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# PROTECTED AREAS, TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

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*Paper prepared for presentation at the 118th seminar of the EAAE*

*(European Association of Agricultural Economists),*

*'Rural development: governance, policy design and delivery'*

*Ljubljana, Slovenia, August 25-27, 2010*

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## **Abstract**

Connections between protected areas, tourism and development of the countryside were studied in the examples of the Triglav National Park and the Kozjanski Park. 200 local inhabitants were interviewed in each area. According to the results, it can be concluded that the studied protected areas give an opportunity to develop rural tourism. It cannot be claimed that the development of tourism in protected areas is more successful than the development of tourism outside the protected areas. The interviewed inhabitants of the Triglav National Park most support the development of tourism in the area (86.5 %) out of all other industries, whereas this is not true for the interviewed inhabitants of the Kozjanski Park. The latter agree the area should be oriented in agriculture and the development of small business and craft. Nevertheless it is not insignificant that a high share of the interviewed inhabitants of the Kozjanski Park agrees on focusing this area on tourism development (74.5 %). Almost half of the interviewed inhabitants of the Triglav National Park (47 %) and only 15 % of the interviewed inhabitants of the Kozjanski Park agree that the opportunity of the protected area is a better possibility in tourism business. Thus we can conclude that the Triglav National Park offers more

opportunities or additional possibilities for business in tourism than the Kozjanski Park. In the protected area, where tourism is more developed (the Triglav National Park), the interviewed inhabitants believe that the nature conservation strategies are less successful and perceive more negative burdens of tourism (traffic and crowds, higher prices). On the contrary, in the protected area, where tourism is less developed (the Kozjanski Park), the interviewed inhabitants observe that nature conservation strategies are more successful and they are less influenced by tourism.

**Keywords:** protected areas, development, tourism, Slovenia

**JEL:** Q01, Q56, Q57

## 1 Introduction

The protected areas are areas of special value, established to protect the integrity and diversity of nature against human destruction. The inhabitants who live in the protected area demand development, which enables the modern way of life. Due to conflict of interest between the park management and the local inhabitants, there often arise conflict situations and dissatisfaction on both sides. Consequently, it is necessary to find the possibilities which will assure the development of the area and the preservation of the environment simultaneously. In this concept tourism is presented as a linking element between the protected area (park management) and local inhabitants.

The researches confirm that tourism can have positive effects on nature conservation (Murphree, 1993; Baez, 1996; Goodwin and Roe, 2001; Hochtl et al., 2005; Nyaupane and Thapa, 2006) and development of the area so that it can enable the improvement of economic opportunities for local people (Child and Heath, 1990; Durbin and Ratrimoarisana, 1996; Lindberg et al., 1996; McCool, 1996; Lolah and Southwich, 2003; Poissonnet et al., 2006) and improve the quality of life in local communities (Martin, 2004). The researches also confirm the negative impacts of tourism or certain forms of tourism on nature and life in the protected area. These are reflected in the environmental burden (Jeršič, 1989; Rejec Brancelj, 2000; Cigale, 2004; Martin, 2004), financial burden (UNEP, 2008) and social burden (King and Stewaet, 1996; Goodwin et al., 1998; Uddhammar, 2006).

When analyzing the relationship between protected areas, local inhabitants and tourism, we find out that there exist different interactions that are reflected in different results. The most desirable is that all three participants (protected area, local inhabitants and tourism) have mutual benefits. Another option is that one or two participants benefit from it and the third participant does not. The third possibility is that all three participants influence each other negatively (Nepal, 2000).

This research of the local inhabitants' opinion in the Triglav National Park and in the Kozjanski Park and review of the objective data on the development potentials of the studied protected areas were aimed to answer the two hypothesis, namely, that protected areas in the region enable greater development of rural tourism and that rural tourism has an important part in developing a rural area in regions where protected areas exist.

### *1.1 Development potentials of the protected areas*

Protected areas in Slovenia combine environmental, cultural, social and human values and as such they provide favourable conditions for controlled regional development on the basis of activities, which are in accordance with the objectives of natural and cultural heritage conservation and at the same time offering opportunities for the development of sustainable activities (Lampič and Mrak, 2008; Plut, 2008).

