions that happen in the world are part of an overall system, which he called the Spaceship Earth and which is a closed material system. (see Annex 1) (cf. Perman 1999 : 23)

A detailed computation and analysis of the complex interactions happening on our planet was established by the Club of Rome¹ in 1972. Dennis L. Meadows and his team intervened a mathematical model called “World 3” for analyzing the world system by drawing scenarios of the multifarious dynamics. This model was published in the book “The limits of growth”, which lead to a great discussions about the global development, because of the prospect, that the limits of our planet may be reached within 100 years. (cf. Meadows 1972) The authors advocate a paradigm change away from the capitalist and resource-wasting thinking of our society. The 30-year-update of “The limits of growth” and the study “Growing within limits” from the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency demonstrates on the one hand, that the environment functions as a sink to absorb harmful substances and show on the other hand, that the prospects from 1972 have come to hand in large part. (cf. Meadows 2006; Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency 2009 : 21, 23)

¹ The Club of Rome was found in 1968 in the Accademia dei Lincei in Rome as an informal federation of diverse academics, scientists, politicians, industrialists, economists and humanists from 25 countries all over the world to explore the reasons and internal coherences of worldwide problems. They invented a mathematical model called „World 3“ for analyzing 5 important trends: the rapid industrialization, the rapid population growth, the world-wide malnutrition, the exploitation of resources and the environmental pollution and its multifarious dynamics.

1.4. The three columns of sustainability:

“Sustainability” is a term, which is nowadays used in nearly all areas of life and more than 60 definitions are available for this term. The economical view of sustainability implies, for example, that “the utility (or consumption) is non-declining through time, [...] the resources are managed so as to maintain production opportunities for the future, [...] natural capital stock is non-declining through time [...] and the fact of] consensus-building and institutional development” (Perman 1999: 86). On the contrary, ecologists put the main focus on the conservation of biodiversity and the protection of species. But, all three columns should be implemented with equal emphasis into a sustainable concept. As already mentioned the concept of sustainability is based on 3 factors as you can see in figure 1.

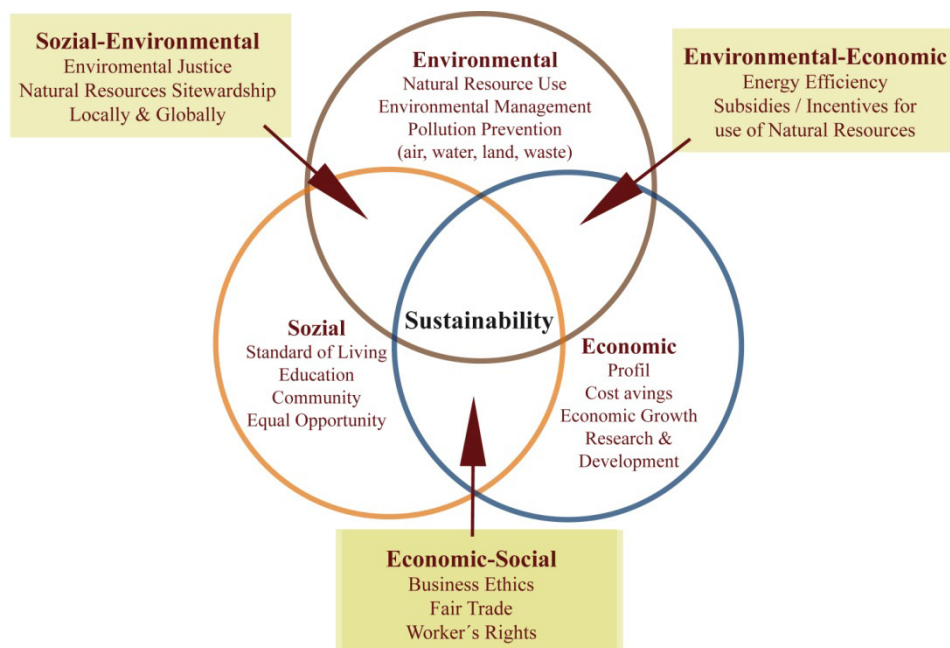


Figure 1 The Three Spheres of Sustainability (University of Michigan 2002)

Ecological sustainability refers to an improvement of the environmental quality, a cutback of the use of resources and energy, the protection of the species and biodiversity and the avoidance of risk for humans and nature. Social aspects implies self-determined life-style through work, an environmental-compatible satisfaction of the basic needs, equal opportunities and basic social security, social innovations and job design and active social participation for the purpose of sustainable strategies. The economic basic principles of sustainability contain efficiency of the economic system, full employment and social security,

economical effectiveness und innovation-competence, intergenerational balance and international economic stability. (cf. Nohlen 2002: 585)

Since the 21st century we can find a fourth column in the literature: Policy. Because of the phenomenon of weak or failed states and the awareness that “Good governance” is a requirement for a peaceful development. (cf. Nuscheler 2005 : 78 f)

The first time “sustainable development” was defined in the report “Our common future” by The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) – also called Brundtland Report – in 1972 in Stockholm:

„Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.“ (United Nations 1972)

Twenty years later on the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, a concept was established for implementing the demands of the WCED as binding agreements and conventions on international level. Therefore the Agenda 21² was introduced. (cf. UN-Division for Sustainable Development 2009)

Henceforward, the concept of sustainability was dispread and it is introduced within a row of programs, like within the Millennium Development Goals³.

² „Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and major groups in every area in which human impacts on the environment.“ (UN-Division for Sustainable Development 2009) Among other things the Agenda 21 includes commitments for poverty reduction, population policy, climate- and Energy policy, trade and environment, decline and cutback of non-sustainable methods of production and consumption. (cf. BMU 2009) Furthermore, the convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change were adopted in 150 nations.

³ The Millenium Development Goals Report 2008 by the United Nations
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/enviro.html>

1.5. The concept of Sustainable Development

The above chapter shows, that the concept of sustainable development was increasingly implemented in global and local policies over the last four decades to construct an overall solution for societal problems. Sustainable Development is a solution of a reformation of the society and the economy regarding the interacting problems of the nature, the population and the economy-system.

The relatively broad definition of the concept is saying, that the concept should work as a global one, but should be implemented locally. Therefore, the already mentioned program of the Agenda 21 was raised with the motto “think globally, act locally” at the UNCED. (cf. Caspari 2004 : 48)

According to Nohlen and Nuscheler the three columns are not sufficient for a sustainable development. So they added two further elements: participation of the locals and self-determined development, namely ownership. (cf. Nuscheler 2005 : 246)

Thus, the two authors transform the “civilizing hexagon” from Dieter Senghaas⁴ into the development political hexagon in figure 2.



Figure 2 The development political hexagon by Nuscheler and Nohlen (self constructed)

As demonstrated in figure 2, sustainable development implies the collaboration of social fairness, environment protection, participation, ownership and work for a qualitative growth. This understanding of sustainable development is assumed for this thesis and will be further outlined within the field of tourism in the next chapters.

⁴ The civilizing hexagon comprehend the interactions of the monopoly of aggression, the constitutional state system, democratic participation, culture of conflict, social justice and interdependency + control of emotions. (cf. Nuscheler 2005 : 235ff)

This chapter has aimed at providing on the one hand an overview of the birth of the term sustainability and its development of implementation and on the other hand a basic understanding of what is meant by and included in this term.

Before explaining how the concept of sustainability is implemented in the sector of tourism, some basic factors about tourism are outlined within the next chapter.

2. Tourism

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economy sectors in the world. With its deepening diversification with other sectors, tourism nowadays is closely linked to economic development and is regarded as a key driver of socio-economic progress. From 1950 to 2005 the annual growth rate of international tourist arrivals grew by 6,5 %, from 25 million to 806 million. The International Union of Official Travel Organizations (IUOTO) was established in 1947, transformed into the World Tourism Organization in 1970 and it has since become an executing agency of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Today the UNWTO is a specialized agency of the United Nations and it operates as an international forum for tourism- and tourism-related issues. (cf. UNWTO 2010)

The following chapter offers an insight into the tourism sector, a definition of tourism, a separation between tourism economy and tourism industry and some relevant facts and figures. Furthermore, the fact that a paradigm change in the values of the population possibly leads to a paradigm change in the tourism sector will be discussed. Subsequently, the present chapter considers the concept of sustainability within the field of tourism. Finally, current trends in the tourism sector are analyzed.

2.1. Definition of tourism

The World Tourism Organization defines Tourism as

“the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.” (UNWTO 2010)

In other words, a tourist is a person who travels to another place for private interest or for business purpose, but he is not employed at this place. Examples therefore are: conferences, workshops, trainings or private reasons like adventure, leisure, recreation, education, pilgrimage, etc.

2.1.1. Tourism economy and Tourism Industry

Tourism is characterized by its global complexity and the interconnections in many other sectors and branches, for example industry, transport, manufacture of goods and services etc. It needs to be pointed out that this paper differentiates between tourism industry and tourism economy. The tourism industry contains the accommodations as well as the suppliers of intermediate inputs, for example suppliers of groceries to hotels. The whole tourism economy includes the tourism industry, but also the suppliers of investment goods (e.g. the construction firms for building the hotels) and overseas goods brought for the tourists (cf. WTTC 2009 :4)

A lot of international institutions stress the positive development through tourism. “Travel and tourism has the potential to reduce the conflict between economic, social and environmental objectives and deliver development in a sustainable way.” (WTTC & IFTO a.o. 2002 : 7)

But the fact that the tourism economy is connected with a lot of other factors, industries, branches, states, locals, etc., makes it a complex field with different players interacting with each other on different levels. Therefore, the impacts of tourism relate to many different fields. What is beneficial to some might have detrimental consequences for others.. This makes it difficult to measure the overall impact of tourism.

Before discussing the paradigm change in the values of the population, several facts and figures mainly drawn from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) will be provided.

2.2. Facts and Figures

In 2008 the international tourist arrivals reached 922 million persons, an increase of 18 million people from the year 2007 and a growth rate of 2 %. The tourism generated 944 billion of US Dollar (642 billion €) in 2008, which equals 30 % of the world's exports of services, (cf. UNWTO 2010) and more than 9 % of the global GDP (cf. WTTC 2010)

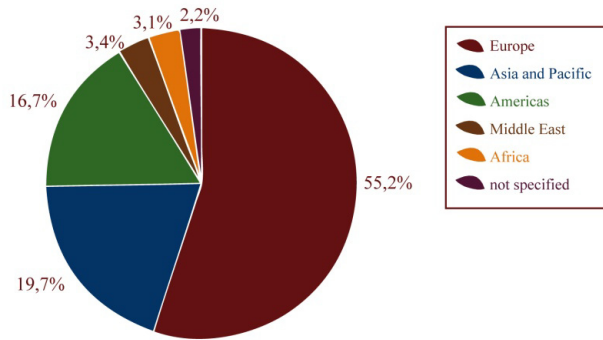


Figure 3 International Tourist Arrivals 2008 in % (self constructed)

According to the two main tourism indicators for economic measurement, tourism arrivals and tourism receipts, Europe is the leading region in 2008, similar to preceding years. As shown in figure 3 according to the UNWTO (2009) Europe claims 55 % of the total share of arrivals. This amounts to 508 million people as shown in figure 4 Asia and the Pacific come in second with 19.7 %, followed by the Americas (North and South) with 16.5 % or 151 million arrivals. The regions with the fewest shares are the Middle East and Africa, with 3.4 % and 3.1 % respectively.

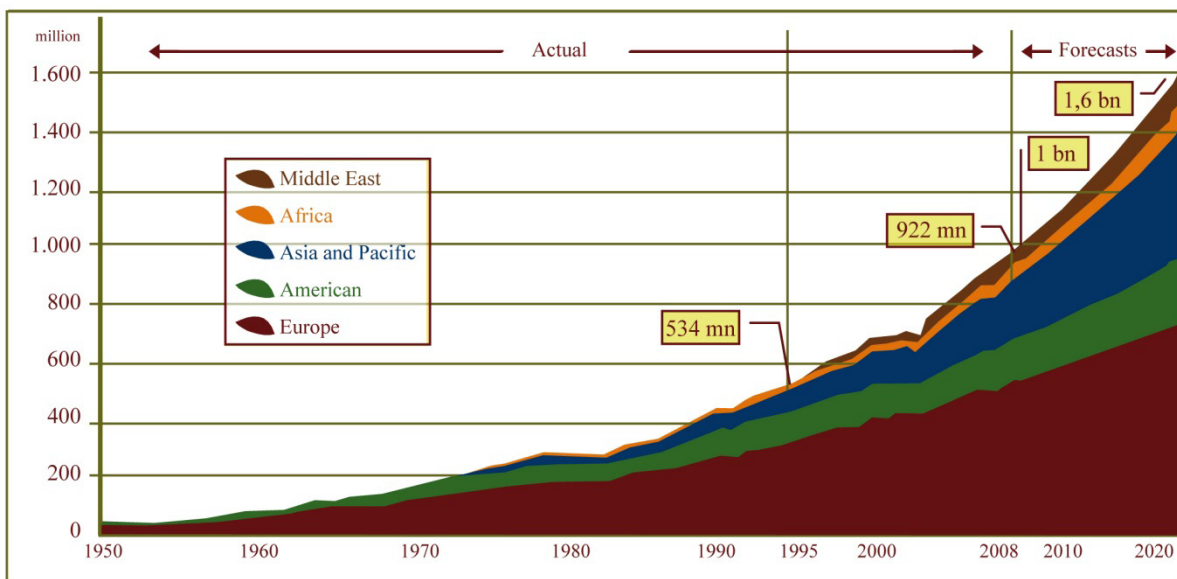


Figure 4 International Tourist Arrivals 1950 – 2020 (self constructed)

The UNWTO lists the total receipts in billion and total receipts per arrival in US Dollar and Euro per Region. Europe obtains for 473.7 billion US Dollar (322.1 billion €) in 2008, followed by Asia and the Pacific with 206 billion US \$ (140.1 billion €), Americas with 188.4 billion US \$ (128.1 billion €), Africa with 30.6 billion US \$ (20.8 billion €) and Middle East with 45.6 billion US \$ (31 billion €). The sub-region with the highest receipt per arrival is Oceania with 3.050 US \$ (2.080 €). (cf. UNWTO 2009 : 10)

2.3. Tourism in Austria

Austria is popular because of its multifaceted nature and offers a wide range of possibilities for tourism in all seasons: skiing in the Alps in winter or holidays on a variety of lakes in the summer. In the last years Austria can register a rising number of tourist arrivals and reached a record-number of 32.6 million of visitors in 2008. (cf. Statistik Austria 2010) In 2009 a slight decline of 0.9 % was denoted. (cf. Statistik Austria 2009) In 2008 the revenue of inbound tourism was 16.6 Mio Euro and 247,543 people were employed in the tourism industry. (cf. Statistik Austria 2010) In 2009 the arrivals decline by 1 % and the overnight stays by 1,9 %, but the domestic arrivals reached a new peak value of 11 million people. (cf. Statistik Austria 2009)

2.4. Paradigm change in tourism: Sustainable Tourism

Since the emergence of mass tourism in the 1960s the rapid growth of the tourism industry exceeds the limits of growth in many tourist destinations. Evidence for this are distinguishable ecological damages through tourism, the increasing sensitivity of nature in broad parts of the population, the wide public discussions about tourism and the resistance against the construction of big touristic projects. The publication of “Limits of growth”, which was published as early as 1972 by Meadows, initiated a critical discussion about tourism and its consequences. Especially damages to the environment became the focus of scientific debates concerning tourism. This discussion led to a development of a variety of concepts and approaches for a more compatible form of tourism. The concept of sustainable tourism proved to be particularly relevant and is therefore discussed in depth below.

2.4.1. Sustainable Tourism

According to the WTO

“Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems” (WTO, WTTC 1996 : 30)

This definition is reminiscent of the definition of sustainability in the Brundtland-Report. Similar to the sustainability-definition this definition is interpreted in a multitude of ways in the literature and by several different institutions. There is no further discussion about the definition included in this paragraph, due to the fact that a precise exploration of the term ecotourism is carried out in chapter 3. The UNEP (2003) lists the following requirements for the development of sustainable tourism:

● Tourist resources - natural, historical, cultural and others - are preserved in a way that allows them to be used in the future, whilst benefiting today's society;
● The planning and management of tourist development are conducted in a way that avoids triggering serious ecological or socio-cultural problems in the region concerned;
● The overall quality of the environment in the tourist region is preserved and, if necessary, improved;
● The level of tourist satisfaction should be maintained to ensure that destinations continue to be attractive and retain their commercial potential; and
● Tourism should largely benefit all members of society.

Table 1 Requirements for sustainable tourism according to UNEP 2003 (self constructed)

The concept of sustainability advocates a reorientation in the field of tourism. The danger could be that buzzwords used in alternative tourism marketing could be appropriated and misused by entities only interested in profit rather than actual alternative tourism. Rather the concept was created to foster a development of holistic change in the structure of tourism destinations, which should be implemented as a general policy by tourism stakeholders. Thereby not only the negative impacts to the environment should be minimized, but the economic efficiency and the social compatibility should be guaranteed. Furthermore, sustainable tourism should “improve the quality of life of the host community, provide a high

quality of experience for the visitor, and maintain the quality of the environment on which the host community and the visitor depend.” (WTO 1996)

It has to be mentioned that sustainable tourism is an overarching term that includes a wide range of denotations, for example nature tourism, nature-based tourism, soft tourism, green tourism, alternative tourism, sustainable tourism, cultural tourism, low-impact tourism, rural

tourism, adventure tourism, appropriate tourism etc. (cf. Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996 : 26) A form of tourism which particularly adheres to the principles of sustainability is ecotourism, which will be described in more detail in chapter 3.

