

POLITICS OF SCALE IN A HIGH MOUNTAIN BORDER REGION: BEING MOBILE AMONG THE BHOTIYAS OF THE KUMAON HIMALAYA, INDIA

Christoph Bergmann, Martin Gerwin, William S. Sax and Marcus Nüsser

Abstract

Pastoral mobility in mountain environments always implicates indigenous forms of agency vis-à-vis the surrounding states with which people are interlinked, for instance through trade relations, contested border demarcations or natural resource regulations. In this paper, we analyse such interactions in terms of an ongoing 'politics of scale', that is to say a politics of the spatial dimensions structuring social life. Our case study focuses on the Bhotiyas, former trans-Himalayan traders who practise a sort of combined mountain agriculture in the high valleys of the Kumaon Himalaya, bordering China. The interdisciplinary approach foregrounds several registers of mobility, from agro-pastoral to ritual techniques and from property rights to ethnic identities.

Keywords: Bhotiyas, pastoral mobility, politics of scale, interdisciplinary research, Kumaon

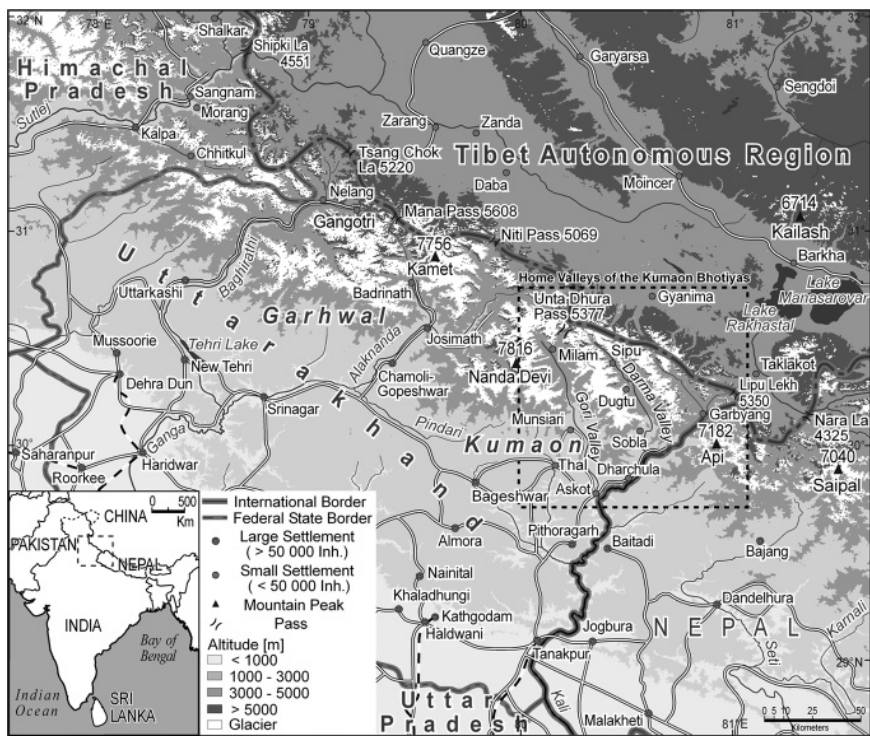
Introduction

Mobility is a prominent theme in high mountain research, especially in analyses of pastoral practices. Without doubt, the rhythms of movement in the Himalaya are broadly driven by seasonal variations, such as the duration of snow cover or the onset of the vegetation periods in different altitudinal belts. However, classic accounts overemphasized cross-regional similarities in vertical land use and specified mobility patterns as adaptations that reduce the risk of crop and livestock production under the harsh environmental conditions of mountain regions (Rhoades and Thompson 1975). This conventional view was backed by assumptions of ecological uniformity in different environmental zones, with carrying capacity as the controlling parameter. Within the parameters of such quantitatively defined and predictable systems, pastoralists predominantly figured as 'politically passive migrants' because their mobility was seen as incompatible with mainstream social and political life (Agrawal and Saberwal 2004: 38).

Rather negative perceptions of pastoral mobility gained a strong currency in the Theory of Himalayan Environment Degradation, the dominant narrative for that region during the 1970s and 1980s (Metz 2010). It postulated a direct relation

between overpopulation, grazing pressure and deforestation, resulting in severe soil erosion in the hills and devastating flooding in the Indo-Gangetic plains (Eckholm 1976). While these prognostic scenarios and explanations still inform policy makers in India and China today, they have meanwhile been challenged by a number of studies revealing the value of indigenous knowledge and a more complex picture of environmental change (cf. Blaikie and Muldavin 2004). Stimulated by scholars working in the semi-arid rangelands of Africa (Scoones 1995; Niamir-Fuller 1999), a new scientific agenda for the assessment of mobile land use in the Himalaya gradually prevailed in which the proactive character of pastoral strategies was foregrounded (Nüsser 1996; Saberwal 1999).

Seasonal movements across different altitudinal belts facilitate extensive livestock keeping, and enable people to efficiently manage good fodder and nutritional supplies for their animals. Actual mobility patterns are thereby shaped through negotiation processes in which the diverging interests of local actors as well as external influences and interventions are relevant (Bauer 2004; Kreutzmann 2006). These negotiations are often fuelled by government programmes of



Sources: Comprehensive Atlas of the World (Eleventh Edition). London: Times; General Staff 1:200 000; Georeferenced SRTM-Data; Landsat-Data
Draft and Cartography: M. Gerwin, M. Nüsser, N. Harm

Figure 1. *The high mountain border region of Kumaon*

affirmative action, which are designed to give the ‘weaker sections’ of society, often non-Hindu, a competitive edge. Many pastoral groups seek to achieve recognition from the state by strategically displaying a distinct ethnic identity (Kapila 2008; Shneiderman 2010).