The data about development potential of the treated protected areas confirm that the Triglav National Park as well as the Kozjanski Park undoubtedly both have potential for environment and culture, which are crucial for tourism development. The Triglav National Park was established to preserve the special value of nature in the area. In the case of the Kozjanski Park the creation of the

protected area was due to the purpose of maintaining the cultural potential of the area, natural valuables and characteristics of the area. We have found out that the Triglav National Park as well as the Kozjanski Park have social potential in the form of different societies which are linked to natural and cultural heritage conservation and they encourage cooperation and strengthen regional development.

The most important factor for a successful development of the area is human potential. The data show that fairly unfavourable age and education composition, daily work migrations and considerable unemployment resulting from so far unfavourable socio-economic processes and representing a considerable obstacle to development are typical of the Triglav National Park and the Kozjanski Park. Namely, it is necessary to take into consideration local wishes and capacities as well as the quality of manpower, necessary to deal with different activities for the development of the areas (Plut, 2008). We ascertain the worse situation in case of the Kozjanski Park:

- The Kozjanski Park stands out for its low educational structure of the population. 50 % of the population aged 15 years or more has only primary or incomplete primary school. The share of high educated population reaches only 5 % (Popis 2002, 2002; Predlog osnutka ..., 2008).
- It is typical of the Kozjanski Park to a greater extent than the Triglav National Park that the number of population is reducing due to lack of jobs in the area (Popis 2002, 2002; SURS, 2002, quoted from Zidar, 2005; Plut, 2008).
- 67.9 % of the economically active population, who live in settlements that lie at least a little within the boundaries of the Triglav National Park, migrate daily to work, of which 38.2 % to another municipality or even to another region (Popis 2002, 2002; Plut, 2008).
- The Triglav National Park is characterized by a low proportion of agricultural activities (3.7 %) (Popis 2002, 2002; Plut, 2008). In the Kozjanski Park a big decrease in agriculture is noticeable, as only 8 % of the inhabitants dealt with this activity at the latest census, which is very little in comparison to data from 1971, which show that 69 % of the inhabitants were farming (SURS, 2002, quoted from Zidar, 2005).
- It is to emphasize that tourism already has an important role in the Triglav National Park (Popis 2002, 2002; Plut, 2008).

## **2 Material and methods**

The survey is based on two case studies. Two areas (regions) in Slovenia have been chosen, where protected areas are located, namely the Triglav National Park and the Kozjanski Park. The protected areas were established more than 25 years ago.

Data collection in the Triglav National Park was carried out within the framework of the project "Triglavski narodni park – Analiza izkušenj lokalnega prebivalstva", ordered by the Park, among 200 randomly selected local inhabitants in the park and outside, using a questionnaire (Rodela, 2007). Inhabitants of the villages situated within the protected area, and inhabitants of the villages lying outside the protected area, that is, on the outskirts of the protected area were included in the survey. Data collection took place from 5<sup>th</sup> until 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2006. 46 inhabitants from 19 villages, representing 23 % of the total sample were surveyed in the Triglav National Park. Outside the Triglav National Park 154 inhabitants from 36 villages, representing 77 % of the total sample were surveyed.

Data collection in the Kozjanski Park was conducted among 200 randomly selected local inhabitants in the Kozjanski Park and outside it, using a questionnaire (Rodela, 2007). Inhabitants of the villages situated within the protected area, and inhabitants of the villages lying outside the protected area, that is, on the outskirts of the protected area were included in the survey. Data collection took place from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007. 172 inhabitants from 24 villages, representing 86 % of the total sample were surveyed in the Kozjanski Park. Outside the Kozjanski Park 28 inhabitants from 9 villages, representing 14 % of the total sample were surveyed.

People, who took part in the poll, were asked about the following socio-demographic characteristics: place of residence, gender, year of birth, number of members in their household and number of children, marital status, employment status, place of work and education.

The number of interviewers in the Triglav National Park was at the end distributed in favour of women (54.5 %) against men (45.5 %). The majority of interviewers were aged between 26 and 55 years (74.5 %), and as such belong to the most active part of the population. The educational level shows that most interviewers finished secondary school education (64.5 %). In view of employment status 14 % farmers, 32.5 % working in tourism and 53.5 % of employees in other industries were included in the survey. 38.5 % of the surveyed population were living in families with two members, 25.5 % were living with families with three members and 25.5 % of them were living in families with four members. More than half of the surveyed population (53 %) was living without children. 21 % of the surveyed population were living with one child and 18.5 % were living with two children. 61 % of the surveyed population were married, 18.5 % were single and 16.5 % were living in consensual union. 88.5 % of the surveyed population were employed in the municipality where they resided, 7 % commuted to work in a neighbouring municipality.