The following sub-chapter portrays the trends affecting the planning of tourism.

2.4.2. Trends affecting the tourism planning

Stronger than any other industry, tourism is affected by trends. The trends are highly dependent on offers from the travel agencies and airlines but also from the change in the customer behaviour, non influenceable external factors and political decisions. Especially governments in the countries of the south financially support sustainable tourism projects and the establishment of national parks. Hence, these trends are portrayed in the following.

2.4.2.1. Sustainable development through tourism in countries of the south

The demand for travelling in intact and relatively untouched nature is rising and governments see a great possibility to create revenue for the country. Due to the fact that large uncultivated areas, which are worth protecting, still exist in countries of the south, international institutions promote the construction of national parks and protected areas by means of income through tourism. Thus, a double-benefit – on the one hand the consumption of untouched nature for the tourists and on the other hand the conservation of nature – is made possible, argued by governments.

The growth of tourism and its impacts on the development-process in the countries of the south have been the subject of controversial discussions over the last decades. The constitution and extension of the economic sector lead to a potent integration into the world economy. Therefore, especially the governments of these countries aim to support sustainable tourism. Since the 1960s the conditions of this integration and the resulting economical, social and cultural effects have provoked a scientific and evolving discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of tourism in developing countries. Two controversial theories will be presented regarding this discussion: the modernization-theory and the dependency-theory.

One result of the discussion about tourism mentioned above is the perception of the modernization-theory⁵: The great economic benefits of planned tourism development can compensate the negative aspects and impacts, and tourism can contribute with its “total account” to the social welfare. (cf. Baumhackl 2006 : 7) The boost of the movement of travelers started with commercial airplane routes between the United States and Europe in 1957 and with the invention of “jet engines [which] made air travel more accessible to the public”. (Honey 1999 : 8) Based on the facilitation of traveling to other continents, modernization-theorists name the foreign currency income, the rising employment and infrastructure and the possibility for people to move from a subsistence-economy to a modern sector as strong arguments for their theory. (cf. Baumhackl 2006 : 7) For Pearce and other scientists, tourism was a growing industry to exceed traditional trade barriers. Furthermore, the tourism sector was beheld as “white industry” when compared to the environmental pollution of other sectors.

Contrary to the modernization theory, representatives of the dependency- and imperialism-theory⁶ see tourism as a factor for the maintenance for under-development. They name the dominance of industrialized countries in the tourism-earnings, the international terms of trade and the power of foreign investors as crucial examples. Besides the external dependency, the negative consequences of tourism come to the fore. Dependency-theorists suspect independent tourism-development for developing countries only in the form of dissociation from the world market or tourism. (cf. Baumhackl 2006 : 8) In the 1980s, several studies on the impacts of tourism were published and the Manila Declaration on World Tourism demonstrates that “tourism does more harm than good to people and to societies in the Third World”. (Nicholson-Lord in Honey 1999 : 9) Therefore, in the middle of the 80s, after the failure of the grand theories (modernization-, and dependency-theory), a pragmatic assessment of tourism in developing countries was established. “Adequate tourism” was propagated and long-distance-tourism should be realised in a social- and environmental friendly path. (cf. Baumhackl 2006 : 8 f)

⁵ Modernization-theories argue for adjustment of underdeveloped societies to western industrialized societies through the process of imitation. “Tradition” and “Modernity” mark the start and the end of the modernization-process. (Nohlen 2002 : 572)

⁶ In the middle of the 1960s some theorists put the focus on the dependency of the underdeveloped nations to the industrialized nations. E.g. Raúl Prebisch hold the aggravation of the terms of trade responsible for the problems of development of the least developed countries. (Nohlen 2002 : 181)

2.4.2.2. Awareness and preferences of tourists

Even trends in the travel behaviour of tourists, which changed over the last decades, form an important aspect for the tourism sector. Steinecke and Maier summarize the projected 1990s trends as follows: vacation in intact nature, holidays combined with relaxation as well as adventure, individualization of the mode of travelling, sunny destinations and spontaneous journeys. (Opaschowski and Müller cit. in Steinecke and Maier 1995 : 37) Analysis in the last years, however show a tendency of Europeans to favor shorter vacations, last minute holidays and domestic holidays. (cf. Jelinek 2009)

In the last years a strong trend of travelling in nature and getting in contact with clean and undiscovered environment has emerged. “The desire to learn and experience nature is influenced by changing attitudes to the environment (...), development of environmental education in primary and secondary schools, and the emergence of environmental mass media.” (Weaver 2001 : 39) Generally, a rising interest and awareness of the nature is seen as a positive movement. Nonetheless, well planed strategies and a good management are necessary to guide travelling in a sustainable way.

2.4.2.3. Non influenceable external factors

Some non-influenceable factors led to a cutback in the rates of tourism-arrivals and tourism-receipts. The Asian financial and economic crisis in 1997 caused the expenditure growth to drop in the following year (cf. UNWTO 2010) and the outbreak of the SARS⁷ (avian influenza) 2002 affected the Asian region more than the Tsunami in 2004. In the statistics we can observe an economic downturn right after such events, but in the case of Tsunami, tourism was booming again one year after and the rate of arrivals rose by 20 %.⁸ (cf. Herdin 2006 : 196 ff) Terrorist attacks might have similar effects. Aschauer describes one example (1999): In Bali in 2002 and 2005 bombs were exploding in and around a Bar in one of Bali's

⁷ Serve Acute Respiratory Syndrome

⁸ In the first 3 month after the catastrophe the rate of arrivals declined by 8,6 % in Thailand, but with cheap flights and speculations for a cheap holiday, for example the rate of students rose by 10,2 %. The figureheads for mass tourism in Thailand Khao Lak and Phuket has been erased, but already 6 month after the Tsunami the chaos in Phuket has been removed. The region was dependent on monetary assistance of the government or international aid and most of the hotels were still indebted and most of them had no insurance. This caused a high sales rate to foreign investors. (cf. Herdin 2006)

tourist destinations, which involved a drastic decrease in arrivals of tourists (80 % according to WTO (2003)) and within a few days after the terrorist attacks 18.700 left Bali. Thereby the whole tourism economy struggled with reduced employment and reduced earnings. For an island dependent on tourism like Bali these heavy losses were devastating.

The previous chapters provided an overview of ongoing issues in the tourism sector. This paper will now turn to a more specific form of sustainable tourism – ecotourism.

3. Ecotourism – a solution to make tourism sustainable?

The desire of traveling in intact nature, for relaxation and sportive activities in natural ambience and visitation to ecotourism or nature tourism destinations is on the increase worldwide. According to The International Ecotourism Society (TIES 2005) ecotourism has been growing 20 % - 34 % per year, beginning in the 1990s. In 2004 it was growing three times as fast as the tourism industry as a whole.

The present chapter offers a distinction of ecotourism from the concept of sustainable tourism and nature-based tourism and presents five definitions of ecotourism from Ceballos-Lascuráin (1987), TIES (1990), Weaver (2002), Blamey (2003) and Fritz and Leuthold (2001), which will be discussed and compared. At the end a definition and criteria for classification for ecotourism will be arrived at, forming the basis for this paper. Finally, the International ecotourism society (TIES) will be presented and an insight into the Austrian ecotourism market will be given by exemplifying two projects.

3.1 Classification

A wide range of denotations for nature travel are identified and alluded to in the literature like nature tourism, nature-based tourism, soft tourism, green tourism, alternative tourism, sustainable tourism, cultural tourism, low-impact tourism, rural tourism, adventure tourism, appropriate tourism etc. (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996 : 26). The definitions of these terms are similar and were often mixed-up, misinterpreted or misunderstood. Therefore a distinction of the term of ecotourism from other forms or concepts of tourism is necessary.

Generally the literature differentiates between mass tourism and alternative tourism. “Mass tourism is seen as the more traditional form of tourism development where short-term, free-market principles dominate and the maximization of income is paramount.” (Orams 2001 : 25) While mass tourism is not always detrimental to the environment, the vast majority of people think of alternative tourism as having no negative consequences whatsoever. Weaver (1998) points out that alternative tourism “is not necessarily less harmful or better” (Weaver cit. in Orams 2001 : 26) than mass tourism, it depends how it is planned and integrated in the environment. However, the line between alternative and mass tourism is vague. It is clear that a small-scale project is more likely to suit the requirements for sustainable tourism, but “there

is no inherent reasons why a large-scale product cannot be sustainable.” (Weaver 2001 : 77) As Orams (2001 :26) shows, there is no copyright on the term “ecotourism” and no patent on what it entails. Thus, large tourism operators include some nature-based-activities in their program and can promote their offer as “eco”-activities as well. So ecotourism participants can be mass tourists and there is no stringent boundary between them; but rather a relationship, which “may be moving in the direction of synthesis, convergence and symbiosis”. (Weaver 2001 : 78) This makes it difficult to take a clear distinction or definition of what ecotourism means.

Nevertheless, Ecotourism can be viewed as a sub-category or niche of alternative, sustainable or nature-based tourism. (Orams 2001 : 27, Weaver 2001 : 74, Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996 : 21 et al) with the focuses on natural attractions rather than cultural, monumental or others. In chapter 2.4.1 the concept and principles of sustainable tourism are summarized, which build the basic parameters for ecotourism. A distinction between nature-based tourism and ecotourism has to be drawn as well. While nature-based tourism covers any kind of activities and forms of tourism which associated with nature, ecotourism is a sub-segment of nature-based tourism, which follows the principles of sustainable tourism.

3.2 Definitions of Ecotourism

Similar to the definition of sustainable tourism, the term of ecotourism has been frequently examined over the last decades as well. More than 80 different definitions of ecotourism are found in the tourism literature. To get a better grasp of the term five definitions will be outlined and compared in the following abstract. At the end, a definition for this paper will be provided.

In 1987 Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin describes ecotourism as:

“Travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas.” (cf. Weaver 2001 : 6)

Ceballos-Lascuráin focuses with his definition on travelling with the special purpose of *studying*. The term *studying* implies that the author refers to the appreciation of the nature – the flora and fauna – and the cultural manifestations.

The advanced integration of the concept and term “sustainability” into policies, guidelines and laws and its implementation into nearly all public fields lead to a more specific definition of ecotourism by Weaver (2002):

“Ecotourism is a form of tourism that fosters learning experiences and appreciation of the natural environment, or some component thereof, within its associated cultural context. It has the appearance (in concert with best practice) of being environmentally and socio-culturally sustainable, preferably in a way that enhances the natural and cultural resource base of the destination and promotes the viability of the operation.”
(Weaver cit. in Fennell and Dowling 2003 : 3)

Weaver as well as Ceballos-Lascuráin underline in their definition the promotion of learning and appreciation according to the natural and cultural context.

The inclusion of the cultural context within this definition allows a culturally differentiated consideration of nature. This view runs the risk of being interpreted in a way not accordable with the claim of resource protection by Weaver, namely that some cultures examine the nature as a resource for industry. Weaver specifies Ceballos-Lascuráin’s definition by the requirement for environmental and socio-cultural sustainability and by the *enhancement* of the resources and the *promotion* of the respective operation. The term *enhancement* suggests a human impact or reformation of nature, which raises the question if a transformed area of environment still constitutes nature or if the term *nature* is just a construct, which everyone can perceive in a different way.

TIES includes the wellbeing of locals in its approach and defines ecotourism as follows:

“Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people” (TIES 1990)

Furthermore, TIES stresses the following ecotourism principles, which should be followed by all ecotourism-participants:

- Minimize impact
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate (TIES : n.s.)

The inclusion of *responsible travel* in the definition of TIES presumes according behavior from the tourism service providers as well as from the visitors. This raises the question how far a destination can solely appeal to responsible travelers and if this target group is big enough to ensure revenue for a region dependent on tourism.

The TIES highlights the importance of tourism because of the financial benefit for conservation purpose and for the local development. Furthermore, the educational aspect is mentioned as an essential factor for building awareness and respect of nature as well as raising sensitivity for the host countries political, environmental and social climate.

A special focus is given to the regional development, which is not considered in the other definitions. As became clear in the previous chapters, tourism no matter if mass-tourism or any other form, has an impact on other factors. These impacts are not easy to measure. The UNDP and the WTO (1986) underline, that environmental compatibility is best arranged and measured at the regional level “where it is suggested that tourism planning can provide one of the best opportunities for attaining environmental goals.” (Dowling and Fennell 2003 : 12)

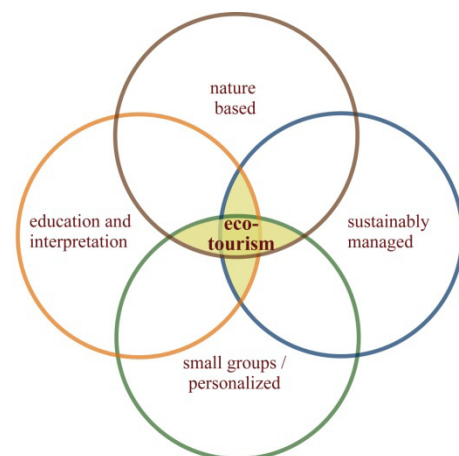
In other words, ecotourism can be utilized as a bottom-up strategy for social and economic regional development.⁹

⁹ “The TIES reports that Eco-lodges for example hire and purchase locally. According to studies from the TIES (2005) they put about 95% of money into the local economy, whereas 80% of money for all-inclusive package tours goes to airlines, hotels, and other international companies. “In Dominica, in the Caribbean, “stay over” tourists using small, nature-based lodges spent 18 times more than cruise passengers spend while visiting the island” and “In Komodo National Park in Indonesia, independent travelers spend nearly US\$100 locally per visit [while] package holidaymakers spend only half this.” (TIES 2005)

In the current definition by TIES, the natural area stands in the foreground. Also in the definition of ecotourism by Blamey (2003: 7) this aspect makes up one of four dimensions (see figure 5):

nature based, sustainably managed, small groups/personalized, and education and interpretation.

Figure 5 Four dimensions of ecotourism according to Blamey (self constructed)



Blamey broadens the problem of definition by questioning the dimension of the group of travelers. He divides the eco-tourists in two categories: “classical eco-tourists”, which refers to a small number of visitors /group and “popular eco-tourists”, which corresponds to a bigger group. As already mentioned in chapter 3.1 arrival in a large group does not necessarily denote a more or less sustainable stay than arriving as an individual traveler.

In this definition of ecotourism the emphasis is on environmental education (awareness-building concerning the environment, learning in and about the nature, etc.). This forms an important benchmark for the concept of national parks in the proceeding chapter.

In an article in the journal “Integra”¹⁰ for the “International year of ecotourism 2002” Fritz and Leuthold (2001 : 9) concentrate on the diversity of the definitions of ecotourism. They analyze five different definitions by Elisabeth Boo, Arbeitsgruppe Ökotourismus, the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the commission of sustainable development (United Nations) and the ecotourism association of Australia. As a synopsis of the various terms they define ecotourism as follows:

¹⁰ The journal „Integra“ is published quarterly by the Institut für Tourismus- und Freizeitforschung in Vienna.

„Ökotourismus ist ein verantwortungsbewusster Aufenthalt in der Natur und naturnahen Gebieten oder städtischen Räumen, dessen Organisation und Realisierung sich aus den regionalen Bedürfnissen über die Mitbestimmung der Beteiligten heraus entwickelt und dabei die Umwelt, die sozialen, kulturellen und wirtschaftlichen Gegebenheiten achtet sowie sie nachhaltig schützt, fördert und finanziert.“ (Fritz and Leuthold 2001 : 10)

Fritz and Leuthold describe ecotourism as a responsible stay in the nature and nature-based or urban areas. Its organization and realization is developed concerning the regional requirements of participation for the involved persons and regarding the respect of the environment, the social, cultural and economic situation, plus their sustainable protection, valorization and financing.

Interestingly, the authors add travelling in urban regions to the definition of ecotourism. Until then this aspect had not been taken into account for the ecotourism definition and leads to a problem for the classification compared to sustainable tourism, which does not refer per se on a “nature-based” area. If all the other aspects – the regional requirements for a participation of the local involved parties and the sustainable appreciation, protection, enhancement and financing of the social, cultural, environmental and economical factors – are achieved, the definition indicates to the implementation of ecotourism into all forms of tourism. Therefore this definition does not offer a clear distinction from sustainable tourism.

The approaches mentioned above show the difficulty in defining ecotourism. Disagreement persists in the inclusion of the “environmental learning”. Ceballos-Lascuráin (cf. Weaver 2001 : 6), Weaver (cf. Fennell and Dowling 2003 : 3), TIES and Blamey (2003 : 7) emphasize the studying of nature and environmental education as a central element of ecotourism. Fritz and Leuthold (2001 : 10) do not include this element in their definition. The terminus of learning can be viewed critically, because it implies an availability of teaching and information. For this paper, a project, which is marked as an ecotourism project, has to provide some kind of information (brochures, booklets, information-tables, etc.) about the environmental and regional distinctions.