These recent trends of scholarly research inform our case study of the so-called Bhotiyas of Kumaon. In their previous trans-Himalayan trade activities, they kept large flocks of sheep and goats for transporting commodities across high passes into Tibet. Although (geo-)political dynamics had overshadowed the region for a long time, the closure of the Indo-Tibetan border due to war between India and China in 1962 had a particularly dramatic effect on the Bhotiyas’ livelihood situation. They practise combined mountain agriculture (Ehlers and Kreutzmann 2000), consisting of animal husbandry and crop cultivation, as well as the use of biotic resources in different ecological zones, all of which are interdependently linked through seasonal migration (Hoon 1996; Nüsser 2006). This mobility pattern favours the maintenance of livestock by means of reliable grazing resources throughout the year, including crop remnants from harvested fields. However, scholars have so far shown little interest in the cultural factors, such as rituals, that also influence a mobile style

Based on the example of this ‘high mountain border region’ (Bergmann et al. 2008; see Figure 1) we argue that pastoral mobility is an active engagement with historically evolving power relations and highland–lowland dynamics. Our empirical investigation starts with the onset of British colonial rule in Kumaon and discusses the boom, gradual demise, and final breakdown of the trans-Himalayan trade. Following this, we provide a detailed account of the Bhotiyas’ struggle for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. The article closes with an account of more recent developments and an ethnographic description of the present-day village context.¹

Analytical Framework

We scrutinize the proactive character of pastoral mobility along three interrelated dimensions, namely its geographical extent, its discursive context, and the fact that it is best regarded as a kind of embodied practice. It has been widely accepted that the migratory routes of mountain pastoralists are highly variable over time (Montero et al. 2009). Such transformations are linked to politico-economic alterations, which enable or constrain specific movements via shifting regulations for accessing pasture grounds or extracting biotic resources. However, implemented policies also promote discursive representations through which pastoral practices are conceptualized in the public gaze (Gooch 2009). The images produced are constantly negotiated in people’s daily encounters with state authority, for example when paying grazing fees or getting permission to enter a forest. In Kumaon, such effects of government interventions into local practices

of natural resource use have received some attention, though most scholars restricted their perspective to the genealogy of a scientifically grounded forestry in the Lesser Himalaya and largely ignored pastoral groups like the Bhotiyas (Guha 1989; Agrawal 2005a).

Building partly on romantic ideas of peasant oneness with nature, Guha exposes how early punitive guidelines for conservation under British colonial rule interfered heavily with local interests, and triggered long-term resistance. Agrawal further analyses the emergence of state–community partnerships. These endeavours culminated in formally recognized forest councils (*van panchayat*) during the 1930s, which were intended to restore responsibility for forest resources and thereby a more balanced and efficient use of them. Based on a Foucauldian framework of power, Agrawal argues that decentralized and participatory management procedures replaced repressive force with engaging and educative mechanisms of control and compliance. In other words, forest-related rules became implemented, fine tuned and propagated on the ground of disciplinary practice through which resource users shape the embodied techniques and forms of knowledge that guide their behaviour. Agrawal (2005b: 186–87) admits that the ethnographic evidence for this scenario is rather thin, so that he is compelled to give little attention to local cultural logics of communal resource regulation, relying instead on an assumed trans-cultural rationality. This paper contributes towards filling this significant gap in contemporary research by using evidence from rituals and other public performances to analyse mountain pastoralism in one particular context.

Our analysis gives special reference to the multiple scales (from local to global) on which the Bhotiyas became able to position themselves and act effectively. Far from being static, scales are constantly shaped and re-shaped in an ongoing politics about the spatial dimensions structuring social life (Cox 1998). They are therefore understood as contested webs of relations: while '[s]ome people have access to such webs at different levels, or with a wider geographical span, others do not' (Schendel 2005: 10). We regard this terminology as useful, since the Bhotiyas reside close to the Indo-Tibetan border. The basic contours of this border were carved out during colonial times, and left lasting imprints on the relationships between the post-colonial states of India and China, as well as between these states and their borderland communities (Schendel 2007). Relevant examples are the replacement of pre-existing informal institutions by stately sanctioned ones at the village level; the massive extension of official regulations for the use of forests and grasslands into the transversal Himalayan valleys of Kumaon in order to further enhance territorial control at the peripheries; the building of dams and road infrastructure to ensure state development as well as to integrate the region with a nationwide development scheme; and at the scale of international relations, a sealed and militarized border. In what follows, we trace and analyse how the Bhotiyas have positioned themselves along and across such webs in the realization of a mobile lifestyle.

Environmental Configurations: Horizontal and Vertical Zonation of the Kumaon-Himalaya

The Bhotiyas' movements span several ecological zones of the Kumaon Himalaya, each with specific environmental potentials and limitations for crop farming, forest and pasture use (Nüsser 2006; see Figure 2). The narrow belt of the Outer Himalaya (*Bhabar*) arises out of the northern parts of the Gangetic Plains (*Terai*). Up to an altitude of approximately 1,000 m, sub-humid tropical Sal-forests (*Shorea robusta*) are found. The Lesser Himalaya (*Himanchal*) follows as a 70–100 km broad belt in a northerly direction, with altitudes ranging between 1,500 and 3,000 m. In lower parts this zone is covered extensively by *Pinus roxburghii* forests, which often exhibit a herbaceous understorey sustained by intentional burnings. In the vicinity of settlements, most of the available land is terraced and cultivated for double cropping with rice, wheat, millet and various legumes.