79 % of women and 21 % of men were surveyed in the Kozjanski Park. The majority of interviewers were aged between 36 and 65 years (71 %). The educational level shows that most interviewers finished secondary school education (50.5 %). In view of employment status 35.5 % farmers, 3.5 % working in tourism and 61 % of employees in other industries were included in the survey. 42.5 % of the surveyed population were living in families with two members, 25.5 % were living with families with three members and 11 % of them were living in families with one member. More than half of the surveyed population (64.5 %) was living without children. 17.5 % of the surveyed population were living with one child and 10.5 % were living with two children. 63.5 % of the surveyed population were married, 7.5 % were single and 3.5 % were living in consensual union. 72 % of the surveyed population were employed in the municipality where they resided, 21 % commuted to work in a neighbouring municipality.

The variables that were included in the questionnaire were used to determine the opinions of the surveyed population on: the needs of area where the surveyed inhabitants live, the performance of current strategies of development area, development focus of the area, the opportunities of the protected area for them personally, the burdens of the protected area for them personally, the opportunities of the protected area for the entire area and the burdens of the protected area for the entire area.

The interviewers evaluated the statements using a seven-point evaluating scale, with number 1 representing that they totally disagree with the statement, and number 7 representing that they strongly agree with the statement. Due to small number of answers some categories from the 1-7 evaluating scale were put together while processing the data, namely category 2 and 3 and category 5 and 6 To determine the differences between individual variables in view of the place of residence (in the protected area, outside the protected area), we used contingency tables and Hi-square test. As statistically significant differences we took into account differences with a value of 0.05 and less. All data analyses were performed by a computer statistical package SPSS 15.0.

### **3 Results and discussion**

#### *3.1 Protected areas in the region enable the development of rural tourism*

If we first try to answer the question whether the protected areas enable the development of rural tourism, in a sense that they have development potential, necessary for that or which would make it possible, based on the presented findings about development potentials in the studied areas, we find out that some development potentials are incomplete. This involves in particular a poor human development potential in the case of the Triglav National Park and the Kozjanski Park, although we state that the situation is worse in the Kozjanski Park.

The surveyed inhabitants of the Triglav National Park believe that current rural development strategies in this area are not very successful (55 %) and that this area needs better rural development policy (88 %) and better coordination / management of the area (81 %). However, it can be stated that tourism development is more successful than current strategies development of other industries - small business and craft, agriculture and industry - in the area. The results show that 38 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park agree that the current strategies of tourism development in the area are very successful (Figure 1).

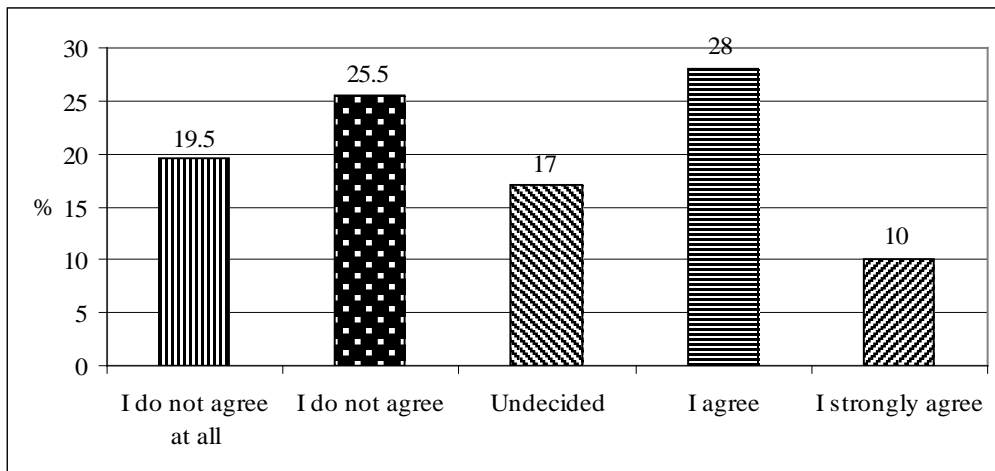


Figure 1. Present tourism development strategies in this area are very successful.

Furthermore, 21 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park agree that current agricultural development strategies are very successful, 20.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants agree that the current development strategies of small business and craft are very successful and 10.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants agree that that the current strategies of the industry are very successful.