A further point under discussion is the place, where ecotourism happens. Again Ceballos-Lascuráin (cf. Weaver 2001 : 6), Weaver (cf. Fennell and Dowling 2003 : 3), TIES and

Blamey (2003 : 7) refer to the term *nature based* or *undisturbed / uncontaminated natural areas*. On the other hand, Fritz and Leuthold (2001 : 10) include the urban area. However, this aspect is disproved in a publication of the author Leuthold (2001 :4 ff), where she mentions *nature-based* as a criteria for ecotourism. In this regard the question of the definition of nature, nature-area and nature-based area arises, given that different ideas of nature exist. For this paper the cultural area of Austria is used as an idea of nature, which constitutes transformed nature per se, but is perceived as nature.

Blamey (2003 : 7ff) is the only author, who refers to the dimension of the group. The estimation, that ecotourism is not dependent on the dimension of the group, is affirmed by Fritz and Leuthold (2001 : 10), the TIES; and Weaver (cit. in Fennell and Dowling 2003 : 3). The vision of the locals is integrated in the definition of Fritz and Leuthold (2001 : 10) and the TIES. The regional population is not directly included in the definition of Ceballos-Lascuráin (cit. in Weaver 2001 : 6), Weaver (cit. in Fennell and Dowling 2003 : 3) and Blamey (2003 : 7), but they mention the term *sustainability* or *cultural manifestations*, which corresponds to social compatibility as well.

Financing of nature conservation through tourism is a further aspect..Fritz and Leuthold (2001 : 10), the TIES and Weaver (cit. in Fennell and Dowling 2003 : 3) include this point. All authors include the economic sustainability respectively the economy in their definition. However, only the TIES mentions customer satisfaction. In this context it is noteworthy that the economic sustainability in a region affected by tourism predominantly depends on the satisfaction of the customer / visitors and their re-visitation of the region. For this piece of writing the inclusion of customer-satisfaction is necessary, because only if the customer is satisfied with the quality of the services economic stability can be guaranteed for a region.

Following these considerations, this paper will define ecotourism as follows:

Ecotourism:

- occurs in a nature-based area
- is based on the considerations of sustainability: it has to be ecological and socio-cultural compatible and assures economic capacity for the region
- offers opportunities for a stay in nature and
- provides environmental regional information

For the purpose of explanation it has to be mentioned that the term “nature-based” area means the opposite of urban area. This term describes a cultural area, which does not portray nature in original form, but is not an urban area. The above quoted quality of services is included in the terminus of economic capacity.

This chapter has aimed at providing an overview of the many different definitions of ecotourism. Ultimately one can say, that the definition of ecotourism stands in a grey area and can be interpreted and viewed in many various ways.

3.3 Criteria for Classification – Principles for ecotourism

Criteria in the context of ecotourism feature the possibility of concretizing objectives and the principles and to prove initiatives on its ecotourism entitlement. In the study “Potentiale des Ökotourismus in Österreich” (potentials of ecotourism in Austria) Leuthold (2001 : 5) establishes criteria for ecotourism. Thus, ecotourism has to achieve the following principles:

- environmentally friendly
- socially acceptable
- economically compatible (i.e. socio-economical justified)
- culturally friendly
- responsible
- nature-based
- sustainable development-perspective
- participation (right of co determination of the population)
- regional development
- eventually enables a contribution for financing a protected area (Leuthold 2001 : 5)

To some extent, these criteria have already been mentioned in the discussion about the definition of ecotourism (see chapter 3.2). From Leuthold’s point of view the necessity of environmental, social, cultural and economical compatibility has to be ensured. This fact is corresponding to the considerations of sustainability in the field of tourism (see chapter 2.4). Additionally, she mentions: responsibility, nature-based criteria, participation and

regional development. The point of financing protected areas is not an absolute requirement in her argument. In this context, it is questionable how far this is convertible. Behind the criteria of environmental, social, cultural and economical compatibility are standing various stakeholders with different interests. Thus, this poses a challenge to meet all these interests.

The term responsibility is rather vague. If the term refers to responsibility of service providers in the tourism sector and of the visitors, it remains unclear how one ensures the responsible behavior of guests.

In this paper responsibility is interpreted as environmental, social and cultural responsibility from all stakeholders, but this discussion about the term responsibility shows that the application of the term is not clear at all. In the same way all the other criteria Leuthold (2001 : 5) mentions are loosely defined.

Wight (1994) presents a diverse listing of criteria for ecotourism and defines its principles as follows:

- “It should not degrade the resource and should be developed in an environmentally sound manner.
- It should provide long-term benefits to the resource, to the local community and industry.
- It should provide first-hand, participatory and enlightening experiences.
- It should involve education among all parties: local communities, government, non government organizations, industry and tourists (before, during and after the trip)
- It should encourage all-party recognition of the intrinsic values of the resource.
- It should involve acceptance of the resource in its own terms, and in recognition of its limits, which involves supply-oriented management.
- It should promote understanding and involve partnerships between many players, which could involve government, non-governmental organizations, industry, scientists and locals (both before and during operations)
- It should promote moral and ethical responsibilities and behavior towards the natural and cultural environment by all players. “

(cit. in Blamey 2001 : 11)

Summarized in keywords, the above mentioned criteria by Wight basically refer to:

- Environmental friendliness
- Regional development
- Participation
- Educational aspect
- Awareness building
- Supply-oriented management

In the definition of Wight (1994) the point supply-oriented management includes the “acceptance of the resource [...] and in recognition of its limits”. Supply-oriented per se implies the fact for an existence of an offer for visitors or guests. The tourism-offer in a region has to meet the requirements and imagination of the visitors and be adapted in an environmental friendly way. Supply-side management is closely connected to regional development and has to ensure “that ecotourism does not occur willy-nilly wherever there is a demand for it, but that governments, tour operators, conservation groups, and local communities, among others, plan together where ecotourism sites should be established and how they should be managed” (Whelan 1991 cit. in Blamey 2001 : 19). In this context it has to be mentioned that in many principles or criteria the satisfaction of the tourists and accordingly the quality for the visitor is not taken into account. Nature-based, environmentally friendly and socially acceptable criteria do not suppose the quality of the services and therefore the re-visitation of the tourists in this region. Thus, for this piece of writing an inclusion of the quality of services into the supply-side management is assumed.

Similarly to the definitions of ecotourism, the criteria of ecotourism are in a grey area. The responsibility criteria seems good, but it does not offer a concrete definition and can be interpreted from many points of view.

For this paper, the criteria by Leuthold fused with the criteria by Wight are applied:

- environmentally friendly
- socially acceptable
- economically compatible (i.e. socio-economical justified)
- culturally friendly
- nature-based
- sustainable development-perspective
- participation (right of co determination of the population)
- regional development
- educational aspect
- Supply-oriented management

3.4 The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)

TIES was founded in 1990 by Megan Epler Wood and her team “as the world’s first international non-profit organization dedicated to ecotourism as a tool for conservation and sustainable development.” (TIES 2010) It provides guidelines, standards, trainings, technical assistance, research and publications and acts as a global network for ecotourism professionals and travelers to make tourism a stable instrument for the protection of bio-cultural diversity and sustainable community development. Members from over 90 countries and various fields and industry segments like: academics, consultants, conservation professionals, organizations, governments, architect, tour operators, lodge owners, managers, ecotourists and development experts, belong to the network. TIES supports the members through membership services, industry outreach and educational programs. (TIES 2010)

3.5 Ecotourism in Austria

Nature tourism is well positioned in Austria and offers a wide range of possibilities for activities in nature and a beautiful landscape. However, nature tourism and tourists who are coming for nature-purposes do not have to cover the principles or criteria of ecotourism.

According to the study of Leuthold (2001 : 10) 35-40 % of the area of Austria could be used for eco-tourism. This is a high percentage, but it refers only to the potential for offering ecotourism in Austria. Leuthold does not forecast if ecotourism portrays a rising and profitable business for the Austrian tourism market, but some initiatives and projects in the Austrian tourism sector constitutes for approaches according to the principles of ecotourism. For example the region Pielachtal, which is the winner of the competition “European Destinations of Excellence” in 2007 and the region Lake Neusiedl - Fertő-Tó, in which a pilot project for environmentally sustainable transport and tourism in sensitive areas has been implemented.

3.5.1 Region Pielachtal

In the year 2007 the European Union started a competition "European Destinations of Excellence"¹¹. Touristic regions with a special focus on the protection of natural resources and cultural heritage could participate in this competition. The region Pielachtal in lower Austria came first because of the cooperation of culture, nature, lifestyle and pleasure to an innovative offer. The main enterprise of the region – the 4 star hotel Steinschalerhof – put a focus on domestic food and products, supports the regional culture and advances the protection of the nature around the river Pielach. (cf. Umweltberatung 2008)

3.5.2 Region lake Neusiedl - Fertő-Tó

Austria is a leading country in the field of "Protection of sensitive areas" in the follow-up of the UNECE Vienna Declaration on Transport and Environment and is a leader in the UNECE-WHO Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP).

¹¹ www.europeandestinationsofexcellence.com

An Austrian and Hungarian cross-border umbrella project "Environmentally sustainable transport and tourism in sensitive areas, using the Lake Neusiedl - Fertő-Tó region as an example" was initiated. Because of the ecologically sensitive area around Lake Neusiedl this region is in need of a careful management for transport and infrastructure and was thus chosen for the project. The pilot project is split up into five working fields:

Module 1 Innovative, sustainable public transport

Module 2 Cross-border mobility centre - implementation of make IT

Module 3 Eco-mobility and eco-tourism

Module 4 Sustainable commercial transport and regional development

Module 5 Tailored infrastructures and new vehicle technologies ¹²

(cf. Lebensministerium 2007)

At the end of this chapter it has become obvious, that it is difficult to form an overall definition of ecotourism because of the variety of definitions and its broad range for interpretation. The use of the term ecotourism for specific projects would become easier with a general definition and a specification of generally admitted criteria and indicators. Thus, tourists and tourism service providers would be prevented from green washing practices in this branch.

The establishment of TIES is a first step to a global definition and universal principles for making tourism more “green”, sustainable and compatible, but their definition is vague and incomplete too. The two examples from Austria demonstrate a compliant development on the path of sustainability. Nevertheless, all the interactions and criteria concerning ecotourism are complex to regard, but this approach can be seen as a one out of many possibilities for a harmonization on the equilibrium and a balance to the limits of growth.

¹² <http://www.sensiblegebiete.at>; <http://www.lebensministerium.at/article/articleview/56348/1/7218>

4. National Parks

Protected areas and national parks are cultural and natural artifacts and have a long history. From the seventeenth century onwards, areas were protected for hunting-purpose by the rich and powerful. Many societies set aside special areas for cultural activities and use of natural resources. (cf. Eagles 2002 : 5; Butler and Boyd 2000 : 14 f) The first *real* national park was established in 1872, Yellowstone national park in the United States. From this date until 1915 eight further parks were established and all of them in North America. (cf. Butler and Boyd 2000 : 17) During the twentieth century the idea of national parks spread around the world. The result was the dedication of 44,000 sites as protected areas according the International Union for the Conservation of Nature definition (IUCN) ¹³, which covers about 10 % of the land surface of the planet. (cf. Eagles 2002: 8)

The present chapter offers a definition of a national Park according to the IUCN, by first categorizing the levels of protected areas. Later the objectives of a national park in general and tourism specifically will be discussed.

It has to be mentioned, that the general part about the national parks is referring almost only to the literature of the IUCN, because the national park Thayatal, which will be analyzed in the practical part, is categorized under the terms of the IUCN for a national park.

4.1 Definition

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) the world's oldest and largest environmental network, established a set of terminology and definition called IUCN's Category System for National Parks and Protected Areas. (see Table 2) Each category is based upon a different objective in terms of management.

¹³ "IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. It supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world and brings governments, non-government organizations, United Nations agencies, companies and local communities together to develop and implement policy, laws and best practice." (IUCN 2010)

Category I	Strict Nature Reserve/Wilderness Area: Protected area managed mainly for science or wilderness protection
Category IA	Strict Nature Reserve: Protected area managed mainly for science
Category IB	Wilderness Area: Protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection
Category II	National Park: Protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation
Category III	Natural Monument: Protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features
Category IV	Habitat/Species Management Area: Protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention
Category V	Protected Landscape/Seascape: Protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation
Category VI	Managed Resource Protected Area: Protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems.

Table 2 Category System for National Parks and Protected Areas according the IUCN (self constructed)

Through category I to category IV human activities and the role of visitation become more and more prominent. While in category I sites can only be entered by a small number of visitors and only a minimum of infrastructure is allowed, Category II and III sites touristic infrastructure is permitted. In Category IV sites consumptive recreation (e.g. hunting) is allowed, in Category V sites farms, houses and extensive tourist facilities are legal. In Category VI sites all types of extractive activities (e.g. mining, forestry, commercial fishing) and mechanized recreation are permitted. (Eagles and McCool 2002 : 19)

According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN 1969) a national parks, which belong to the Category II sites, can be defined as

“ a relatively large area where

one or several ecosystems are not materially altered by human exploitation and occupation, where plant and animal species, geomorphological sites and habitats of special scientific, educative and recreative interest or which contains a natural landscape of great beauty and

the highest competent authority of the country has taken steps to prevent or to eliminate as soon as possible exploitation or occupation in the whole area and to enforce effectively the respect of ecological, geomorphological or aesthetic features which have led to its establishment and visitors are allowed to enter, under special conditions, for inspirational, educative, cultural and recreative purposes” (cit. in Butler and Boyd 2000 : 4f)

National parks, therefore, can be considered as large, relatively untouched natural, environmental areas, that are protected at a high level and contain, among other things, the aim of recreation meaning tourism. Interestingly, the term “national park” does not automatically signify a category II area. According to the IUCN, in all categories areas called national parks exist and there even are national parks that are not protected areas at all. “The fact that an area is called a national park is independent of its management approach” (IUCN 2008 : 27)

For purposes of facilitation the Lebensministerium and the Nationalparks Austria utilize the shorter definition of a national park, mentioned above, stating that a national park is a “protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation” (IUCN cit. in Eagles 2002 : 11)

Two issues have become evident so far, namely that the two central elements of a national park are the nature conservation and the recreational purpose for visitors. An interesting point that these two aspects are overlapping with the criteria for ecotourism. (see chapter 3.3)

Concerning the identification of a national park is difficult, who defines if an area features a *natural landscape of great beauty*. There are, after all, different perceptions of *beauty* and *nature* (see chapter 3.2) The outcome of this is, that the identification of a national park is dependent on the examination of individuals, which possibly could have political or economical interest. Concluding the definition of a national park, it has to be mentioned, that a national park does not exist a priori in its form, but rather is made to be something special with its nomination as a national park.

The previous chapter gave an insight into the definition of a national park and the protected area management categories system, the following section continues with the objectives of a national park.

4.2 Objectives

The primary objective for the management of a national park is:

“to protect natural biodiversity along with its underlying ecological structure and supporting environmental processes and to promote education and recreation.”

Further objectives outlined in the “Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories” by the IUCN

- “To manage the area in order to perpetuate, in as natural a state as possible, representative examples of physiographic regions, biotic communities, genetic resources and unimpaired natural processes;
- To maintain viable and ecologically functional populations and assemblages of native species at densities sufficient to conserve ecosystem integrity and resilience in the long term;
- To contribute in particular to conservation of wide-ranging species, regional ecological processes and migration routes;
- To manage visitor use for inspirational, educational, cultural and recreational purposes at a level which will not cause significant biological or ecological degradation to the natural resources;
- To take into account the needs of indigenous people and local communities, including subsistence resource use, in so far as these will not adversely affect the primary management objective;
- To contribute to local economies through tourism.” (IUCN 2008 : 16)

Regarding the subsistence use of resources of indigenous and local people, the objectives mentioned above allow their use only if it “will not adversely affect the primary management objective”. In this statement nature conservation is ranked higher than a basic human right, which cannot be accepted in this way from the author of the paper. This discussion cannot be elaborated in detail, as it is not relevant for the case study in part III of this paper. The third part of this document refers to the management objectives of the national park Thayathal, which do not raise moral discussible points concerning a violation of human rights.

In the definition of a national park as well as in the objectives “recreational purpose” is alluded to. But nature conservation is the first principle and can be regarded as a condition for tourism and the development of tourism is not an explicit element of the principles of a national park. While “recreation” is a distinctive part of the definition of a “National Park” it

is certainly not a primary objective of the park management. However, regarding table 3 “tourism and recreation” is assigned a prior objective.

The following table shows how an analysis of management objectives can be used to identify the most appropriate category (cf. Eagles 2002 : 11)

Management objective	1a	1b	II	III	IV	V
Scientific research	1	3	2	2	2	3
Wilderness protection	2	1	2	3	3	2
Preservation of species and genetic diversity (biodiversity)	1	2	1	1	2	1
Maintenance of environmental services	2	1	1	-	2	1
Protection of specific natural / cultural features	-	-	2	1	3	3
Tourism and recreation	-	2	1	1	3	3
Education	-	-	2	2	2	3
Sustainable use of resources from natural ecosystems	-	3	3	-	2	1
Maintenance of cultural/traditional attributes	-	-	-	-	1	2

Key: 1 = primary objective | 2 = secondary objective | 3 = potentially applicable objective | - = not applicable

Table 3 Management objectives and IUCN protected area management categories (self constructed)

Table 3 shows that in every category of protected area, except Category 1a (the strict nature reserve) some kind of recreation and tourism is likely to occur. It also shows that biodiversity protection – a critically important function of many protected areas, is often not the primary purpose and far from the only purpose of a protected area. Biodiversity protection is a requirement of the IUCN definition and any protected area should have a special policy to maintain and conserve biodiversity. (cf. Eagles 2002 : 11)

A deficit within the context of the definition and framework of a national park appears considering that the IUCN is the only source used. Thus, it is necessary for the reason, that the national park Thayatal is a IUCN certified area. All hitherto raises issues in this chapter will be revisited in the subsequent chapters in the practical part.