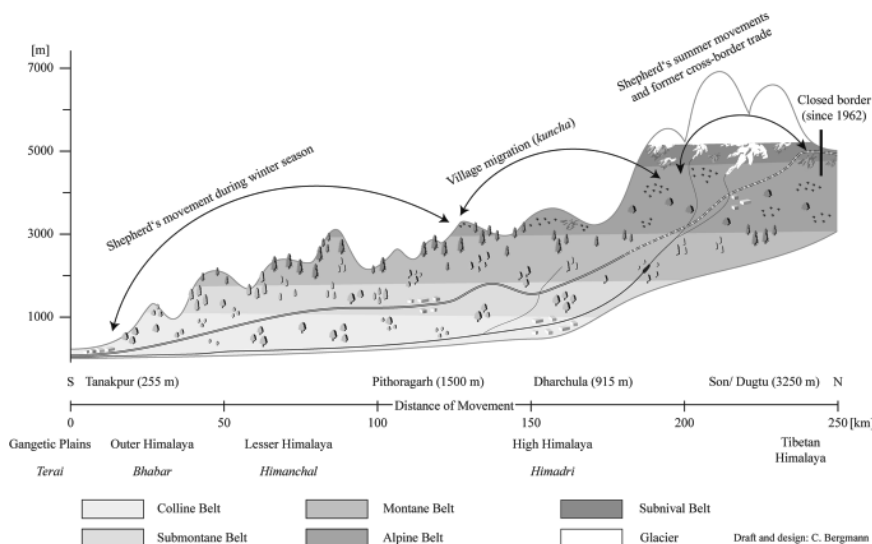


Figure 2. The mobility pattern of the Bhotiyas (Darma Valley)

The adjoining zone of the High Himalaya (*Himadri*) is about 30–50 km wide. Glaciated mountain peaks, of which some exceed an altitude of 7,000 m, dominate the scenery. Its narrow transversal valleys give rise to montane forests where evergreen oaks (*Quercus semecarpifolia*, *Qu. floribunda* and *Qu. leucotrichophora*) alternate with areas dominated by conifers (*Abies spectabilis*, *Cupressus torulosa*) or deciduous trees (*Alnus nepalensis*, *Aesculus indica* and *Acer* spp.) At higher altitudes grasslands are found, which prevail into the Tibetan

Himalaya that form the northernmost part of Kumaon. With relatively wide and shallow valley bottoms, these localities are covered with meadows and dwarf shrubs. These are widely used as summer pastures (*bugyal*).

The Bhotiyas of Uttarakhand, India

The Bhotiyas are an ethnically and culturally heterogeneous community.² They inhabit seven high mountain valleys, all of which are close to international borders in Garhwal and Kumaon, the two administrative divisions and former kingdoms of Uttarakhand. As former trans-Himalayan traders, their ethnicity and livelihood was traditionally associated with the Indo-Tibetan border. Until the Sino-Indian War and the closure of that border in 1962, sheep and goats were extensively reared, especially for transporting goods across passes in the High and Tibetan Himalaya. The Bhotiyas of Kumaon are divided into the Johari and the Rang. The Johari reside in the Gori Valley, whose upper part is referred to as Johar. The Rang split into further subdivisions that are also named according to the valleys they inhabit, namely the Byansi (Byans Valley), Chaudansi (Chaudans Valley), and Darmani (Darma Valley). Our analysis gives special emphasis to the Johari and Darmani, whose lower settlements are located around the now urbanized centres of Munsiri and Dharchula. The languages spoken by them belong to the Tibeto-Burman family (Grierson 1909: 479–529; Willis 2007). However, most people are multilingual and also fluent in Hindi, Pahari³ and Nepali.

Politics of Scale in a High Mountain Border Region

Imaginations of Mobility and Shifting Routes of Seasonal Migration

Before the onset of British colonial rule, a regional power structure was defined by interactions between the kings and aristocrats of Kumaon, Tibet and Nepal, who continuously aimed to extend their spheres of influence (Joshi and Brown 1987). Following the invasion of Kumaon and Garhwal by the Gorkhas in 1790, the area was brought to the fore of British strategic calculations (see Figure 3). The defeat of the Gorkhas in 1815 gave them their first direct access to the Indo-Tibetan border (Gill 2000). At the onset of colonial rule in Kumaon, the Bhotiya trade was delimited to the barter of locally needed products, such as grain, salt, cloth and wool (Raper 1812: 497–98, 530; Moorcroft 1818: 399–400), while the more lucrative long-distance trade in pashmina wool, a raw material for Kashmiri shawls, was exclusively traded through middlemen in Ladakh (Lamb 1986: 44).

From the beginning of their administration, the British were aware that an involvement in the trans-Himalayan trade was crucial for advancing colonial development. For them, the high mountain border region of Kumaon represented above all a gateway to the geopolitically and economically significant centres in