Approximately the same proportion of the surveyed inhabitants in the Kozjanski Park as well as the surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park do not agree with the statement that current rural development strategies in the area are very successful (56.5 %). 93 % of the surveyed inhabitants from the Kozjanski Park think that the area needs a better rural development policy, and 71.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants think that the area needs better coordination / leadership. Also in the case of the Kozjanski Park the surveyed inhabitants identified the current strategies of tourism development in the area as the most successful among industries. And 47 % of the surveyed inhabitants of the Kozjanski Park believe that the current strategies of tourism development in the area are very successful (Figure 2).

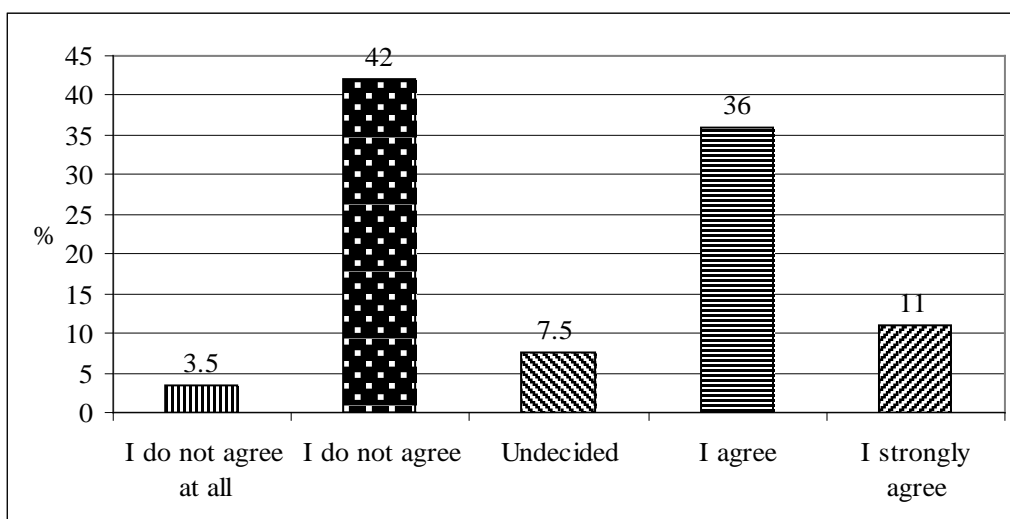


Figure 2. Present tourism development strategies in this area are very successful.

Comparison to the performance of developing other industries in the area showed that 35.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Kozjanski Park agree that the current strategies of agriculture development in this area are very successful. 32 % of the surveyed inhabitants believe that the current strategies of small business and craft in the area are very successful and 7 % of the surveyed inhabitants believe that the current development strategies of industry in this area are very successful.

According to the results we can conclude that the protected area in the region enables to develop rural tourism. However, this raises the question whether the tourism development in the protected area is more successful than tourism development outside the protected area. Although there is no statistically significant difference between the opinion of the surveyed inhabitants of the Triglav National Park and the place of residence (in the protected area or outside it) ( $p = 0.076$ ), that the current development strategies in this area are very successful, the results show that the inhabitants in the protected area are more dissatisfied with the current tourism development strategies, as 56.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park and 41.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants outside the park consider that the current strategies of tourism development are not successful. In the case of the Kozjanski Park we find out that the surveyed inhabitants to a higher extent do not agree that the tourism development strategies are very successful. The results show that 47.7 % of the surveyed population in the protected area and 32.1 % of the surveyed population outside the protected area believe that the current tourism development strategies in the area failed ( $p = 0.002$ ).

Based on those results we can therefore conclude that the current strategies of tourism development in both protected areas are approximately equally successful or less successful than the strategies of tourism development outside the protected area. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that present tourism development strategies within and outside the studied protected areas are connected, as tourist infrastructure is more developing outside the protected area, based on (Triglav National Park) or supplemented by (Kozjanski Park) natural environment characteristics within the protected area.

### *3.2 The role of rural tourism in rural development in regions with protected areas (natural parks, other protected areas)*

The surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park support tourism development in the area. The results show that 86.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park agree that the area should focus on the development of tourism, which becomes an important point when compared to the opinion of the surveyed inhabitants regarding orientation to other industries. The results show that 80.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park consider that the area should focus on the development of small entrepreneurs and craftsmen, 80 % of the surveyed inhabitants consider that the area should focus on the development of organic farming, 23 % of the surveyed inhabitants consider that the area should focus on the development of larger companies, 21.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants consider that the area should focus on the development of conventional agriculture, and 18.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants consider that the area should focus on the development of industry.