In respect of the definition and the objectives of a national park it has to be mentioned again, that the evaluation of an area to a national park underlies a subjective appreciation. In view of

the fact that flavors regarding the uniqueness and beauty of an area are different. It has to be placed here, that also within a culture there is a certain idea of aesthetical character. (cf. Friedl 2006) Nevertheless, there are some principles which a park has to observe to fall into the category of national parks.

5. Tourism in National Parks

The idea of combining tourism with conservation first came to life at the beginning of the 19th century when African safaris became popular and the first national parks were created. (Orams 2001 : 24) Nevertheless, tourism and nature protection stand in an ambivalent relationship to each other. For tourism an intact nature and landscapes are an essential basic. At the same time tourism's tendency for excessive usage constitutes one of the main polluters and destroyers of nature and landscape. Nature protection can sometimes be an obstacle for touristic development through technical, functional and legal restrictions. Simultaneously it ensures that the landscape remains attractive for tourists and worth visiting.

In the following chapters, the relationship between tourism and nature conservation is discussed and its best case – cooperation – is highlighted. Because of the importance of collaboration on all levels, an overview of the tourism and nature conservation policies is given. The principles of tourism in a national park are outlined and will be compared in the conclusion at the end of this chapter with the principles of ecotourism. The affinities, the differences and their relevance concerning tourism and/or the national park will be pointed out.

Tourism can be a great chance for the development of a region, but it may have negative effects as well. Thus, this chapter will assume the impacts of tourism to a protected area and a framework for the analysis of the ecological impacts to the national park Thayatal will be presented.

5.1 Relationship between Tourism and Nature Conservation

Budowski (1976) describes three different types of relationship between tourism and nature protection: Coexistence, Conflict, and Symbiosis

- **Coexistence:**

Coexistence is possible, if “neither tourism nor conservation is well developed in the relevant area, or because each is ignorant concerning the other’s field”. (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996 : 54) In the majority of cases tourism in the relevant area is in development, thus coexistence is just the previous phase to a change-over into Conflict or Symbiosis. (cf. Adamowicz 2009 : 23)

Therefore it is not important for document.

- **Conflict:**

With the expansion of tourism in an area, tourism and conservation come into conflict, mainly if tourism is not sustainable or harmful to nature. Possible conflicts, for example, in national parks can occur through highly intensive use of sensitive areas through visitors. As well as the damage caused by tourists, there are barriers for a cooperation-relationship, like the structure and the local stakeholders of both sectors. Examples of such barriers are fiscal problems, which lead to personal shortages, internal objective-conflicts in nature conservation and economic pressure in the tourism sector. (Budowski 1976 : 29)

- **Symbiosis / Cooperation:**

Symbiosis is a relationship, which brings benefit to all participants: “From the conservationist’s point of view this means that natural assets are conserved as far as possible in their original condition [...], while an increasing number of people derive wider benefits from nature and natural resources, be these physical, aesthetic, recreational, scientific or educational.” (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996 : 54) If tourism is well planned, tourism and nature conservation can obtain synergy effects for each other, as shown in figure 6.

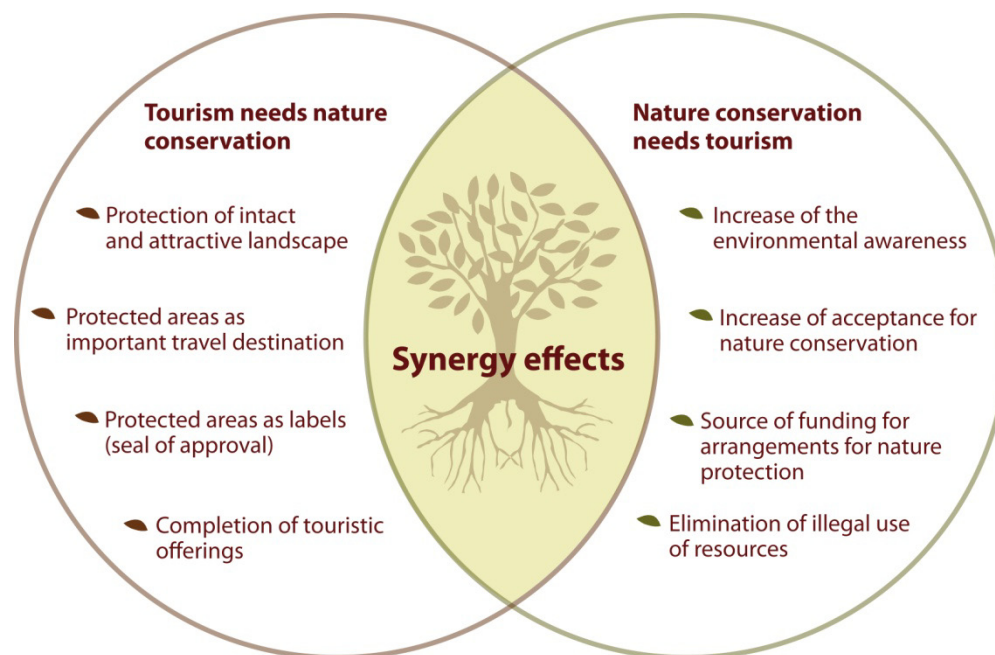


Figure 6 Synergy effects between Tourism and Nature Conservation (self constructed)

As mentioned before, the relationship between tourism and conservation is often moving from initial coexistence towards conflict. Mostly the tourism expansion is insufficiently planned and brings along a degradation and loss of natural areas or is planned without sufficient negotiating goals and objectives of both parts. A change in behavior on both sides could bring numerous benefits for a country or region. (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996 : 54)

In Costa Rica for example more than 25 % of the country's area is covered with national parks and biological reserves. After the economic crisis in the 90s the government chose to raise the national park entrance fees and introduce a two-tiered fee system: foreigners pay more than residents. Despite the increased charges, Costa Rica's parks remain a favored tourist destination. Thus, Eagles (2002 : 25) even suggests that the national park system formed the foundation for the ecotourism industry in Costa Rica.

The above leads us to the conclusion that, if the tourism-policy and the conservation policy are well planned and executed by an area, the two concepts can reach a symbiotic relationship (see figure 6). The subsequent table illustrates the different levels, on which the two policies are operating and facilities relating to their combination and implementation.

5.2 Tourism and nature conservation policies

Level	Tourism framework	Conservation Framework
Local/ sub-national level	Municipal/regional destination management	Parks and protected areas / individual ecosystems
National level	National tourism policies and master plans	Park and protected area networks / aggregated and integrated ecosystems
International regional level	Regional tourism organizations	Biosphere / transboundary ecosystems / corridors
Global level	International tourism organizations (WTO, WTTC)	Global environment/conventions and treaties, e.g. Convention on Biological Diversity

Table 4 Tourism and nature conservation policies by Holz (self constructed)

As Holtz a.o. (2003 : 51) shows (see Table 4), at the local and sub-national level local, municipal, state, country and provincial government, local natural resource management agencies, individual parks and protected areas should be included. Policies integrating nature protection into the tourism sector occur in two forms: Firstly municipal and regional government programs of action to make tourism more sustainable. Secondly: protected area management plans that incorporate the tourism sector. The impacts of the implementation of a policy are reflected at the local level. Especially within management plans for parks or protected areas, the integration of a local tourism policy is relevant for the conservation of biodiversity. Problems can result from conflicts between the stakeholders. Problems might also be caused by the fact that local authorities often have little or no control over national or international tourism policy.

Table 4 also demonstrates that tourism development strategies as well as decisions or actions for natural resource protection are often constructed at the national level. Through international treaty obligations such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, governments are forced to create national parks and protected areas and link the policies to national tourism policies.

The international regional level is defined as a cooperation between several countries in a given region; e.g. PATA (the Pacific Asia Travel Association), NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) This is also the area of tourism policy making which is least involved in implementing biodiversity considerations , despite the fact that it has the most potential for gaining benefits. (Holtz a.o. 2003 : 51)

The final level Holtz considers is the global level. Many international agreements for the integration of biodiversity considerations into the tourism sector have been developed at this level over the last years. However, the implementation has to pass all levels to finally reach the regional level and to be truly beneficial for nature.

5.3 Principles for tourism in protected areas

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism¹⁴ in protected areas is made up of ten principles and recommendations for action for the management of tourism in protected areas. These principles serve as orientation for sustainable tourism development in national parks and protected areas and are shown in Table 5.

● To involve all those implicated by tourism in and around the protected area in its development and management
● To prepare and implement a sustainable tourism strategy and action plan for the protected area
● To protect and enhance the area's natural and cultural heritage, for and through tourism, and to protect it from excessive tourism development
● To provide all visitors with a high quality experience in all aspects of their visit
● To communicate effectively to visitors about the special qualities of the area
● To encourage specific tourism products which enable discovery and understanding of the area
● To increase knowledge of the protected area and sustainability issues amongst all those involved in tourism
● To ensure that tourism supports and does not reduce the quality of life of local residents
● To increase benefits from tourism to the local economy
● To monitor and influence visitor flows to reduce negative impacts

Table 5 Principles by EUROPARC (self constructed)

By the first principle an establishment of a forum between the protected area authority, local municipalities, conservation organizations and stakeholders from the tourism industry, as well as cooperation with regional and national parties is considered.

The second principle refers to the preparation and implementation of a strategy and its understanding by the local stakeholders. This contains the definition of the area, the

¹⁴ “The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is a practical management tool that enables protected areas to develop tourism sustainably. The core element of the Charter is working in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to develop a common sustainable tourism strategy and an action plan on the basis of a thorough situation analysis. The aim of all Charter projects and activities is the protection of the natural and cultural heritage and the continuous improvement of tourism in the protected area in terms of the environment, local population and businesses as well as visitors. The Charter and the Charter Network is coordinated by the EUROPARC Federation.” See: <http://www.europarc.org/home/>

assessment of the area's heritage (natural, historic, cultural), tourism infrastructure, economic and social circumstances, the capacity, need and opportunity of the area, an estimation of current visitors and potential future development, strategic objectives for the development and management of tourism, an action plan to meet these objectives, a description of resources and partners to implement the strategy, approaches for monitoring results.

Given the fact that each protected area is different, the other seven principles correspond to the local determination of strategic priorities and action programs.

The third principle concerning the protection and enhancement of the area's heritage a monitoring system for the impact on the flora and fauna should be implemented. Furthermore, a controlling system for tourism in sensitive locations would be recommendable. The activities which have an effect on the quality of landscapes, air and water should be controlled and reduced. Restrictions concerning the use of non-renewable energy and the creation of unnecessary waste and noise are proposed.

To increase the quality of the services for the guest, meeting needs of disadvantaged visitors and supporting quality-checks are mentioned. Regarding the principles four to seven, the authentic promotion of the area, the availability of qualitative visitor information and the provision of educational facilities is recommended. These factors should interpret the area's environment and heritage to visitors, local people, groups and schools as well as the support of training programs for the staff of the protected area, organizations and stakeholders in the field of tourism is recommended. Ensuring the eighth principle, an inclusion of the local communities in the planning process of tourism in the relevant area, good communications between all the stakeholders should be ensured. Therefore conflicts which may arise should be identified and sought to be reduced. The ninth principle implies the increase of benefits for the local economy through regional development, by promoting the purchase of local products and encouraging the employment of local people in tourism. For the last principle an overview of visitor numbers, a creation and implementation of a visitor management plan, the promotion of the use of public transport, cycling and walking as an alternative to private cars and the control of new tourism development is necessary. (EUROPARC : n.s.)

Summarizing this section it has become evident, that the principles above are based upon tourism, which is adjusted to a region, but equally include the nature conservation as a central

element. Interestingly, when comparing these principles with the criteria for ecotourism it seems that many of them are overlapping, but this will be outlined in detail at the end of this chapter.

5.4 Impacts of tourism in protected areas

As already mentioned the impacts of tourism are difficult to measure because of complex connections to other sectors. Therefore economic analysis for the measurement of the impact of tourism will not be included. Many of the economic valuations are imprecise and do not take every factor into account. In the following steps an overview of the effects and impacts of tourism in a protected area will be given. The literature categorizes many different forms of impacts, like impacts on the involved parties or economical, social, ecological and institutional impacts. In this paper the impacts are presented according to the three columns of sustainability: economical, ecological and social impacts. Whereas the economical and social impacts are presented for the sake of completeness, the ecological ones are looked at in greater detail and provide the basis for the analysis in the case study. Tourism as a driver for sustainable development is a common strategy of governments from southern countries. The impacts of tourism affect an economically weak population or region more than an industrialized area, therefore some examples of countries of the south are included. Even now the current trends (see chapter 2.4.2) demonstrate a boost in travelling to southern countries.

At the beginning of every chapter an overview-chart is presented. The charts refer to notions discussed by Eagles (2002) and the Austrian Development Cooperation (ÖEZA) (2001), which are summarized and completed to possible chances and risks.

5.4.1 Economic impacts of tourism

In the subsequent Table 6 an overview of the possible economic chances and risks of introducing tourism in a relevant area is given.

Chances	Risks
Creates jobs	Dependency of tourism (seasonal tourism)
Increases possibilities for further income	Low wage-sector /informal sector
Marginalized people may be integrated into the economy circuit	No added value in the host country–reflux of currency
Decline of rural depopulation	Imported goods for tourists
Stimulates and diversify the local economy	Education of a monetary irrationality
Encourages local manufacture of goods	Increasing prices (food, land,..)
Obtains new markets and foreign exchange	Inadequate capacity to control the development of tourism
Improves living standard	Inadequate infrastructure
Generates total tax revenues	
Enables employees to learn new skills	
Increases funding for protected areas and local communities	
Development of infrastructure	
Increase of the GDP	

Table 6 Economical impacts of Tourism (self constructed)

“Travel and tourism, if utilized effectively, can be a force for positive growth and economic success for both developed and developing countries.” (UNEP 2001 : 13) But especially countries of the south often do not possess an adequate market for the needs and the requirements of the tourism industry. A market, which has to be created, brings along a lot of ambivalent consequences.

One of the most highlighted and most obvious positive factors of the tourism industry is the increase of jobs and the rising level of income for local residents. “Governments often use tourism for economic development because it is relatively inexpensive to create a tourism job compared to one in manufacturing”. (Eagles 2002 : 24) Other “efforts [are to] be made to build up the capacity of local individuals to participate in development and to ensure that they are given a fair opportunity to compete” (Kadt 1979 : 379) The creation of jobs might have positive effects but it should also be mentioned, that in countries of the southern hemisphere most of these jobs are low-income or activities in the informal sector.

Furthermore, marginalized people may get the chance to be integrated into the economy circuit and thereby denote a decline of rural depopulation, due to the fact that tourism often occurs in rural areas.¹⁵

Taking a look at table 7 we can see that in the year 2005 8,3 % of the total employment covers the Tourism and Travel Economy, corresponding to 221 Million Jobs worldwide and an annual real growth rate of 3 %. (WTTC 2005 : 7)

Regarding the share of tourism economy employment as part of total employment, some countries or islands feature a high dependency on tourism. 57.6 % of the Maldivian population in 2006 was employed in the tourism industry. (WTTC and UNWTO 2009)

¹⁵ Microcredit-programs for example, are an effective method for a (re-)inclusion in the economic process of the poorest class of population. Katharine N. Rankin adopts a critical point of view and raises the question if a submission to the neoliberal free market economy and an involvement into the capitalistic way of thinking away from the subsistence or tradeoff economy constitutes an improvement for the population. (Rankin 2001: 22, 30) Micro-credits are midget credits for people – predominantly women – who are normally not considered as credit-worth. The credit should be disposed for the constitution of an enterprise and therefore providing the possibility of an independent employment and a sustainable income. (cf. Rahman 1998 and Fernando 2006)

World	2005 US \$ bn	% of Total	Real Growth 2005	2015 US \$ bn	% of Total	Annualized Real Growth 2006 - 2015
Personal Travel & Tourism	2,833.1	10.4	5.1	4,602.0	11.0	3.9
Business Travel	652.9	-	4.6	962.7	-	3.1
Government Expenditures	285.3	3.8	2.9	417.4	4.1	2.8
Capital Investment	918.0	9.4	5.3	1,673.1	10.0	4.8
Visitor Exports	818.3	6.5	7.3	1,513.0	5.5	5.7
Other Exports	694.1	5.5	6.3	1,510.5	5.5	7.4
Travel & Tourism Demand	6,201.5	-	5.4	10,678.5	-	4.6
T & T Industry GDP	1,712.4	3.8	5.2	2,660.6	3.9	3.5
T & T Economy GDP	4,745.7	10.6	5.1	7,798.7	11.3	4.0
T & T Industry Employment *	74,233.0	2.8	2.9	85,520.8	2.8	1.4
T & T Economy Employment *	221,568.0	8.3	3.0	269,556.0	8.9	2.0

Table 7 Forecast of the economic impact by the WTTC (2005) (self constructed)

The shifting preferences of tourists and dependency on tourists can be dangerous for regional development. For example, after the Tsunami in 2004 only about 15 % of the usual tourists visited Goa. (cf. ÖEZA 2001).