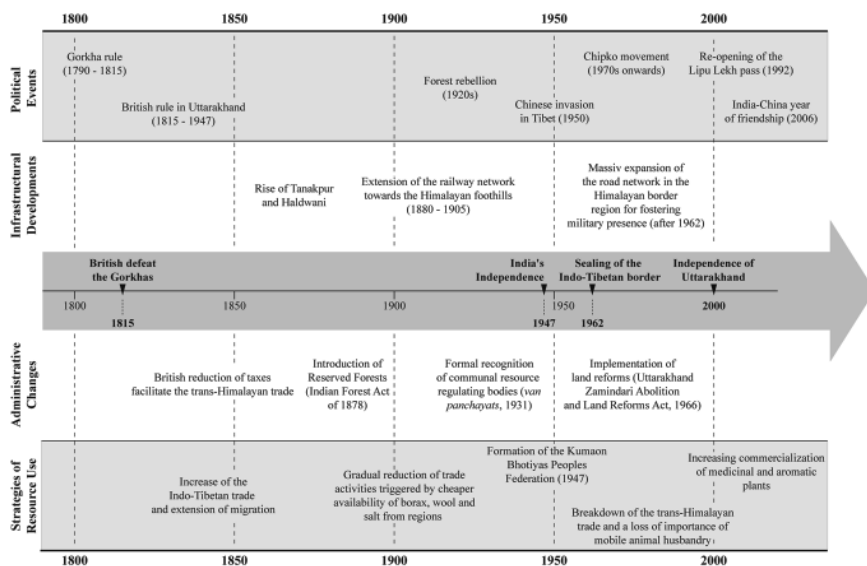


Figure 3: *Timeline of important historical events and alterations in Kumaon*

Tibet and Central Asia (Moorcroft and Trebeck 1837: xvii; Lamb 1986: 40). Until then, British attempts to access Tibet had been rather unsuccessful due to various diplomatic obstacles, as well as to the hostility of local residents. The Bhotiyas who ‘are known to travel freely without molestation in countries far beyond the British frontier’ (Montgomerie 1868: 129) were considered by leading administrators to be important brokers for channelling and furthering colonial ambitions.⁴ In return, and in order to facilitate a ‘free and unshackled trade’ (Kumaon Division 1843), only minimal taxes were levied on them – both in comparison to other groups in the region and to the sums collected by the former Chand and Gorkha rulers (Traill 1832: 31; Batten 1851: 219–220). This strategy became clearly visible after the Dogras of Jammu, British rivals allied with the Sikh kingdom, invaded Western Tibet in 1841. The temporary closure of Tibetan markets led to considerable losses among the Bhotiyas and stimulated the British to foster their relationship with them by making further tax allowances. These were meant to strengthen a ‘good feeling’ towards the British government that local traders should then ‘communicate ... to the Taklakote authorities’ (Kumaon Division 1842) in Tibet, emphasizing the beneficial effects of colonial rule at the periphery of empire.

A rapid increase in trade volumes, particularly for wool, occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century (Sherring 1906: 140). The quantity of this trade item transported through the high valleys of Kumaon rose from approximately 800 kg in 1841 to more than 330,000 kg in the year 1901 (Goudge 1903). The

boost was linked to the dynamics of the colonial economy, particularly the emergence of industrialized production processes in the wool mills of the Gangetic Plains (Roy 2003: 271–72). While the Bhotiyas had initially sold imported goods mostly in Almora and Bageshwar in the Lesser Himalaya, they gradually began to bargain directly with middlemen of such mills in Haldwani and Tanakpur (Walton 1911: 69). The extension of the railway network during the 1880s further transformed these towns, which are located in the transition zone of the Himalayan foothills to the Gangetic Plains. As railheads, they became the most important market centres of Kumaon (Goudge 1903).

Instead of grazing their flocks of sheep and goats in the vicinity of the lower settlements at the margins of the High Himalaya during winter (Traill 1832: 11–12), the Bhotiyas then integrated the more far-away forests and pastures with these evolving market places. Grazing tracts had to be shared with other groups, who also came down during the cold season (Forest Department 1889). At the time of migration, the grass cover of the *Pinus roxburghii* forests in the Lesser Himalaya provided sufficient fodder resources. Moreover, shepherds negotiated customary agreements with sedentary farmers in order to graze their animals on harvested fields in return for fertilizing manure and the sale of dairy products. The Johari in particular acquired huge tracts of cultivable land around Bageshwar, Thal and Munsiri. While members of this group came to rank as superior landholders and tax collectors (*zamindars*) of the region, a rather different scenario followed for the Rang. A major reason for this discrepancy relates to the Rajwars from Askot.⁵ These local aristocrats held proprietary rights in village land and harshly controlled its distribution, to the disadvantage of these easternmost Bhotiya groups (Walton 1911: 211–12).

In the meantime, British perceptions were influenced by a shifting politics of the crown, which aimed at defining and securing scientifically mapped state borders as well as environmental boundaries in the interior (Barrow 2003). This resulted in the gradual enclosure of the Bhotiyas' movements within complex institutional and administrative arrangements. These trends were related to emerging demands in natural resources, especially timber, for intensified railway construction. After the Indian Forest Act had been established in 1878, large tracts of the forests around Haldwani and Tanakpur were demarcated as 'Reserved' (Guha 1989: 44).

During the 1890s the British introduced further regulations to directly act on migratory patterns, such as the installation of officially sanctioned halting places (*paraos*) in the Lesser Himalaya. At these intermediate spots, stays were restricted to a maximum of three days, while the allotted grazing tracts near the market centres of the foothills remained accessible only from December to February for a fee of six *annas*⁶ per animal (Forest Department 1898). Although the colonial administration still emphasized the Bhotiyas' vital role for the trans-Himalayan trade, their mobility was increasingly defined as maladaptive and harmful (Forest Department 1905; Dangwal 2009). It was, for instance,

considered responsible for their disregard of operative regulations, since '[t]he absence of any control over them has in a way spoilt them and they seem to have very little respect for authority. The wandering life they lead ... encourages lawless habits' (Political Department 1895). This perspective formed part of the administrative discourse within the British colonial machinery, which generally depicted pastoral groups as disturbing factors within an economically motivated rhetoric of nature conservation (cf. Leach and Mearns 1996; Rajan 2006).

In the Kumaon Himalaya the implementation of scientific forestry was driven by an ever-increasing demand for timber products by the British. Between 1910 and 1917 the administration heavily extended the area sanctioned by strict rules for grazing and resource extraction until approximately 4,500 sq km fell under the category of 'Reserved Forest' (Forest Department 1921). This brought the areas around Munsiri and Dharchula under direct control of the Forest Department. The Kumaoni population resisted these developments in a famous and often-described rebellion (Guha 1989; Agrawal 2005a), in which the Bhotiyas participated by intentionally ignoring rules imposed by the colonial authorities. As a direct consequence, the total area of restricted forests was again reduced (Forest Department 1934). Moreover, after the submission of several petitions to senior officials of the colonial government, the grazing tax too was finally abolished in 1938 (Mittal 1986: 229). However, the gradual decline of the trans-Himalayan trade set the greatest challenge to the Bhotiyas' mobility.