In the example of the Kozjanski Park it is possible to observe that the interviewed inhabitants most agree with the orientation of the area in agriculture and development of small business and craft. Nevertheless it is not insignificant that a high share of the interviewed inhabitants agrees that the area should focus on tourism development. The results show that 93 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Kozjanski Park consider that the area should focus on the development of conventional agriculture, 82 % of the surveyed inhabitants consider that the area should focus on the development of small entrepreneurs and craftsmen, 78.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants consider that the area should focus on the development of organic farming, 74.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants consider that the area should focus on the development of tourism, 69.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants consider that the area should focus on the development of larger companies, 56.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants consider that the area should focus on the development of industry.

The fact is that due to restrictions, placed on the protected area, the development of any industries in rural area is not admissible, meaning that in fact the protected area directs the development in the area. To sum up, the interviewed inhabitants of the Triglav National Park (58 %) are more aware of the above mentioned fact than the interviewed inhabitants of the Kozjanski Park (32 %).

- Tourism as a generator of development and a creator of new jobs

Most of the surveyed inhabitants, in the Triglav National Park as well as in the Kozjanski Park, agree with the statements that the areas need better employment opportunities and better employment opportunities for people with higher and university education, and those two needs are placed in the first two places according to the importance.

Additional possibilities of employment in the protected area are seen by 38.5 % of the interviewed inhabitants of the Triglav National Park and 17.5 % of the interviewed inhabitants of the Kozjanski Park. However, as the additional opportunities or possibilities in the protected area for them personally, they both place, according to importance, in the first three places: healthy environment, possibility of recreation and relaxation in the region of natural beauties and preservation of aesthetic attributes of the landscape. These three attributes are considered as the key element of a successful tourism development in protected areas.

- Tourism as an alternative source of income

The surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park see alternative sources of income, offered by the protected area, in obtaining additional financial resources (36.5 %), indemnities, allowances for the use of agricultural area within the park (17 %), sale of agricultural products under the brand name of the park (16.5 %) and sale of handicraft products under the brand name of the park (11.5 %). Furthermore, the surveyed inhabitants in the Kozjanski Park list as alternative sources of income, offered by the protected area, obtaining additional financial resources (11 %), sale of agricultural products under the brand name of the park (11 %), indemnities, allowances for the use of agricultural land within the park (7.5 %) and sale of handicraft products under the brand name of the park (7.5 %). Almost half of the inhabitants in the Triglav National Park (47 %) and only 15 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Kozjanski Park agree that that the protected area offers better possibility for the tourism business for them personally.

Therefore the surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park and the Kozjanski Park identified better possibilities for tourism business as an opportunity of the protected area. However the surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park in comparison to the surveyed inhabitants in the Kozjanski Park to a higher extent believe that the opportunity of the protected area is in better possibilities for tourism business. Thus we can conclude that the Triglav National Park offers more opportunities or additional possibilities for tourism business than the Kozjanski Park.

- Tourism contributes significantly to sustainable development in the region

The results show that more than half of the surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park agree that the current strategies of nature protection are successful (54 %). In the Kozjanski Park even more surveyed inhabitants agree with that statement, namely 63.5 %.

As far as 58.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park consider that traffic and crowds due to increased flow of tourists burden the area. Furthermore, we note that only 10.5 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Kozjanski Park agree with this statement. 49.5 % of the interviewed inhabitants of the Triglav National Park and only 3.5 % of the interviewed inhabitants of the Kozjanski Park agree that the burden of tourism is generally higher prices in the protected area.



If we link the findings about present nature conservation strategies in the area and the burden of tourism in the area, we can conclude that nature conservation strategies are less successful in the protected area, where tourism is more developed (Triglav National Park) and that local inhabitants perceive more negative effects of tourism (traffic and crowds, higher prices). On the contrary, the interviewed inhabitants in the protected area where tourism is less developed (the Kozjanski Park) notice that nature conservation strategies are more successful and they are less influenced by tourism.