With tourism the economy gets diversified through the complex link with other sectors. “This is what makes the economic impact of tourism so significant for development.” (ESCAP 2007 : 22) Through this the dependency on just one sector (e.g. agriculture) gets minimized with diversification. (cf. ÖEZA 2001 : 12) The relevant literature argues that an increase of economic activities (gastronomy, accommodations, shopping, and entertainment) in a region leads to a development of infrastructure and results in an increased quality of living. (cf. Eagles 2002: 24, ÖEZA 2001 :13). But a transformation of a rural region into a tourist-adequate region and the incorporation in a competitive market also implicates the risk of rising prices for food and land, which is in counties of the south often not bearable for the local people. A non sustainable development takes place, if the extension of the infrastructure for tourists is not useable for locals and/or leads to an overstraining of the existing one. (cf. ÖEZA2001 : 14)

The economic impact of tourism is commonly measured at the macroeconomic level and is assessed by the tourism receipts, the share of gross domestic product (GDP), exports and growth rate patterns for the capital investment, government expenditures, tourism economy and tourism industry. (cf. ESCAP 2007 : 20)

Many small island economies are especially dependent on tourism for export earnings as well. Britton argue that agricultural and manufacturing producers in most underdeveloped economies cannot “guarantee the quality and continuity of supply of inputs appropriate for international luxury standard tourist facilities” (Britton 1982 : 392). The reflux of profits is a potential risk of the development of tourism, especially for islands and luxury tourism. Therefore these countries heavily rely on imported goods for the construction of tourist facilities as well as for supplies. Thus, to guarantee sustainable tourism, the minimization of the amount of reflux is necessary.

In addition, capital investment and government spending in the tourism economy are important data regarding the impacts on the economy. As already mentioned, many governments see the tourism economy as a chance for a development strategy. Therefore, they increase their spending in tourism. The Government of India, for example, increased their budget between 2003 to 2007. The Ministry of Tourism and Culture, 34 implementing agencies, 30 NGOs and 4 panchayats ¹⁶ have been working at 36 sites across 20 states throughout the country.¹⁷ (ESCAP 2007 : 81)

Furthermore, the WCPA argues that an enhance of economic opportunity and tourism also increases funding for protected areas and local communities, but it is also hard to control who really gets the benefits. An example is the Tortuguero National Park in Costa Rica, where less than 6 % of tourism income belongs to the local communities. (Baez and Fernandez cf. Eagles 2002 : 25)

¹⁶ local governments at the village or small town level

¹⁷ Alternative models of rural tourism with the protection of cultural heritage and indigenous traditions are being developed across India. The center of the project strategy is community ownership and management, as well as the participation of women, youth and other disadvantaged groups and the appropriation of local skills and construction materials. For further information see: www.explorerruralindia.org

5.4.2 Social impacts of tourism

Literature referring to tourism features a lot of anthropological and social studies, but the main focus of this paper are the ecological impacts. Hence, no in depth discussion of social impacts will be provided. For the sake of completion and in order to raise awareness the following chapter will briefly outline the most important factors regarding these issues. Again, the possible chances and risks are listed in Table 8.

Chances	Risks
Local communities decide important development strategies	Disturbance of community activities
Local communities can decide on their own natural resources	No adequate control over momentum of tourism
Improves intercultural understanding, Communication and mutual learning of other cultures	Negative tensions between the stakeholders
Encourages local people to value their local culture and environment	Cultural instability
Increases education level of local people - raises the level of reflected knowledge	Safety problems
Participation on economical and political	Coordination problems

Table 8 Social impacts of Tourism (self constructed)

The guidelines and literature of many public institutions (World conservation union, ÖEZA, UNWTO) see tourism as a chance for local communities to decide over their resources and important development strategies, to improve intercultural understanding, communication and mutual learning of other cultures. Furthermore, they highlight the encouragement of local people and visitors to value the local culture and environment. (cf. Eagles et al 2002 : 24) Social impacts are the least researched effects of tourism even though they are closely related to the economic and environmental impacts.

With an establishment of tourism in an area, resources, which were principally used by locals, now have to be shared with visitors. Mainly in rural areas and in countries of the south this can lead to resentment against foreigners. For example, many beaches in the Caribbean have

been sold to hotels, consequently the use and entrance is restricted for local people because of *recreational purpose* for tourists. (cf. Butler 1974 : 243 f) But recreational areas also have a deleterious effect: In the case of the establishment of the Kanha Tiger Reserve in the periphery of Bandhavgarh (India) activities of the native people (hunting, nomadic activities) have been disrupted. The countertrade economy of these people has been annihilated and the livelihood of the affected people was destroyed. (cf. Sekhsaria 2009)

Usually the income of the locals is not adjusted to the increase in prices, which constitutes another great problem. (cf. ÖEZA 2001 : 14, Butler 1974 : 244)

Tourism may give rise to safety problems and cultural instability. Sex tourism, child prostitution, human trafficking, diffusion of diseases are some issues. In addition negative tensions may occur from inadequate behavior of tourists in a host country. (cf. ÖEZA 2001 : 14) These aspects and the practice of rituals and cultural events for the sole purpose of tourism, encompasses cultural instability in a local community. Furthermore, coordination problems arise because of the unclear responsibility structures of many governmental and private departments. (cf. ESCAP 2007 : 47 ff)

5.4.3 Ecological impacts of tourism

The ecological impacts are the most important ones for this paper, therefore at the beginning of this chapter again an overview of the chances and risks is provided (see Table 9). Furthermore, a framework for the evaluation of the ecological impacts is established in the sub-chapter 5.4.3.1, which serves as basis for the research if tourism can be introduced in an area or not.

Chances	Risks
Protection of ecological processes	Emissions and air pollution through means of transport for the journey
Conservation of biodiversity	Destruction of Biodiversity and nature
Protection and Valuation of cultural resources / build heritage resources	Rising water consumption
Possibility for the protection of the environment because resources get a value	Rising waste (imported goods, sanitary waste, Rising energy consumption
Supports research and development of good environmental practices and management systems	Uncontrolled growth (deprivation of nature and cultural heritage)
	Wildlife disturbance
	Visual and noise impacts
	Overfishing
	Impacts on vegetation (trampelpfade), soil compaction or erosion

Table 9 Ecological impacts of Tourism

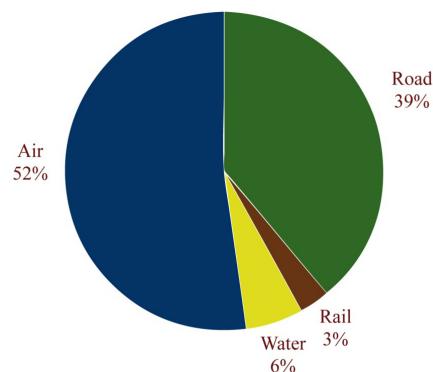
On the one hand tourism, especially nature-based-tourism or tourism in protected areas, can be a key factor in conserving the natural and cultural heritage of a region. As Eagles explains, through entrance, service fees and local taxes, funds can be generated to bear the costs of conservation, education of the local people and maintaining cultural traditions. (cf. Eagles et. al 2002 : 27)

On the other hand there are numerous problems, which arise through tourism. The environmental costs start with the means of transport chosen for arriving at the destination. Over the recent years, travelling by plane has become considerably faster and cheaper through

the price-dumpings of the airlines. The airplane is the leading means of transport with 52 % of the overall inbound tourism in 2008, as illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7 Inbound Tourism (self constructed)

The latest climate report of the United Nations 2006 discovered that since 1990 the emissions of air traffic increased worldwide by 50 %. The emissions from the whole traffic sector, however, rose by “just” 23.9 %. (cf. Maguhn 2006)



Moreover, negative impacts on the environment can occur through the creation of roads and camp-sites, recreation vehicles, litter, crowding, human waste, wildlife disturbance, water pollution, overdevelopment, collection of firewood, overfishing, damage to sand dunes and reefs, visitors taking souvenirs from the flora and so on. (cf. Eagles et. al 2002) One example of the ambivalent development of tourism- with economic stabilization on the one hand and rising environmental problems on the other hand – is Trekking and Adventure Tourism in Nepal. (f. Zurick 1992) A heavy ecological damage is caused by trekking tourists on the Mt. Everest. The mountain has been called the highest waste dump of the world, because numerous expeditions leave their equipment behind. (cf. Vorlaufer 1996 :69)

The practical part of this paper concentrates on the ecological impacts of tourism on the national park. Therefore, this chapter presents a framework for the evaluation of the ecological impacts. .

5.4.3.1 The framework for the evaluation of the ecological impacts

As already mentioned, for the introduction of tourism in a national park, it has to be guaranteed that the tourism projects do not drastically damage the nature. Therefore a framework for the evaluation of the ecological impacts of tourism to the environment is established within this chapter. Generally, there are three approaches illustrated in figure 8 to analyze the impacts of tourism in a protected area

The first approach offers the analysis of the causation of the impact according to 3 criteria constructed by the Umweltbundesamt. In a next step the affected party and the result to the party, caused by tourism, is examined. Finally, the influence on the intensity of the impact is explored. These three approaches build the basis for the research in the National Park Thayatal, which will be outlined more detailed in the next section.

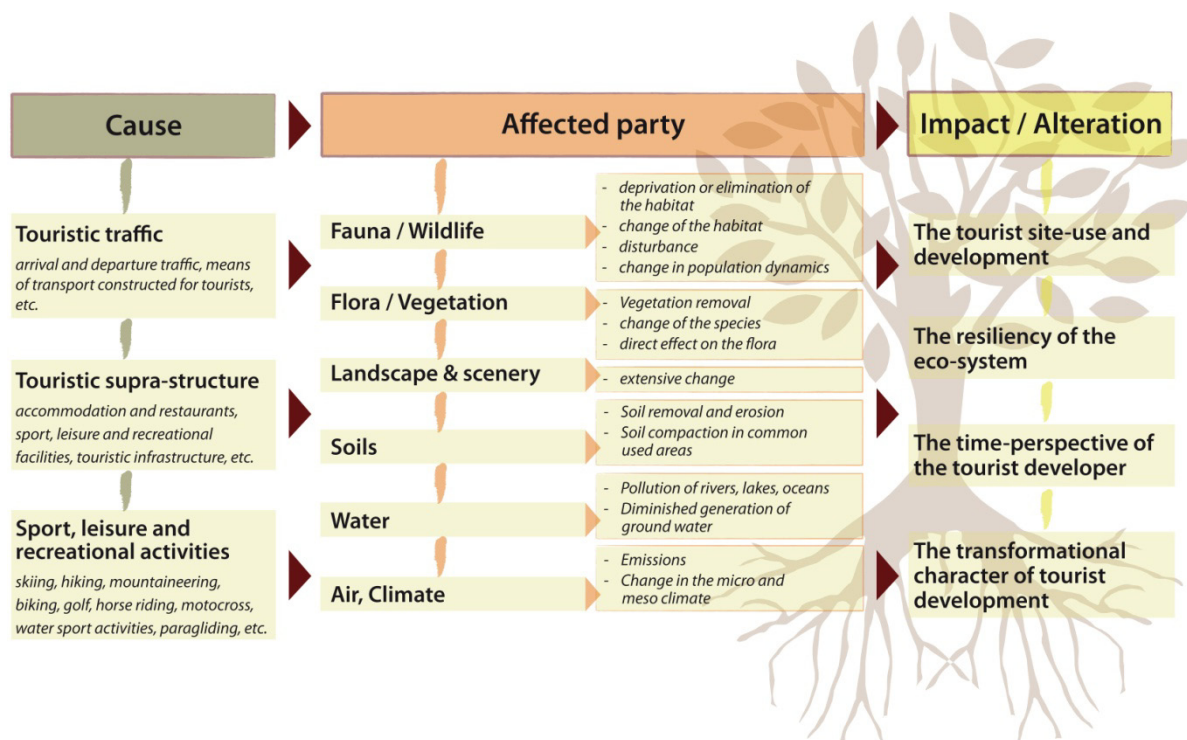


Figure 8 The Ecological Impacts of Tourism to the Nature (self constructed)

A. Causation of the impacts

The Umweltbundesamt (2003: 171) describes the negative impacts from touristic activities on the environment and nature through three criteria.

- **Touristic traffic** means the arrival and departure traffic and the means of transport constructed for tourists, etc.

- **Touristic supra-structure** includes accommodation and restaurants, sport, leisure and recreational facilities and touristic infrastructure, etc.

- **Sport, leisure and recreational activities** in national parks are e.g. skiing, hiking, mountaineering, biking, golf, horse riding, motocross, water sport activities, paragliding, etc.

B. The affected party and the result

In the following table the consequences of the extension of tourism and the three criteria above are listed and discussed. The first column contains the affected element, the second column describes the impact and the alteration to the particular element and the last column features examples for the cause of the impact and change.

Environmental risks through tourism:

Element	Impact / Alteration	Examples for causation
Fauna / Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deprivation or elimination of the habitat • change of the habitat (isolation, travel routes, hunting areas, breeding areas) • disturbance through noise , visual or harassing behavior • change in population dynamics through hunting and fishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure and recreational infrastructure • Leisure facilities • Mountain biking, fishing, climbing, canoeing, etc.
Flora / Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation removal, mechanic infraction of the vegetation • change of the species through modified establishment • direct effect on the flora (stepping on, driving through) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construction of leisure facilities • transportation infrastructure • camping, parking, picking plants, mountain biking, trekking
Landscape & scenery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extensive change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construction of leisure and touristic facilities, which are not adapted to the nature and country-side
Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil removal and erosion • Soil compaction in common used areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “wild” camping, parking, affixed routes and sites • Common used trails
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution of rivers, lakes, oceans (Release of oil and fuel from ships and smaller crafts) • Diminished generation of ground water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposal of sewage or litter • Increased demand for fresh water • Water sports activities, bathing
Air, Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emissions • Change in the micro and meso climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorized transportation (plane, train, ship, automobile, etc.)

Table 10 The Environmental Risks through Tourism (self constructed)

A careful consideration of table 10 above reveals that the negative impacts of tourism in national parks mainly result from the construction of leisure infrastructure, moving and stationary traffic, overstraining of destinations and attractions and through excessive visits of sensitive areas. The Umweltbundesamt (2003:171) asserts that ecosystems without human interventions react more sensitive than already heavily modified ones. Consequently an opening of relatively untouched nature to visitors is likely to cause an abundance of problems and difficulties.

C. Influence on the intensity of the impact

Cohen (1978) mentions that “one cannot talk about the ‘environmental effects’ of tourism overall. In fact, “one has to elucidate the factors in the tourist situation which are of greatest consequence for the environment, and then evaluate the impact of each factor”. He alludes to numerous environmental effects of tourism, but he emphasizes four main types of factors influencing the environmental impact of tourism:

The intensity of tourist site-use and development

Cohen argues that “the number of tourists visiting a locality, the length of their stay, the things they do and the facilities at their disposal determine the *intensity* of tourist site-use and of the accompanying development of the locality for tourism” (1978 : 12) He also mentions the exponential growth of the need for development of a tourism infrastructure with the increasing number of tourists and cites the Alps as an example: In the middle Austrian Alps only minimal infrastructure is necessary for the small number of tourists, whereas in the French Alps large-scale infrastructural development for the large, concentrated number of tourists is necessary.

The resiliency of the eco-system

How the environment can withstand an influx of tourists depends on the sensitivity of the ecosystem. Cities seem to be capable of withstanding penetration of tourists better than other sensitive environments, landscapes or ecosystems. As mentioned before, ecosystems that have already been transformed such as big cities, are able to carry a large number of

tourists, but they are not able to absorb “unlimited numbers of tourists without negative environmental consequences”. (Cohen 1978 :14) Smaller cities, indeed, are ecologically and culturally less resilient to tourism, hence, the impact of tourism will be graver than in bigger cities. Fatal destruction in rural environments takes place when there is a sudden tourist invasion.

Such a tourist boom, if not carefully regulated, “can easily throw [...] places off their ecological balance and even endanger their very survival” (Cohen 1978 : 15)

The time-perspective of the tourist developer

Tourism is one of the biggest sectors on the world market, thus all participants have an economic incentive for providing natural, historical or cultural attractions. Cohen describes the failure of short-term-based views of tourist developers which is the case in many countries of the south. The participants want to draw the profit out of the business immediately, without planning strategically on the long-run. Therefore, the role of the environment is of subordinate significance and developers do not want to invest much in the conservation of the environment. Even if the perspective of the developer changes from a short-term to a long-term view and an inclusion of the environment, the damage done is mostly irreversible. (Cohen 1978 : 17)

The transformational character of tourist development

The main attraction of tourism is not just the natural resource. Infrastructure and touristic facilities also have to be created to maintain or attract more tourists. In addition, Cohen mentions the transformation of the environment which results from the preparation of environmental attractions for tourism usage. (cf. Cohen 1978 : 17)

6. Conclusion

Nature conservation and tourism are two fields which are compatible under certain conditions. The management of the national park has to cooperate with all participants of tourism and in the best case even the tourism and nature conservation policies should work together at the local, national, international and global level. The national park management has to care about tourism and recreation facilities in the area and there are some principles which have to be adhered to. The principles mentioned above are drafted very generally and it has to be mentioned that each park management has to formulate their own regulations and conditions adapted for tourism in the particular park.