Tincal (raw borax), a mineral from the saline lakes of Central Tibet that was utilized by colonial and European porcelain industries, had already become uncompetitive during the second half of the nineteenth century. Reasons included the discovery of new deposits in other parts of the world, as well as the development of chemical processes for producing borax (Brown 1984: 117–19; Spengen 2000: 101). From the 1920s onwards, Tibetan wool was then successively replaced by cheap imports from Europe and Australia (Roy 2003: 258–59). In addition, also the import of non-borate salts became less significant due to the availability of cheap sea salt from the coastal areas of India (Fürer-Haimendorf 1975: 62).

In the course of these developments the main commercial routes to Tibet shifted eastwards, linking Sikkim with the ports of Bengal (Foreign Department 1947). The situation further worsened for the Bhotiyas because of a widespread outbreak of animal diseases among their flocks during the 1940s, and intensifying political disputes in Tibet that distorted the traditional modes of trade following the Chinese invasion in 1950 (Patterson 1962). This challenged them to reorient their mobile livelihoods in order to cope with the drastically altering prospects of their borderland. Older people from Munsiri report that the most visible change was a dramatic increase in field cropping, rather than collecting a portion of the harvest as landlords from tenant farmers.

The Closure of the Indo-Tibetan Border: Reorienting Mobile Livelihood

Towards the end of colonial rule the Johari elites had envisaged a firm integration in regional caste society by dismantling their own cultural distinctiveness. In contrast to the British administration's classification of the Bhotiyas as a 'Mongoloid border tribe', they tried to promote and justify the idea of originally being high-caste *Rajput*-immigrants from the Indian plains (Atkinson 1882: 111–15; Srivastava 1966: 204). When commercial activities with the Tibetans had lost significance for the reasons outlined above, the Johari reoriented and, as a political strategy, deployed the tribal category.

Soon after India's independence the Kumaon Bhotiya Peoples' Federation (KBPF) was established as a unified political organ vis-à-vis emerging state structures and the ever more pervasive policies of affirmative action propagated by the Indian Government, creating various benefits for marginal groups. Although representatives from other valleys were actively involved, the Johari clearly dominated. In their first memorandum of 1947, the federation had defined 'Bhotiya' as a backward community that demanded special statutory safeguards to 'promote economic welfare, and social and cultural uplift' (KBPF 1947: 18). When the administration began looking for possible Scheduled Tribe (ST) candidates, the Bhotiya leaders instantly sought to have the Bhotiyas placed on the list. The arguments put forward for recognition laid emphasis on their 'primitiveness' and 'disadvantage' as a mobile group of traders dwelling in an otherwise unproductive region between Tibetan Buddhist and Hindu influence. Claims for regaining unrestricted access to forests and grasslands formed an integral part of this strategy. The Bhotiya elites clearly anticipated a further reduction of trade, and conflicts over land that they presumed would come along with this.

Yet, seasonal migration had already lost its significance, especially among the Johari. Milam, the largest of all Bhotiya settlements at the upper end of their valley, recorded a reduction from six hundred households in the 1930s (Pant 1935: 240) to three hundred in 1950 (Murray 1951). Growth in sedentary agriculture in the vicinity of the winter settlements was accompanied by an increase in cattle at the cost of sheep and goats (KBPF 1947; GoU 2003). However, the 'Kumaon and Uttarakhand Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act' of 1960, which aimed at the transfer of land for crop farming to the actual cultivators, negatively affected the land-holding Johari (Prasad 1989: 71, 113–16). Many families lost access to pastures in the foothills and Lesser Himalaya, as well as property to appointed tenant farmers in the lower settlements. Particularly around Munsiri, the redistribution of land was partially compensated by strategic reinvestments and quasi-transfers of leased land to non-landholding relatives.

After the war between India and China in 1962, the Bhotiya elites invested even more effort into obtaining official ST recognition until they finally succeeded in 1967. This guaranteed them quota-access to universities, government service and the legislature, along with other privileges. By opting for ST status,

they had intentionally positioned themselves at the margins of caste society. At the same time this 'jump' to the national scale (Smith 1993) facilitated their access to the class-ridden spheres of power and wealth across various administrative levels. In this context, non-agriculture employment in the administrative centres of Uttar Pradesh, the then federal state to which the Kumaon region had become aggregated, became feasible opportunities for a growing section of educated Bhotiyas.

However, one of the gravest forms of Indian state intervention after the border closure was the large military road-building programme, which opened up the lower parts of all the Bhotiya valleys in Kumaon (Rawat and Sharma 1997). Furthermore, the Indian Government promoted the building of schools and the implementation of a decentralized administrative structure (Nautiyal et al. 2003). These policies facilitated the further development of Munsiri and Dharchula into densely populated administrative and educational centres. In the meantime, the trend of giving up seasonal migration to the upper valleys accelerated. In the Gori Valley, the number of migrating villagers declined from 673 in 1971 to 229 in 2001 (GoI 1973; 2003). In the uppermost settlement Milam, only eighteen households were counted in 2004 (Nüsser 2006: 20), while non-Bhotiya groups from villages around Munsiri as well as from other parts of Kumaon increasingly utilized the high altitude pastures of the valley. They were obliged to pay fees, levied by the respective *van panchayats*, which were exclusively ruled by the migrating Johari.

In the easternmost valleys of the Rang, the decline in seasonal migration took place at a slower pace. In the Darma Valley it reduced from 2,674 people in 1961 to 1,210 in 2001 (GoI 1966; 2003). Especially due to their geographical vicinity to Nepal, this group remained in control of alternative and economically reasonable pastoral routes. Far-western Nepal remained quite undeveloped in infrastructure until the late 1980s, so that large flocks provided a perpetual source of income as transport animals, even after the closure of the Indo-Tibetan border. The relative lack of arable land in the winter settlements around Dharchula was another important factor in this regard. Moreover, following first negotiations between India and China, new hopes for an economic recovery of their migratory routes were awakened with the re-opening of the Lipu Lekh pass in the Byans Valley in 1992.⁷

The Indian Government then took a more confident policy towards its controversial border with China, and this confidence increasingly guides the actions of the regional administration and private investors (Mohan 2007). The removal of the so-called Inner Line regulation in most parts of the Bhotiya valleys in the early 1990s is one sign of this process. Until then, strict controls on access due to security concerns inhibited economic development, including the nascent tourist industry (Statesman 1981), and local residents frequently complained about this. In the upper Bhotiya valleys things changed even more

rapidly, when the 27th independent state of Uttarakhand (named Uttaranchal until 2006) was carved out from Uttar Pradesh in 2000.