- Tourism contributes significantly to increased competitiveness of the region

81 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park and 57 % of the surveyed inhabitants in the Kozjanski Park think that due to the protected area the tourist reputation of the town has increased. More surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park than surveyed inhabitants in the Kozjanski Park agree with that statement. In the example of the Triglav National Park it is clear that the protected area or the beauty of nature enables tourism. In the example of the Kozjanski Park it was found out that the protected area supports tourism. In the latter case the focus has been brought into the development of thermal baths (nowadays Terme Olimia in the municipality Podčetrtek and Terme Čatež in the municipality Brežice) outside the protected area in the last years. In the last few years the protected area has been more appreciated as a component part of tourism development in the area, above all due to investment in renovation of cultural heritage (old buildings, castles, squares, ...), cleaning up the environment and other events.

According to the results we can sum up that tourism and its related activities in the protected areas contribute significantly to the competitiveness of the region, especially in the case of the Triglav National Park.

#### **4 Conclusions**

On the basis of the opinions of local inhabitants we have studied links between protected areas, tourism and rural development in two protected areas in Slovenia, namely the Triglav National Park and the Kozjanski Park.

Among the development potential in the treated protected areas, human potential is insufficient, which is noticeable in the case of the Kozjanski Park.

More than half of the interviewed inhabitants of the studied protected areas (i.e. the Triglav National Park and the Kozjanski Park) respectively believe that present countryside development strategies in the area are not very successful. The interviewed inhabitants of both studied protected areas agree that the tourism development is more successful than present development strategies for other industries in the area, namely present small business and craft development strategies, agriculture development strategy and industrial development strategy.

According to the results we may confirm the hypothesis that the protected area in the region enables to develop rural tourism, but, arising from the results, we find out that the current strategies of tourism development in protected areas are about equally successful or less successful than the strategies of tourism development outside the protected area.

The current strategies of tourism development in the studied protected areas and outside them are connected as outside the protected area tourist infrastructure is primarily developing, which is based on natural features of the environment in the protected area (the Triglav National Park) or is complementary (the Kozjanski Park).

The surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park support tourism development in the area. In the example of the Kozjanski Park it is possible to observe that the interviewed inhabitants most agree with the orientation of the area in agriculture and development of small business and craft.

Nevertheless it is not insignificant that a high share of the interviewed inhabitants agrees that the area should focus on tourism development.

The fact is that due to restrictions, placed on the protected area, the development of any industries in rural area is not admissible, meaning that in fact the protected area directs the development in the area. To sum up, the interviewed inhabitants of the Triglav National Park are more aware of the above mentioned fact than the interviewed inhabitants of the Kozjanski Park.

The surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park and the Kozjanski Park identified to the highest extent better possibilities for business tourism as an opportunity in terms of obtaining alternative sources of income. The interviewed inhabitants of the Triglav National Park more strongly believe that the opportunity of the protected area lies in better possibilities of tourism business than the interviewed inhabitants of the Kozjanski Park (47 % against 15 %). Thus we can conclude that the Triglav National Park offers more opportunities or additional possibilities for tourism business than the Kozjanski Park.

If we link the findings about present nature conservation strategies in the area and the burden of tourism in the area, we can conclude that nature conservation strategies are less successful in the protected area, where tourism is more developed (Triglav National Park) and that local inhabitants perceive more negative effects of tourism (traffic and crowds, higher prices). On the contrary, the interviewed inhabitants in the protected area where tourism is less developed (the Kozjanski Park) notice that nature conservation strategies are more successful and they are less influenced by tourism.

The surveyed inhabitants in the Triglav National Park see in the protected area several additional options for dealing with tourism than the surveyed inhabitants in the Kozjanski Park. So tourism in the protected area represents certain benefits for the local people. According to the current findings we can conclude that the protected area supports tourism.

The interviewed inhabitants of the Triglav National Park agree more than the interviewed inhabitants of the Kozjanski Park that due to the protected area a tourist reputation of the place has increased. In the example of the Triglav National Park it is clear that the protected area or the beauty of nature enables tourism. In the example of the Kozjanski Park it was found out that the protected area supports tourism.

According to the results we may confirm the hypothesis that tourism has an important role in rural development in regions with protected areas. It is believed that tourism in the protected area does not bring only benefits to local people, but there are also present greater losses, resulting in negative impact of tourism on local inhabitants (annoying traffic, crowds of tourists, increased prices ...) and according to surveyed inhabitants in inferior nature conservation strategies. All stated above holds more for the Triglav National Park than for the Kozjanski Park.

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