One thing has become evident so far, namely that the concept of tourism in a national park and the concept of ecotourism approach resemble each other and some principles overlap. In the following table 11 a comparison of these principle is listed:.

Principles of ecotourism	Principles of tourism in a protected area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participation (right of co determination of the population) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To involve all those implicated by tourism in and around the protected area in its development and management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sustainable development-perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare and implement a sustainable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cultural friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tourism strategy and action plan for the protected area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> environmental friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To protect and enhance the area's natural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply-oriented management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and cultural heritage, for and through tourism, and to protect it from excessive tourism development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational aspect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide all visitors with a high quality experience in all aspects of their visit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To communicate effectively to visitors about the special qualities of the area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> economically compatible (i.e. socio-economical justified) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage specific tourism products which enable discovery and understanding of the area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase knowledge of the protected
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> area and sustainability issues amongst all those involved in tourism
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that tourism supports and does not reduce the quality of life of local residents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase benefits from tourism to the local economy

Table 11 Comparison of Principles of Ecotourism and Tourism in Protected Areas (self constructed)

In both approaches participation of the local population is necessary. Sustainability is as important as environmental and cultural protection. The supply-oriented view within the principles of ecotourism is resemble to the provision of a high quality experience to all visitors included in the principles of tourism in a protected area. On top of that education and awareness building concerning the qualities of the area regarding the tourists as well as the locals are considered in both approaches. Furthermore, the development of the region and the economical benefit for the local people is an important part of both requirements.

One thing, which is outlined separately in the conditions for ecotourism is the term “nature-based”, which is evident if tourism occurs in a national park. The principle “socially

acceptable” may falls into the category “that tourism supports and does not reduce the quality of life of local residents”. An important point, which is mentioned in the principles for a national park is the monitoring of tourism and the influence of visitor flows to reduce negative impacts.

A wide range of literature concerning the impacts of tourism exists. The material above provides an overview of the possible impacts, but a detailed analysis would go beyond the scope of discussion, therefore this paper concentrates on the ecological impacts of tourism. In the next part of this paper a framework for practical analysis is applicable, which concentrates on the cause of the ecological impacts, the affected party and the effect itself and on the intensity of the impact.

III. Case Study: Tourism in the National Park Thayatal

National parks take a special role in nature conservation in Austria: “Here nature conservation comes absolutely first.” (Lebensministerium). Six of the ecologically most valuable regions of Austria have been declared national parks covering 2,350 km² and about 3 % of the national territory. As demonstrated in figure 9 Hohe Tauern is the largest national park in Austria with 183,600 ha. Hohe Tauern extends over an area of three provinces and was first declared in Carinthia in 1981, second in Salzburg in 1984 and finally in Tirol in 1991 to a national park according to Category II of the IUCN. In the 1990s three further national parks are established: in 1993 Neusiedlersee – Seewinkel, in 1996 Donauauen and in 1997 Kalkalpen. The youngest and smallest national park was declared in 2000, which is the Thayatal with 1330 ha land.



Figure 9 National Parks in Austria. Source: Nationalparks Austria (2010)

In the present part of the paper, first, the national park Thayatal is briefly introduced, and an overview of the tourism development within the region is provided. Second, the structure for analyzing the ecological impacts of tourism, created in chapter 5.4.3.1 is applied to the national park Thayatal. The analysis of the ecological impacts serves for an overview if tourism is appropriate for this region, or if it overuses the nature or if it can be extended. In a third step the concept of ecotourism is examined to the effect, that the already existing tourism in the national park will be investigated, if it does cover the principles of ecotourism and if the region is appropriate for providing ecotourism.

1. Area: National park Thayatal

A special feature of the national park Thayatal constitutes the trans-border cooperation with its Czech neighbor, the National Park Podyjí, which reach 6,620 ha. The Thaya River constitutes the common border over 25 km (see figure 10). Since there are no high mountain ranges or other natural barriers, the two sides do not differ much in landscape, biodiversity or human interference, which makes cooperation across borders pretty important for these national parks. The two administrations sat together from the start and worked out common goals for the future national park management. This is not easy as the organizational conditions are very different.

The Austrian National Park Thayatal is a GmbH. The shareholders of the company are the Republic of Austria - represented by the Minister for the environment - and the province of Lower Austria - represented by its Governor – currently Erwin Pröll. The company is bound by a series of laws, the main one being the national park law, which also defines the participation of the local population and their involvement in the implementation. In return, the Národní park Podyjí is an agency of the Czech Environment ministry. The National Park Thayatal has a light administrative structure and the nature may be allowed to follow its course without human interference. In the National park Podyjí the former forestry management became part of the national park administration. The Lower Austrian national park law is much clearer than the Czech one concerning regulations, i.e. on utilization. However, this can facilitate or complicate measures.



Figure 10 Area of the National Park Thayatal. Source: Nationalpark Thayatal (2010)

The town of Hardegg is the only locality in the National Park Thayatal on the Austrian side. With its 80 inhabitants Hardegg is even the smallest town in Austria. The national park is located on a distinctive climate border: in the east the dry Pannonian climate dominates, while the highlands of the Waldviertel are influenced by the humid Atlantic climate. Because of this matter, the continental and central European flora and fauna are interspersed in the National Park and there is a high diversity of species and plant in this relatively small area.¹⁸
(Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH)

1.1. The selection of the investigation area:

The selection of the investigation area is drawn upon the following considerations:

- The region is a rural area
- The area constitutes a peripheral region, in which numerous problems occur: high unemployment rates through emigration of companies, migration of qualified labour, low productivity, high dependence on economic activities outside the region, ageing of population, poor financial means for innovative projects and infrastructure
- The area includes a national park
- There appear offers for tourists and cultural attractions, but little demand

1.2. Tourism development in the National Park Thayatal

The National Park Thayatal is an area without boundaries, therefore the exact number of visitors cannot be measured. Some people are just walking or cycling through the national park not requiring any services or information from the national park center. In 2008 the number of people visiting the National Park Thayatal estimated to 20,344. This number includes visitors participating in programs for excursions, guided tours, school trips, exhibitions organized by the National Park or which just comes to the info point in the

¹⁸ "In both National Parks 1.288 plant species have been identified so far. In comparison: in the whole of Austria there are 2.950 varieties of plants." (Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH)

national park center. From 2009 onwards visitors can view a multimedia presentation in the national park center. 828 person made use of the multimedia service in 2009 and the whole visitor number accounts 21,242 people. (Nationalpark Thayatal 2009) Hardegg, the smallest city in Austria, is the only locality inside the area of the national park and the only possibility for visitors to stay. In 2006 and 2007 between 2,100 and 2,300 people stayed for one night in Hardegg; in 2008 and 2009 the number of tourists/night increased to 3,541 and 3,283 respectively. (Tourismusverband Thayatal 2009) The main season lasts from May to September. This can be regarded as a negative aspect contrary to the other national parks in Austria. For example the area of Hohe Tauern offers winter sport activities and spa-tourism additionally to typical summer activities like hiking, walking, cycling, etc.

Around the National park Thayatal a tourism region “Nationalparkregion Thayatal” was established, with more possibilities for tourists to stay. The localities are: Brunn, Dobersberg, Drosendorf, Geras, Groß-Siegharts, Karlstein, Kautzen, Langau, Pernegg, Raabs-Thaya, Retz, Thaya, Waidhofen, Weitersfeld, Waldkirchen. The total number of tourists/ night within the National park-region Thayatal amounts in 2008 115,345 visitor and in 2009 132,546 visitor.

2. The ecological impacts of tourism in the national park Thayatal

In the national park nature conservation comes prior to other things, therefore this paper concentrates on the ecological impacts of tourism. In the present chapter the approach of part II section 5.4.3 will be taken and adopted to the national park Thayatal. For a better illustration, the structure is inserted as well below (see figure 11). First, the causes of the impacts will be determined based on the medium internet and brochures of the national park. Then the affected party and the result occurring to the party will be analyzed on the basis of a study from Leopold Sachslehner from the research community Wilhelminenberg. In the last step the influence on the intensity of the impact will be estimated with the help of Dr. Brunner, the director of the national park and several studies from the Institute for Environmental Studies from the Faculty of Science of the Charles University in Prague.

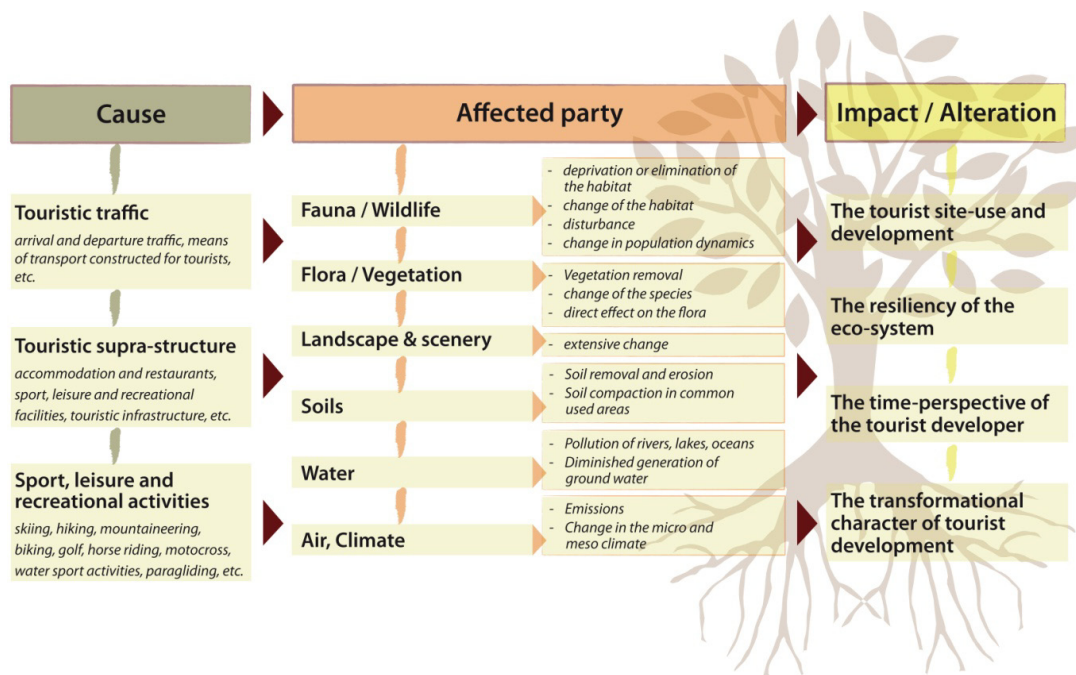


Figure 11 the ecological impacts of tourism to the nature

2.1. The causation of the impact:

Touristic traffic: Most of the tourists visiting the region come by car or private means of transport (e.g. groups come in buses), because of the poorly developed public infrastructure in the region, especially to the national park center. During school season there is a bus from the station in Retz to the national park center 5 times a day. For this reason most of the visitors are constrained to come by their own means of transport.

Some accommodation around the national park do not even refer to the possibility to arrive by public transport on their website. In the management plan 2001 – 2010 an urgent need for an improvement of the public infrastructure and the transport connection is included. It has to be mentioned here, that this requirement is no longer implemented in the draft of the management plan for 2011 – 2020, even though an improvement of the public transport connections in and to the national park cannot be observed. (cf. Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH)

Touristic supra-structure: As already mentioned, the only city to stay inside the national park is Hardegg, but there are some other localities, mostly run by private persons, as well. All in all there are nine accommodations to stay in the National Park Thayatal: Gasthof Hammerschmiede, Pension Lily, Privatzimmer Eveline Mahr, Privatzimmer Fam. Marschick,

Privatzimmer Neuwirth, Gästehaus am Mühlbach, Ernst und Karin Donnerbauer, Bauernhof, Quartier 10, Norbert und Hanni's Frühstückspension. (Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH) All of them are small and are not suited for mass tourism.

Furthermore, the touristic supra-structure includes sport, leisure and recreational facilities and the touristic infrastructure. Sport or leisure facilities specially for tourism purpose are not established within the area of the national park, because of the principle of the free development of the nature through the assurance of an unaffected dynamic by human beings. Nevertheless, well marked hiking trails and stations including blackboards with information or possibilities for nature experiences are provided by the national park. (Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH)

Sport, leisure and recreational activities, which can be performed in national parks are: hiking, biking and fishing. Fishing is allowed, if it happens under the conditions of conservation. It is possible within a dimension, that guarantees no negative impacts on the fish population and does not provoke a disturbance of nature and the environment. (Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH 2000 : 12) A problem results from the different law in the area of the Czech Republic for the reason, that there are almost no fishery restrictions . (Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH 2010 : 20) Water sport activities are permitted in the area, because of the disturbance of the fauna. According to Dr. Brunner, a discussion about the opening of a piece of the river Thaya for water activities for tourism use took place between the management of the two parks, but in the end this idea was defined as counterproductive for the aim of nature protection from both sides.

2.2. The affected party

The following section contains the affected elements and the consequences, damages or disturbances to these elements through visitors, facilities constructed for visitors or security arrangements, made for the visitor, in the national park. In the study done by Leopold Sachslehner disturbances include the visible impact from anthropogenic caused disturbances through evasions and avoidance, escape, disappearance, the local extinction of animals, the

damage of vegetation in the composition of species, structure and constitution. If the source is not quoted in the following sub-chapters, it automatically refers to Sachslehners study.

Fauna / Wildlife:

According to a study from Leopold Sachslehner concerning the potentials of disturbance, the fauna of national park Thayatal includes an extremely wide range of animals prone to disturbance. Animals with a great mobility and great requirements for space and which are respectively prone to disturbance are: the red deer, the wild boar, the otter, the black stork, the grey heron, the honey buzzard, white-tailed eagle (winter), duck hawk, falcon, eagle owl, halcyon and white-backed woodpecker.

For example, the Red deers keep away at least 300 meter form heavily frequented trails. After disturbances evasion movements over long distances can be the result. Therefore, the development of the ecosystem of the forest is affected in the long-run. Regular disturbances on rock formations constrain the breed settlement and success from animals breeding there like the eagles mentioned above. This lead to damage in vegetation but as well to a loss in the habitat of reptiles, xero- and thermophilous insects, spiders or snails. Breeding black storks need a protective zone of 300 to 500 meter for an undisturbed breed. Especially prone to

disturbances are water birds and riparian birds as well, if their breeding space and nutrimental habitat is blocked or ruined through people staying in the relevant area for longer. Necessary arrangements for the security of trails in terms of felling trees can remove the habitat from woodpeckers, bats and species of beetles living in the wood.

Flora / Vegetation:

An endangered type of vegetation is dry grasslands around rocks, on viewpoints, on exposed locations, on surroundings of the riverside and in the surroundings of walking-paths. The national park Thayatal can register a large, well marked path-network. But not all visitors follow the rules and leave the path to make their own expeditions, which may have a direct effect on the fauna, if the visitors are stepping on plants or if the soil is too humid and cannot

withstand the steps. Director Brunner also mentions as a problem, that some visitors are collecting mushrooms, even if it is not allowed in the area of the national park and the mushrooms growing as well outside the area.

Mountain biking and climbing on rocks is strictly forbidden on the paths of the national park, because of their impacts to soil and vegetation.

A point, which is not an effect caused by tourists, but has an impact on the vegetation too, is the neophytes-management. Neophytes are plants which are not originally from Europe, but were consciously or unconsciously brought here by humans. In the area under investigation Neophytes are Himalayan balsam, giant knotweed and robinia. The management of these Neophytes should happen with attention and efficiency review to avoid unnecessary disturbances in the case of inefficacy. Thus, the arrangements made for the management of neophytes may cause more damage than their further expansion.

Landscape and scenery:

As already mentioned, the national park Thayatal does not offer any sport, spa or other activities for tourists, therefore a disturbance in the landscape or scenery is not given. The blackboards with information provided for the visitors are adjusted to the environmental scenery and are not perceived as disturbing factors.

The national park center was constructed in 2003 as a facility for providing information to the visitors. The center is a modern building made of wood and glass and it was constructed following the ecological standards, using mainly environmentally friendly materials, heating with wood pellets and producing electricity through a photo-voltaic facility. The homepage highlights that the national park center “is constructed on platforms so that the forest ground underneath remains open, and flora and fauna can continue to develop freely” and underlines that “it fits harmoniously into the landscape of the Waldviertel”. (Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH..)

Soils:

Paths with a heavily reconnaissance, or paths, which are softened by the rain, are not that resistant and prone to erosions. A common problem are visitors not observing the rules of walking on the marked paths. Heavy entering /stepping-on soil around rocks, which is commonly covered with gravel, can lead to an aggravating modification on the soil-consistence.

Water:

Water sport activities and boating are strictly forbidden on the part of the river Thaya, which flows through the national park. This should prevent the water from oil and fuel pollution and should maintain the natural habitat for animals in or around the river. The prevention from pollution is questionable, regarding the fact, that boating is allowed outside the area of the national park and the river carries possible pollutions item with the flow through the national park. The only activity near or in the water, which is allowed to visitors, but causes disturbance, is fishing. The possibility for fishing is just allowed in and in special zones around Hardegg and has a daily temporal restriction. The fisher cottages along the river places a steadily disturbance and the hydroelectric power station in Vranov, beyond the national park, constitutes an ecological harm for the river.