Dynamics at the Margin: The Multiplicity of Change

For decades the high mountain border region of Kumaon formed the outermost part of the most densely populated and lowland-dominated Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, whose government regularly ignored demands coming from these peripheries. Only after independence did a regional development agenda gain importance (Rangan 2004).⁸ The succeeding administrations aimed at combining market-based approaches with a mountain policy, of which hydro-energy, tourism and medicinal plant extraction became the most important building blocks (Garhwal Post 2009). Moreover, the whole state profits from the Border Area Development Program that promotes investments in infrastructure, education and agriculture (Tribune 2009). Examples include the ongoing extension of asphalted roads and telecommunication facilities into the high valleys. While many of these interventions vitalize life in the summer settlements, they also interact with complex negotiations and practices on the ground.

This was illustrated following the annual general meeting of the Bhotiyas, held in Dharchula in April 2008. After discussions of current prospects among community leaders and with state officials, the large number of spectators eagerly awaited the cultural competition between dance groups of the various valleys. The dancers coming from the Mana and Niti Valley in Garhwal received the most intense public acclaim. Their performance centred on the trans-Himalayan trade, particularly on the relationship with Tibetan business partners (*mitra*). Under British rule the Bhotiyas had popularized the half-truth that the Tibetans regard commensal relations as a necessary requirement for commerce, and that Hindu traders had therefore to disregard Hindu rules about touch pollution and beef eating (Srivastava 1966). Besides reasons of logistical feasibility and language competence, this kept potential Paharicompetitors even more effectively away, thus strengthening the traders' monopoly. Nevertheless, the ethnonym 'Bhotiya' still carries these stereotypic and negative connotations, and is therefore 'not liked by the various communities to whom it is applied' (Tolia 2010: 50). The dance group reinscribed and reorganized the apparent tension transmitted by the tribal etiquette in various scenes that were elucidated by the following sequences spoken in Hindi:

Finally the long waiting has come to an end. The day of our reunion across the border of two countries is looming. Two cultures will come together and two friends will share their feelings. But what kind of meeting is this? Though it is a commercial activity, the whole affair is less about the exchange of commodities than about the exchange of feelings. The Tibetan trade is all about this! The Tibetan trade is all about this!

Listen friends, next year we will meet you again!' With this promise our traders come back. They face the strong winds and the dust on the way to the Niti-Mana Valley, on the way to the Niti-Mana Valley. When the traders return to their village safely, they spread happiness and joy among the people. Men and women, young and elderly, everyone becomes excited. They are all wondering what the traders might have brought for them: is it a headdress, an anklet, or some necklace?

The constant blowing of the wind, the twittering of birds, the sound of the rivers and the roaring of fountain-like waterfalls, it seems that all creation has come to a halt. We have noticed that time is not in favour of our fortune, of our prosperity and our trading activities. Commerce stopped and our economy is tumbling. What will happen to the next generation? What will happen now? What will happen now? Think about it, friends! What will happen now? What will happen now?

Though a border limits our culture, we are still willing to exchange feelings. Friends, the desire to meet you is still alive in our hearts! Yet we know that the Tibetan trade has been engraved on the pages of history like a bygone event.

But there is hope that on these pages of history our trade and our emotional exchange only pause for breath. These former events might rise, when the course of history changes side again. Please forgive us, friends, that for the moment we are unable to keep our promise of meeting you. We are unable to keep this promise; we are unable to keep it; we are unable to keep it!

In the literature, the meeting of the trade partners has been interpreted in accord with the rejected stereotype: as a sharing of each other's religious practices (Prasad 1989: 57). However, rather than emphasizing religious sentiments, the actors appropriated a scale of exclusion, a closed border that makes it impossible to keep a culturally substantial and economically significant promise, in order to foreground a tribal identity as being intimately linked to the bygone days of trade as well as to some traditional faculties that legitimize control over the most lucrative movements and activities in the high mountain border region. Present constellations are in fact likely to be constructed and reconstructed along such powerful images of the past. This is indicated, for example, in the context of the state-regulated use of biotic resources. Especially the Johari around Munsiri have shown great skills in balancing regional politics in their favour. Ever since large tracts of the forest and grassland areas utilized by the Bhotiyas were turned into community-based resource regulating units (*van panchayats*) during the late 1960s and 1970s, they made their voice heard better than those of other tribal as well as non-tribal competitors within the participatory framework established by government authorities.

These legal instruments are also relevant with regard to the use of medicinal and aromatic plants, which have received growing attention over the last years, leading to a significant increase of commercialized extraction and legal farming.

Besides *Aconitum heterophyllum* (*atis*) and *Picrorhiza kurroa* (*kutki*), which are collected between August and November, especially *Cordyceps sinensis* (*kida*), a fungus that grows on a caterpillar larva, is of particular interest. This species is extensively gathered from May to July and then sold at wildly fluctuating rates ranging from Indian Rupees (INR) 200,000 to 700,000 (approx. USD 3,200 to 15,000) per kilogram to middlemen in the markets of Munsiri and Dharchula, with an estimated yearly trade volume of 150–250 kg in the former and 250–350 kg in the latter location. The collection of this lucrative item widely contributes to household income, ranging from INR 15,000 (approx. USD 335) to far more than INR 50,000 (approx. USD 1,125) per annum.