Air, Climate:

A federal highway is running through the national park, but it does not have much traffic, because of the peripheral location of the national park. The connection to arrive to the national park with public means of transport is poorly enlarged, therefore the majority of tourists are tied to their own means of transport, which means that there is a greater air pollution considering the isolated location of the Thayatal.

The above mentioned shows all the affected parties by tourism in the respective area, but also the influence on the intensity of the impact, regarding chapter 5.4.3.1 C., is an important

factor, which has to be taken into account for measuring the impacts of tourism. The four types of factors, outlined by Cohen (1978), are now taken under investigation concerning the national park Thayatal.

2.3. Influence on the intensity of the impact

The intensity of tourist site-use and development

According to a study from the Institute for Environmental Studies of the Faculty of Science at Charles University in Prague for the locality Hardegg, the most frequent length of stay in the national park is one day. Just 14.5 % of the investigated Austrians stayed for two days and 19.7 % of all sampled persons stayed for a week. (Čihař 2001 :6) Regarding the annual number of visitors, which accounts for about 25,000 people¹⁹ (Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH) the intensity of the tourist site-use cannot be viewed as being dangerous for the environment and nature for the national park.

Another point, which influences the intensity of tourist-site use and development is the choice of the means of transport for visiting the national park. 81.1 % of the respondents went to the national park by car, 6.2 % by bike, which again shows the lack of public transport. Once visitors arrive at the national park, 43.5 % of the respondents travel around by foot, 36 % by bike and the car is used by 30 % for moving around within the national park. (Čihař 2001 :6)

Regarding the fact, that for 98.7 % of the respondents the main motive for visiting the national park is the scenery, the fact that 30 % are moving around by car seems a little strange. Certainly, the landscape can be enjoyed as well by driving through it, but this is not in the proper meaning of the objectives of a national park.

In this region, the minimal infrastructure for tourism is given and is not supposed to be largely extended in the next years. This fact will be explained more precisely in the next but one section.

All together Director Brunner is convinced that the touristic development has hitherto not achieved dimensions causing any danger for the national park Thayatal.

¹⁹ This number does just include persons, which make use of any service in the center of the national park.

The resiliency of the eco-system

As described in chapter 5.4.3.3 ecosystems that have already been transformed are able to carry a larger number of tourists than ecosystems, which were almost left unchanged. Before the transformation of the area into a national park, the area was utilized privately. Even now the owners of the area are private persons, but the arrangements for conservation and maintenance are under the purpose of the national park management.

The ecosystem of the national park can be seen as a relatively unchanged area on the contrary to e.g. cities, but the forest, meadows and fields were cultivated from the farmers of the region. Director Brunner exemplifies the former settlement of firs in an area, which is normally not conditioned for firs. A small tornado uprooted some of the firs, which is regarded as a normal way for the repatriation into an ecosystem, which is left on the nature's own resources.

Regarding the conditions and the diversity of the national park, one might say that the Thayatal is a sensitive and relatively untouched and well-preserved ecosystem. Oriented on the number of visitors the ecosystem is neither over allocated nor in danger of a sudden tourist invasion, which would cause fatal destruction and disturbance.

The time-perspective of the tourism developer

The possibilities for staying in the national park Thayatal are decreasing. According to Director Brunner some of the private persons, which offer bed and breakfast, are getting older and the additional expenditure is no more profitable regarding the effort. A long-term sustainable tourism development is only possible if cooperation between the national park, the businesses, the factories and the population within the region can be established. The national park on its own is insufficient to provide offers for and maintain visitors. A huge problem seems to be convincing the population from the benefits of the national park and the possibilities they may have through the development of tourism.

Thus, a long-run time-perspective by Cohen has first to be created in this region. A short-run time perspective results in the decreasing of tourism offers, which can be regarded as negative tourism development.

The transformational character of tourist development

As already mentioned above, the area of the national park is owned by private persons, but they are not allowed to use this area any longer since the nomination of this area into a national park. Obviously, this led to resistance against and rejection of the national park. The land owner got a monetary compensation from the state, but this monetary compensation was not used for purpose of tourism development.

To maintain or attract more tourists, an infrastructure and touristic facilities have to be created. The area of the national park offers a beautiful landscape, but again the management of the national park is too small to further develop attractions and touristic infrastructure.

First of all the attitude of the people in the region will have to change. As long as they will not see a change in the field of tourism for regional development and the possibilities that may open up through the national park, this concept is unworkable.

This chapter has aimed at providing an overview of the ecological impacts of tourism to the investigation area: the national park Thayatal. Regarding all negative effects, one can say, that tourism is not that far developed within the park to constitute a dangerous factor for the nature and the environment. Therefore, a more intense cooperation, as explained in chapter 5.1, would be advantageous for all participating parties. An advanced offer for tourists, may stimulate the enterprises and factories in the region and may lead to a more positive attitude of the local population towards the national park and tourism. As well a closer cooperation between the management of the national park and the locals would facilitate a symbiosis between nature conservation and tourism.

In the next chapter the concept of ecotourism is reviewed concerning the possibilities the area features for ecotourism and the requirements the concept of ecotourism would set for the investigated area.

3. Eco-tourism in the national park Thayatal

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the impacts of tourism are not seriously damaging or disturbing the affected elements, like animals, plants, etc. within the national park Thayatal. The literature and the interview with Director Brunner suggests that an expansion of tourism in this area may bring benefits to many other parties. In chapter 6 the similarities of the concept of ecotourism and the concept auf tourism in national parks are outlined. For these reasons, the concept of ecotourism is used, to take a look on the national park Thayatal and if this concept is relevant for the region.

First of all, the definition of ecotourism, provided at the end of chapter 3.2 is taken and compared with the characteristics and conditions of tourism in the investigated area. Furthermore, the prepared criteria in chapter 3.3 are taken to compare if ecotourism is already happening in the national park and which factors are missing to make the region an ecotourism one.

3.1. Can tourism in the national park Thayatal be denoted as Eco-tourism?

According to the definition in chapter 3.2 of part II:

Ecotourism:

- occurs in a nature-based area
- is based on the considerations of sustainability: it has to be ecological and socio-cultural compatible and assures economic capacity for the region
- offers opportunities for a stay in nature and
- provides environmental regional information

The national park can be definitively defined as a nature-based area and offers opportunities for a stay in nature.

Environmental information is provided on blackboards on the hiking-paths, the brochures in the national park center and in several other touristic facilities in the region, the offer of guided tours and excursions for school classes, issue-specific presentations, issue-specific weeks, etc. Regarding the considerations of sustainability it has to be mentioned, that the tourism, happening in the national park Thayatal, can be seen as ecologically compatible with the region as presented in chapter two. The socio-cultural compatibleness and the assurance of

economic capacity are two factors, which cannot be verified in the given region. As mentioned above, the population in the region is not convinced and aware of the benefits, potentially gained through the national park. According to Director Brunner, the region has great potential, but many possibilities remain unexploited. Therefore, the population has to come to the bottom of the economic capacity of the region and create awareness for the economic, socio-cultural and environmental potential of the region.

Regarding these facts, one can say that the region offers a great chance to be excellent in the field of eco-tourism, but actually lacks some economic structure for the locals.

In the following paragraph, a deeper look into the criteria of ecotourism, figured out in chapter 3.3 of part II is taken:

- environmentally friendly
- nature-based
- educational aspect
- socially acceptable
- economically compatible (i.e. socio-economical justified)
- culturally friendly
- participation (right of co determination of the population)
- regional development
- supply-oriented management
- sustainable development-perspective

The first two criteria, which have to be fulfilled in the case of ecotourism – environmentally friendly and nature-based - are already explained above and can indeed be found in the national park Thayatal. The educational aspect is mentioned as well above in the definition and can be regarded as an available criteria. Particularly on the part of the national park center information material is provided. As already mentioned, blackboards, brochures, guided tours and excursions, issue-specific presentations, and so on are prepared from the national park for the tourists, but if these things are going to be accepted and esteemed by individuals, lies not in the area of responsibility of the national park management.

Whether tourism in the region is socially acceptable cannot easily be verified or falsified. A more intense investigation concerning the acceptance of tourism from the local population is necessary. The interview with Director Brunner highlights that tourism is accepted by the majority of the locals, but the offer for accommodations and other facilities for tourists, like restaurants, snack-bars etc. is decreasing. This may result from the fact that the region in the

national park Thayatal lacks economic infrastructure and the local people do not see an economic necessity in offering facilities for tourists. As a result from these reflections, the criteria if tourism is “economically compatible and socio-economical justified” can be falsified. The peripheral location of the region, leads to a large emigration of the local population. Director Brunner mentioned the town of Hardegg, which is a city including 136 houses, but only 80 are still inhabited. The lack of qualified employment, leads to a movement of labor, thus, fewer and fewer possibilities for an economic enforcement of the region are given. A possibility of co determination of the population is given, but many of the locals do not see an economic chance in participating in the field of tourism.

For a regional development, first the locals have to be convinced of the region’s opportunities and their own chances and benefits from participating in a development process. Second, a close cooperation among all participants to support each other and to act in concert is necessary. The national park Thayatal cooperates with:

Retzer Land: It is first association nationwide to merge the most important dynamic forces of a small region. The objective is to raise the quality of a region and to present the Retzer Land and its products to the public. “Soft tourism” in the countryside is regarded as a chance for increasing the value added of a region. Offers and possibilities within the region are proofed, developed and offered to a respective target group. (Retzer Land GmbH)

Waldviertel Tourism: Waldviertel Tourism is an institution for publicity and marketing for the whole Waldviertel. Their core activities are the planning and implementation of marketing activities and public relations under consideration of the Waldviertel as a whole, both economically and geographically. (Weinviertel Tourismus GmbH)

Weinviertel Tourism: Weinviertel Tourism is roughly the same as Waldviertel Tourism.

NÖ Card: The Niederösterreich-Werbung GmbH offers a collection of the famous and best qualitative attractions of lower Austria. More than 60 criteria have to be met to become a top-excursion-destination and the national park Thayatal is accepted as one of these destinations. With the NÖ-Card tourists get benefits by visiting these attractions (Niederösterreich-Werbung GmbH).

Tourism region Thayatal: The tourism association of the national park region Thayatal promotes the region of and around the national park. It is responsible for the marketing of excursion destinations, local communities and quality partners. Their partners include local suppliers, wine cellars and taverns, hotels and private accommodations, restaurants and guest houses and nature parks. The quality criteria are strictly examined by the association and implies: at least three stars or three flowers for accommodations, which are not run by private persons, regional specialties and at least one vegetarian dish have to be offered by gastronomy business, food served at local wine tavern, restaurants and snack bars has to be made from Waldviertel and Weinviertel regional products and typical regional products have to be produced by local farmers. Furthermore, all the partners must have an information stand, where visitors can pick up hiking- and cycling-maps, the representation of the aims of Austria's national parks and the Thayatal National Park, direct marketers run organic farms or businesses have to meet the AMA (Agrarmarkt Austria Marketing) certification standard and work according to an environmentally sound agricultural programme.

The products of these partners - like chocolate, cheese, schnaps, etc. - are sold in the national park center, and the accommodations and restaurant are recommended in their brochures. It is noteworthy, that the fewest partners are in the region of the national park, which indicates the poor value added and regional structure. Also the quality partners dispose brochures of the national park for the visitors in their locations and as well all the other associations, that cooperate with the national park, offers booklets and information leaflets for the tourists.

Supply-oriented management is closely connected to regional development and has to ensure that all the facilities affected by tourism have to plan together. Governments, tourism operators, conservation groups, and local communities and the management of the National park Thayatal should cooperate to establish a tourism network within the area. In this context it has to be mentioned, that within the supply-oriented management even the satisfaction of the tourists and accordingly the quality for the visitor has to be taken into account. A good quality is ensured for all the quality partners of the tourism region Thayathal, but for all other suppliers there is no guarantee or inspection on the quality.

Especially in the summer, the region inside the national park offers some cultural events worth visiting, as for example the lower Austrian folk music festival, the summer cinema and summer theatre, the summer concert in Hardegg, a fairy-tale festival, etc. Regarding the aspect of cultural friendliness, this point can be verified in the area of the Thayatal, but the potential is not exploited at all. Last but not least the sustainable development perspective is mentioned in the criteria above. This criterion includes all the other points already mentioned. Thus, tourism happening in this region has good approaches in the direction of sustainable development, but does not correspond to all the criteria, which are considered elementary for a sustainable development perspective.

Before proceeding to the next chapter, an answer to the question in the title of this chapter is given. Taking all the criteria into account, it has become clear, that the area of the national park Thayatal has great potential concerning the ecological reserves in the region, but nevertheless the economical and the social aspects are less developed. The criteria like: environmental friendliness, being nature-based and the educational aspect can be assumed for the examination if tourism in the national park can be denoted as eco-tourism, while the criteria culturally friendly, Supply-oriented management and sustainable development-perspective cannot easily be verified or falsified. To some extent the factors exists in the area, to some extent the whole dimension for the fulfillment of the criteria is not yet reached. The other points - socially acceptable, economically compatible, participation and regional development are considered as unfulfilled or not fully extended or available.

4. Problems for participating in the field of eco-tourism

The present chapter outlines the problems of the National Park Thayatal for participating in the field of ecotourism. Some of them are already broached in the previous chapters. The problems of the region listed below are a summary of the literature about the national park, observed factors from the literature concerning the National Park Thayatal and the interview with DI Robert Brunner, the director of the National Park Thayatal. The general problems relate to political, social and economical problems of the society and the general public. All these factors were collected by the author and serve as a summary of the problems in this area. A more specified and intense investigation of the region would be necessary to outline all the factors hindering the development of ecotourism in the region

4.1. Problems of the region

Peripheral region

As already mentioned, the region Thayatal is located far away from a city or an important road or rail junction. Thus, tourists have to plan if and how to get there and there are few who visit the national park, because they happen to be passing by. This is the case in the national park Hohe Tauern, Kalkalpen and Gesäuse. The National Park Podyjí, the Czech part of the national park Thayatal can register more visitors than the Austrian part, which may be due to the fact, that it is located near the city Znojmo. Director Brunner highlights that many people living in and around Znojmo decide to undertake their outdoor-activities in the national park. The area in and around the national park Thayatal is of low population density. Furthermore there is no larger city located around the national park. For example, from Retz - the nearest city with a small population of about 4000 inhabitants - it takes 20 minutes to arrive in area of the national park. Therefore one can assume, that only a small proportion of will visit the national park for after-work outdoor sport activities.

As is also mentioned above, the infrastructure of the public means of transport is not very developed. Especially on weekends it is not possible to get to the national park by public

transport because there are no buses on Saturday and Sunday. Visitors are dependent on their own means of transport.

Participating businesses

The peripheral location of the region features a weak traffic infrastructure, but as well as a weak economic and business infrastructure. Director Brunner mentioned the lack of businesses as a problem for the region, to act in the field of ecotourism. A criteria for ecotourism is the regional development and the regional economic participation, but many farmers in and around the area of the national park, sell their harvest to storehouses. This may have two reasons: first, it is less effort to sell the whole harvest, as to use it on their own and second, they may gain more profit. Director Brunner underlines the decrease of direct selling from the farm and from specialization in or refinement of self-made products.

Acceptance of the national park

The optimum relationship between these two fields – nature conservation and tourism – would be a cooperation. (see chapter 5.1) But, the establishment of the relevant area into a national park caused ambivalent reactions from the population. A movement argues against the national park with no further use of land and forest for private or farming purpose. As long as the local population do not see the advantages of the national park, it will be difficult to convince them to participate in the field of tourism. The national park is not dependent on tourism income; it is state-funded and the main editions are arrangements for nature conservation. (Director Brunner 2010) But, nature conservation cannot earn direct revenues for a region, therefore the combination nature conservation - tourism may constitute a prosperous combination for the development of a region, assuming that the population accepts the concepts and participates in the project.

Confuse political and regional cooperation

Lower Austria is divided into 5 districts for regional development. The national park Thayatal belongs to the community for regional development “Niederösterreich-Büro Waldviertel” (Regionalmanagement Niederösterreich 2010) In every community are smaller regions, like the Retzer Land, the tourism region Thayatal, etc. Furthermore local municipals, the federal government and the state give restrictions and are responsible for the region. Brunner points out the difficulties of a co-operation because of the many different parties. The collaboration of tourism policies and nature conservation policies happen on different levels. Therefore a good communication and transparent actions are not ensured.

4.2. General Problems

Expectations of the visitors

A general problem of our society are the expectations everybody brings to a visit of a national park. Compare it to a zoo., A zoo guarantees the visitor to observe almost all animals, which the zoo is promoting for a visit. In the brochures of the national park Thayatal for example the wild cat and the wild boar are advertised, but as they are living free, without cages and compounds, seeing these animals cannot be guaranteed. For this reason tourists are often unsatisfied with the provided service. As already mentioned, all the national parks in Austria are state-funded; no entrance-fee is collected by the visitors like in many other states. A collection of an entrance fee would causes problems for the same reason, because of the high expectations of the visitors. Through the media we are spoilt with exotic animals from all over the world and a wildcat or wild boar may not appear to be worth seeing, on top of that if it is not guaranteed to see them for sure. The majority of the population would not be willing to pay for “just” watching nature. There is no entrance-fee collected, but the general public is looking for action and experiences in their holidays or leisure time. In other words, the activities which can be performed for free an the services which were offered in the national park are considered boring.

Environmental awareness of the population / Educational policy

Education for sustainable development is an important aspect for the topic under discussion. Our descendants will plan the next steps for sustainability and therefore it is crucial to generate awareness for the environment and for sustainable actions. Only internalized values can be performed automatically, like recycling. Thus, an environmental education has to be implemented already in the primary school.

But not only the awareness of children should be raised, adults too should be made aware of the necessity to protect the environment. It is more difficult to reach adults than children, because for adults it is optional to participate on a seminar or at a presentation, whereas for the children it is obligatory to attend class or go on excursions.

No cost transparency

A problem of the global good and commodity market is the non-existing transparency of the costs of a product. An apple juice in a supermarket with apples from South Africa or America is cheaper than an apple juice produced by a farmer in the region. Regarding the cost of transportation, storage and manufacture this seems hard to believe.

A public instrument for the exposure of cost transparency would be the internalization of costs. The basis is a fair allocation of the costs according to ecological damage through the “polluter-pays-principle”: the person/party who/which is responsible for the emergence of the damage has to carry the costs for the prevention or the removal of the ecological damage. (Umweltdatenbank 2003) A taxation of these damages would mean an increased price for the consumer. Environmentally friendly products will be notably cheaper. (Jäger 2006 : 186, Perman 1999 : 126) Thus, a proper introduction of the taxation would lead automatically to an environmentally friendly behavior. A realization of this concept is only possible on the long-term and will bring along problems in the determination of the causer, the exact calculation and quantification of the damage and political oppositions. (Wirtschaftslexikon24 2009) But this approach would be a good step in the direction of sustainability.

IV. Conclusion

The present paper has assumed, that the implementation of ecotourism increases the potential for a positive development of a region on all three levels of sustainability: ecological, economical and social. Especially in environmentally sensitive areas all kinds of tourism cause ecological damage. Thus, this paper concentrated on the ecological impacts of tourism, because only if the impacts are not drastically endangering the environment, tourism can be seen as an instrument for sustainable development.

In the second part of the paper – the theoretical one- the concept of sustainable development, the tourism sector and finally the concept of ecotourism were presented. It has become evident that tourism and nature protection are two topics which are compatible with each other and in the best case exist in cooperation. The theoretical part alluded to the fact that the combination of these two fields is especially difficult in ecosystems, which are untouched by man and left in their original state. But as the trend of tourism goes in the direction of sustainable tourism and nature-tourism, the natural environment plays a significant role in the developing and implementing of tourism.

The concept of ecotourism provides an approach for the cooperation of tourism and nature conservation, but it is not that easily introduced in a specific region as it sounds in the theory. There is no common definition or any specified criteria for the term. Thus, the paper compared and discussed different definitions and criteria for ecotourism, to finally present one suitable for this paper. It is difficult to determine whether ecotourism occurs or not and may lead to a – according to the definition within this paper- wrong use of the term, e.g. for economic purpose. Therefore, a collaboration of both sides – bottom-up work and top-down restrictions - will have to emerge. On the one hand, the population of a region has to create and cooperate with tourism-projects. Awareness building from the bottom up and environmental education will have to be introduced. On the other hand, international and state regulations concerning nature protection and tourism policies have to set the parameters and need to be taken into account.

In a further step, the concept of a national park and the guidelines for tourism within a national park were outlined. Interestingly, the principles of ecotourism and the principles of

tourism in a national park resemble each other, which can be seen as an appropriate basis for research into the case-study. In both lists of principles nature conservation is prior to tourism development. So, the last step of the theoretical part presented a framework for analyzing the ecological impacts of tourism. This framework structures and helps to analyze first the causes of the damages to the nature, then the affected element and the impact and last but not least the influence on the intensity of the impact. This framework serves as a support for the decision making, if a development through the implementation of tourism may be appropriate for a region.

In part three the framework is used concerning the tourism in the National Park Thayatal, followed by the analysis if the existing tourism can be denoted as ecotourism or not.

Regarding the first research question: *In which points are the two fields - nature conservation and tourism - competing with / supporting each other?* Generally, one can say that nature can exist without tourism, but tourism, concerning this work specially ecotourism, cannot exist without nature. On a closer look tourism can also support nature conservation if it occurs with increasing environmental awareness and acceptance for nature protection. But nature protection laws can hinder tourism development as well, like e.g. the guidelines concerning a national park, which give priority to the environment rather than to tourism. Within the area of investigation, the National Park Thayatal, the educational and environmental awareness-building aspect is an important factor for supporting nature conservation. But therefore, visitors, who come to the region, will have to be provided with information.

Regarding all negative effects of tourism in the National Park Thayatal, in chapter two, part III, it is obvious, that tourism does not endanger nature and environment of the park. Because of this, the assumption constructed in the introduction, “tourism in national parks can just be implemented, if it does not harm nature” can be seen as fulfilled. Thus, the concept of ecotourism is used to see, if it fits to the area of the National Park Thayatal leading to the second research question: *How far constitutes the concept of ecotourism a chance for the tourism development in the National Park Thayatal?*

In a comparison of the criteria, the existing tourism in the area cannot be denoted as ecotourism, even though some aspects can be seen as adequate ecotourism approaches. The criteria environmental friendliness, nature-based and the educational aspect occur in the given region, while the criteria culturally friendly, Supply-oriented management and sustainable

development-perspective cannot easily be verified or falsified. The other points - socially acceptable, economically compatible, participation and regional development are considered as unfulfilled or not fully extended or available.

The local population's acceptance of the national park is not a given. This constitutes a problem for the cooperation within the region and the demonstration of possible chances for participating in tourism for the locals. Furthermore, the periphery location of the region, the lack in participating businesses and confusing political and regional arrangements hinder the touristic development of the national park. Thus, Director Brunner outlined in his interview, that a region may not register all kinds of businesses: tourism, industry, infrastructure, residential area etc.

Nevertheless, the natural advantages of the National Park Thayatal could constitute a change for the regional development and would be a perfect setting for ecotourism. For an evaluation of the whole region concerning the implementation of tourism, an economical and a social analysis is recommended, but this would exceed the framework of this paper.

Concluding one can say that ecotourism can foster an economic, social and environmental chance for a region, if all participants work together on all levels and if all the affected parties are taken into account. A decision to operate in the field of ecotourism has to be well planned and monitored to avoid developing into the wrong direction. There are many possible ways for operating in this field and it is difficult to take a path, where all participants and the environment reach benefits, therefore a statement of Jakob von Uexküll is appropriate for the closing of this paper:

“There are too many possibilities to be a pessimist. Of course, there are also too many crises to be an optimist. I always say, I am a ‘possibilist.’ I see the possibilities”. (Jakob von Uexküll c.f. Right Livelihood Award 2006 : 9)

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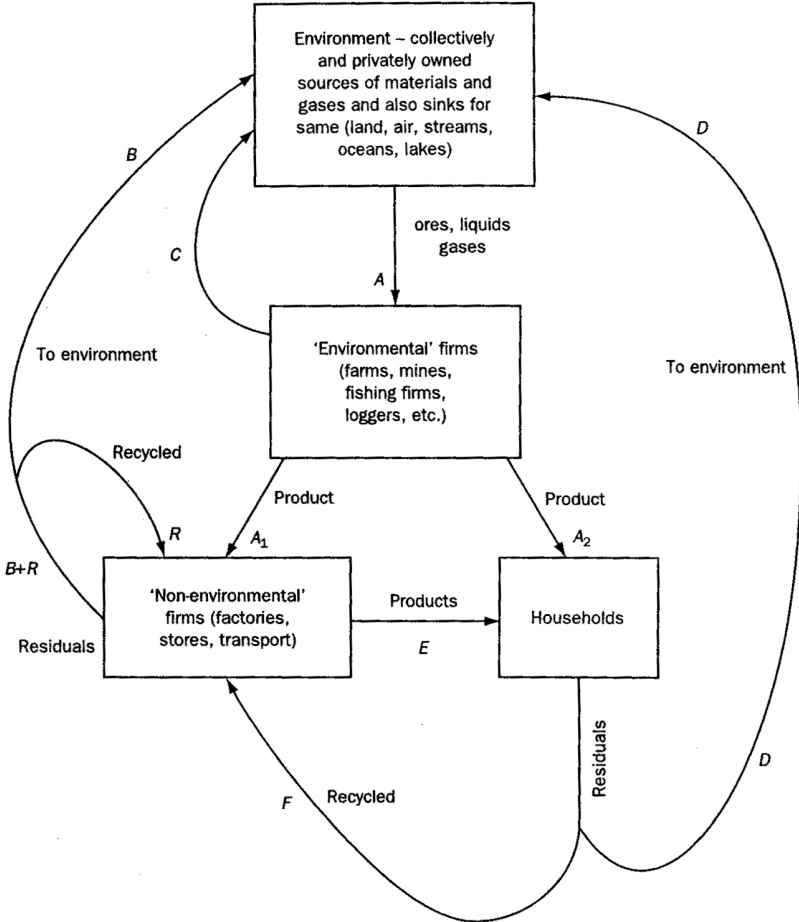
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Interview:

DI Robert Brunner, Director of the National Park Thayathal, personal interview (26.05.2010), in Hardegg.

ANNEX

Annex 1



The Materials-Balance-Model of economy-environment interactions. Source: Perman (1999). In: Natural Resource & Environmental Economics.

Annex 2

Gesprächsleitfaden für Experteninterview

Potentiale des Nationalparks

- Benennen Sie die wesentlichen Stärken und Schwächen des Nationalparks. Mit welchen Merkmalen des Nationalparks können Sie sich identifizieren? bzw. Wie unterscheidet sich der Nationalpark Thayatal von anderen Parks in Österreich?

Tourismus und Naturschutz

- Welche Bedeutung hat die touristische Entwicklung im Thayatal für den National Park?
- Inwieweit profitiert der Nationalpark vom Tourismus?
- Existieren Konzepte oder Leitbilder für die Entwicklung touristischer Projekte im Park? Wie ist Tourismus in den Planungsprozess des Parks integriert?
- Welche Gefahren oder Schäden (speziell ökologische) bringt der Tourismus für den Nationalpark?

Touristische Entwicklung

- Welche Bedeutung hat der Nationalpark Thayatal für die touristische Entwicklung?
- Welche Faktoren hindern touristische Entwicklung im Nationalpark?
- Kennen Sie Konflikte zwischen der Entwicklung von Tourismus und anderen Projekten zur Landnutzung?
- Wie schätzen Sie die Zusammenarbeit in der Tourismusregion ein?
- Profitiert die Region durch die Bekanntheit des Nationalparks?
- Liegen bei den Unterkünften/Touristenattraktionen Informationen oder Broschüren über Naturschutz im Nationalpark auf?
- Sind die Unterkünfte mit umweltfreundlichen Equipment ausgestattet?
- Verkaufen und verwenden die touristischen Einrichtungen ökologische Produkte aus der Region?

Ökotourismus

- Was verstehen Sie unter Ökotourismus?
- Wie schätzen Sie die Nationalparkregion Thayatal ein? Ist dies eine ökotouristische Region?
- Welche Ansätze/Projekte kann man als ökotouristisch bezeichnen?
- Was fehlt in der Nationalparkregion Thayatal, um sich im Ökotourismus zu profilieren?
- Welche Potentiale gäbe es hinsichtlich ökotouristischer Entwicklung im Nationalpark noch auszuschöpfen?

Annex 3

Abstract (Deutsch)

Nachhaltigkeit bzw. *Nachhaltige Entwicklung* und *Öko* entpuppten sich in den letzten Jahrzehnten zu viel gebrauchten Schlagwörtern in aller Munde. Des Weiteren verzeichnete die Tourismusindustrie in den letzten Jahrzehnten einen rasanten Anstieg. Anhand dieser Arbeit werden die beiden Bereiche miteinander verbunden und der Nachhaltigkeits- und Ökoaspekt in den Sektor Tourismus eingebettet. Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, eine Möglichkeit darzulegen, Naturschutz mit Tourismus zu verbinden, diese kritisch zu diskutieren und am Gebiet des Nationalpark Thayatal aufzuzeigen, inwieweit eine Kooperation dieser beiden Faktoren in Form von Ökotourismus als Chance für nachhaltige Entwicklung herangezogen werden kann. Ausgehend von der Annahme, dass sich der Trend im Tourismus weiterhin in Richtung Ökotourismus, Naturtourismus und Parktourismus richtet, verfolgt die Autorin folgende These: Tourismus kann in Nationalparks nur eingeführt werden, wenn der Umwelt kein Schaden zugeführt wird und der Tourismus eine positive soziale, ökonomische und ökologische Entwicklung innerhalb des entsprechenden Gebietes nach sich zieht. Zur Feststellung, ob und inwieweit der Umwelt ein Schaden zugefügt wird, bietet die Autorin ein *Framework* zur Analyse der Einflussfaktoren des Tourismus auf die Umwelt und deren ökologische Auswirkungen. Basierend auf diesem Framework, erläutert diese Arbeit inwieweit Ökotourismus als Instrument für nachhaltige Entwicklung herangezogen werden kann.

In einer Fallstudie wird das in der Theorie erarbeitete *Framework* und die Definition von Ökotourismus auf den Nationalpark Thayatal angewendet. Vom ökologischen Standpunkt aus gäbe es einer kontrollierten, touristischen Expansion nichts entgegenzusetzen. Es charakterisieren sich jedoch Problemfaktoren - wie zum Beispiel die fehlende Akzeptanz der Bevölkerung hinsichtlich des Nationalparks, die periphere Lage der Region und der Mangel an sich beteiligenden Unternehmen - heraus, die einer nachhaltigen Tourismusentwicklung in dieser Region im Wege stehen.

Annex 4

Abstract (English)

Sustainability, Sustainable Development and "Eco" are important buzzwords often used in the last decades. This paper is a study of the tourism industry, which was rapidly rising in the last decades, in relation to sustainability and eco aspects. The aim of this thesis is to present a link between nature protection and tourism, to provide a critical discussion in this interesting field and to introduce a concrete example: the National Park Thayatal. The study of the National Park Thayatal demonstrated how far a cooperation between the various forms of ecotourism can be seen as a chance for sustainable tourism. The study assumes, that the trend in the tourism sector is moving towards ecotourism, nature and park tourism. The author makes the assumption: Tourism can only be implemented in national parks, if it does not harm the nature and implies a positive social, economical and ecological development within the relevant area.

In order to investigate if and how far the environment is going to be damaged through tourism, the author presents a framework for analyzing the impacts of tourism and ecological effects to the environment. Based on this framework, the concept of ecotourism is assessed as an instrument for sustainable development.

In the case study, the framework and definition of ecotourism provided in theory, were adopted for the National Park Thayatal. From an ecological point of view, a further controlled tourism development within this area could be manifested. But a closer investigation of this area gives rise to other problem factors - as for example the lack of the local population's acceptance of the national park, periphery location of the region and the lack in participating businesses - which hinder a sustainable tourism development in this region.

Annex 5

CURRICULUM VITAE

Mariana Huber

Lustkandlgasse 4/10
1090 Wien, Österreich
Tel.: 0043 650 9309 222
mariana-huber@hotmail.com



Personal Data

Date of Birth: 6th of August 1984
Citizenship: Austrian

Education

Since 10/03: Studies of International Business Administration at the University of Vienna
Since 10/07: Studies of International Development at the University of Vienna
10/06 – 07/07: Studies at the Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna, Italy
06/03: High School Diploma at the Commercial Academy, Vöcklabruck

Work Experiences

02/09 – 10/09: Internship at Siemens Energy AG, Vienna
Activities: analysis of the European energy market, translation work
09/08 – 04/09: Assistant at Assist GmbH, Vienna
Activities: social work
07/06 – 08/06: Receptionist at Peneder fast forward, Atzbach (Upper Austria)
Activities: office work, reception
09/05 – 06/06: Assistant of the ÖH
Activities: office work, client support
08/05 – 09/05: Controlling-Assistant at Schausberger, Gunskirchen (Upper Austria)
Activities: controlling
03/05 – 09/05: Receptionist at Cisco, Vienna
Activities: office work, meeting prearrangements
09/01: Business assistant at Douprava, Attnang-Puchheim (Upper Austria)

Extra – Curricular Activities:

Languages: German: mother tongue
English: fluent written and spoken
Italian: fluent written and spoken
French: basics spoken and written

IT-Skills: good experience in Word, Excel, Access, Powerpoint
basics in Java Script, HTML

Certificates: July 2008

Afro-Caribbean influences, political and historical development on the
Caribbean coast in Venezuela
Universidad Bolivariana in Caracas / Venezuela

Colonial history of Nicaragua, History of the Atlantic coast, Interventionism
and Imperialism of the United States, Sandinism and Revolution
Universidad Politécnica in Managua / Nicaragua

Autonomy-process in the autonomous regions on the Caribbean coast of
Nicaragua
Universidad de las regiones autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense
(URACCAN) in Porto Cabezas / Nicaragua

August 2008

History of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, Interculture and intercultural
Citizenship
Universidad URACCAN in Bluefields / Nicaragua

Hobbies: riding, dancing, slack-line

Interests: nature, photography, languages, travelling