While the cultivation of medicinal plants, especially *Allium stracheyi* (*jambu*) and *Carum carvi* (*thoya*) is strongly supported by the Uttarakhand Government, regulating the extraction of *C. sinensis* proved rather difficult. Particularly in Dharchula, the reliance on unregulated market channels created major legal problems for local collectors and external buyers alike. Only in September 2010 did the Uttarakhand Government, under pressure from local political leaders, officially authorize the *van panchayats* to intervene in this crucial matter (GoU 2010). At the same time, the Bhotiya community launched local campaigns for including the lucrative fungus in the list of officially approved Indo-Tibetan trade items through the Lipu Lekh pass.

During the period in which *C. sinensis* is harvested, the population in the upper valleys increases by approximately one-third. This ‘gold rush’ has resulted in new patterns, where people join the summer settlements for only a few weeks or months. Yet the resulting temporary alliances partially compensate for the labour shortage during periods of planting, harvesting and wool shearing. Even though only 15–35 per cent of the available cropland is currently cultivated in the Darma villages, more than 80 per cent of the migrating households invest in agriculture. The main seasonal crops are different varieties of buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* and *F. tataricum*), barley and potato, as well as legumes, which are all mostly cultivated for subsistence.

While heavily reduced in number, sheep and goat rearing is still the largest and most profitable component of animal husbandry. At present, local villagers own approximately 4,000–4,500 animals. People often merge their flocks until a suitable size (from 250–450) is reached, and this *toli* (herd of sheep and goats) is then looked after by a shepherd who is hired on contract. Some of these shepherds also bring their own animals to the upper pastures of the valley. During the winter months, wool processing is still a primary occupation, even though the household economy is often sustained through income generated by (non-migrating) members working outside the agrarian sector. While the traditional woolen industries attracted little attention from external actors (Prasad 1989: 118–22), these activities also gain some new support by a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating around Munsiri and Dharchula.

Ritualized Movements: Reconsidering Seasonal Mobility

This re-evaluation of seasonal mobility in terms of livelihood opportunities is also reflected in a revival of mobility-related ritual practices. Currently, the main rituals of the upper Darma Valley show how even urban-dwelling community members still associate themselves with a mobile lifestyle. During these rituals certain trees are carried from a lower forest to people's villages of residence over distances of up to 15 km. The trees, either conifers (e.g. *Abies spectabilis*) or birches (*Betula jacquemontii*), are installed as prayer-flag poles that are locally known as *alam*. While they grace every house as well as all major places of worship, the two most noticeable ones are always located at the main village temple.

These huge poles are first installed before sowing, in May, for the god *Gabla Sai*, who is regarded as the divine ruler and protector of the Darma Valley. In June they are exchanged – at regular intervals, currently of four to twelve years – as part of a ceremony for *Syang Sai*, a deity worshipped in all three valleys of the Rang. After a last spectacle has taken place at the time of harvest in mid-September, when a ritual for *Su-Ringding*, the god of the land, is performed, the trees are finally removed and stored on the temple's roof for the coming year. In what follows we selectively describe and analyse only the second ritual, namely the *alam* exchange in *Syang Sai*'s name.

'Syang' means 'great' or 'major' and 'Sai' means 'God'. Accordingly, *Syang Sai* is often depicted as *Mahadev*, or more particularly as the Hindu god *Shiva*. Planning for the major ritual event of exchanging his *alams* starts early and under the guidance of committees established particularly for such purposes. All village members are expected to participate, especially those who reside elsewhere in India or abroad, since this is one of the very rare occasions for getting together in one's 'native' village. The number of attendees even in a small village like Son, presently with eleven migrating families, easily exceeds 250 people.

When the ritual was observed in that village in June 2009,⁹ the main event began in the early morning, when the ritual specialist cut a young fir. He tied a white piece of cloth (*daja*) to the tree and sprinkled some grains of rice on it. Through this common practice (*daja chimo*) the fir was transformed into a ritual object classified as *dhukshing* (Photo 1). After a sheep was sacrificed within the temple, and in the presence of all male village members, people of both sexes slowly gathered in front of *Syang Sai*'s *alams*. Eventually they began to dance in a long row towards the lower entrance of Son. This style of dancing (*choliya*) is common on many occasions that require an orchestrated movement away from or towards the village centre, especially for the reception and farewell of important village guests or relatives. Led by the ritual specialist carrying his *dhukshing*, and accompanied by a small group of low-caste musicians, the alternating male and female dancers only halted after they had reached the main footpath of the valley below Son proper. From there the male participants proceeded alone towards the next lower village, Baling, where they again lined up to dance proudly past its residents.



Photo 1. *Ritual specialist carrying the dhukshing*

The final destination was a nearby forest patch with particularly large firs. Although the area forms part of Baling, some of the upper villages hold usufructs – obtained through kinship relations – to extract the forest resources required for these ceremonies. Before the villagers proceeded into the forest to pick out suitable trees, the ritual specialist exchanged his small fir (*dhukshing*) on the fringe. For that purpose he cut a tree of similar size, fixed a small piece of white cloth (*daja*) on it and put the old one aside as to remain clearly visible for any passer-by on the wayside. Within a short time, people then cut down two towering trees, which they thoroughly stripped of bark except for their fruit bearing crowns. Especially since only two persons are permitted to shoulder them at the same time, the homeward journey was by far the most demanding part of the whole ceremony. While earlier ritual movements had been publicly displayed as an elegant dance, they now turned into a parade of physical bodily strength. Only by relieving each other every few minutes were they able to navigate their heavy loads safely on difficult terrain.

When the party was about to pass Baling, the residents of that village welcomed them warmly, applied auspicious marks to people's foreheads and served a quick meal along with liquor to their guests, who individually reciprocated with small amounts of money.¹⁰ This mode of exchange (*chyaitan*)



Photo 2. *Women during the ceremony*

happens in every village that has to be crossed along with the *alams*. When they finally reached the lower entrance of Son, their arrival was celebrated even more joyously than before, as male and female villagers danced together again, behind the *alams*, towards the main temple. Having reached it, the women grouped themselves in a half circle (Photo 2). While their male counterparts first removed the old (*alam kenya*) and then installed the new *alams* (*alam chumo*), they continuously spread rice and circulated white pieces of cloth with their hands. Both gestures are supposed to encourage the god accepting and occupying his new seat. The exchange (*alam sammo*) was complete when the ritual specialist put his small fir (*dhukshing*) in *Syang Sai*'s shrine and purified the temple's roof with spring water and cow urine (Photo 3). On the following day a meal was sponsored at the temple to which relatives from all over the valley were invited.

The performance describes a ritualized movement that is clustered around biotic resources of scarce distribution in higher altitudes: massive tree trunks. Radcliffe-Brown (1922) once famously suggested that the prominence of such 'natural' objects in rituals reflect their functional-technical importance for a society, including their particular value as a resource. Such values bind the individual members of a society, and rituals facilitate the communication and conservation of corresponding interests in a standardized symbolic form. Such an



Photo 3. *The installed alams*

interpretation seems at first glance to be appropriate here because firs are widely required as construction materials and the pressure on forest resources was more intense in earlier times. Besides densely populated villages, a respectable number of Tibetan nomads also interfered (Lamb 1989: 362–86). In the uppermost part of the Darma Valley descendants of these nomads still own the land where a major camp was formerly located. Although nowadays settled elsewhere in India, they regularly come back to their ancestral place and organize similar events that form part of the *alam* system.¹¹

However, for the ongoing significance and attractiveness of the *alam* exchange as *the* major communal village event, there are other reasons as well. People themselves lay emphasis on the distinct experience of performing the ritual, particularly of carrying the heavy trees over a respectable distance. This kinesthetic dimension involves a kind of ‘muscular consciousness’ (Ingold 2011: 47) that becomes manifest with the installed *alams* and propagates masculine strength and potency among a (re-)united village community. It allows even the participating urban dwellers to identify with the hardship of pastoral life, which is generally perceived as a crucial ingredient of one’s cultural identity. However, this positive attitude goes hand in hand with rather sceptical assessments. As a non-migrating informant from village Sipu put it: ‘The *alams* should not be

exchanged every year. This wouldn't be good from an environmental point of view (*paryavaran ki drishti*) ... Moreover, in one village at least fifty green trees are being cut for worshipping the family gods. If it continues that way, we will be most responsible for a spoiled environment.'

While Agrawal's (2005a) notion of 'environmentality' foregrounds the techniques that shape people's awareness for the conditions of the forests they use, his approach leaves rather unspecified the forms of regulation that are practised without state recognition, such as the *alam* system. Until now, the forest councils as well as other legal institutions in the Darma Valley are not detached from but rather entwined with this pre-existing mode of communal forestry. The ritualized movements not only prompt people to think about and monitor important resource deposits but also enable them to experience a sense of political belonging. Powerful deities who control a mosaic of spatial units, ranging from the household to the entire Rang territory, mediate this experience. As such, the *alam* system is as much related to struggles over resources as to the formation of identities. Both are negotiated when travelling along the routes of a contested geographical area.

Concluding Remarks

In this article we aimed to expose the character of pastoral mobility in a high mountain border region. Classic approaches on the topic either highlighted the processes of adaptation to external influences or emphasized the ideological currents that sanction certain livelihood patterns from the inside. However, the movements of pastoral groups as well as the meanings and experiences attributed to the fact of pastoral mobility are not fixed, but subject to dynamic negotiations. These negotiations are occasioned as much by the efforts of state actors as by the strategies of people on the ground. The case of the Bhotiyas illustrates how a high level of mobility was convincingly emphasized and lastingly transformed into a claim on special statutory safeguards. Even though many families became settled or assumed occupations outside the agrarian sector, seasonal migration has not yet lost its significance. It rather continues to be reshaped in a politics that is informed by new politico-economic opportunities and socio-cultural aspirations across scales.

Acknowledgments

We are very grateful to the people from the Gori Valley and Darma Valley for their hospitality and for taking the time to participate in the research process. We are also obliged to M. Viridi, E. Theophilus, K. Ramnarayan and G. Pande, who have accompanied and supported our endeavour from the early beginnings. For

comments on earlier drafts of this paper we further appreciate the efforts of J. Dame, A. Wagner and two anonymous reviewers. We would also like to thank S. Krätli for his efforts and suggestions that contributed to improving our arguments. Of course, the responsibility for the final version rests completely with the authors. We are indebted to the Landesgraduiertenförderung Baden-Württemberg that provided an individual scholarship for Christoph Bergmann during a first long-term fieldtrip, and to the German Research Foundation (DFG) for their generous grant for the ongoing project 'Changing Strategies of Resource Use: The "Bhotiyas" in the High Mountain Border Region of Uttarakhand, India' (NU 102/10-1), since February 2010.

Notes

1. This study is based upon various phases of field research that have been conducted individually as well as jointly by the authors from 2007 onwards. The duration of field trips ranged between 4 weeks and 15 months. The interdisciplinary data assessment for the present paper included participant observation, semi-structured interviews with local informants and government authorities, a questionnaire survey, as well as translations and analyses of recorded audio and visual materials. Historical sources were surveyed in the regional archives of Uttarakhand and in the Uttar Pradesh State Archive, as well as in the in the Asia and Africa Department of the British Library.
2. We are aware of the set of problems related to the term 'Bhotiya' (Nawa 2000), but nevertheless will retain it for making general statements, not least because it is the official designation and a regional term of reference.
3. Pahari literally means 'of or belonging to the mountains' and commonly refers to the major Hindu hill populations in Nepal and India. These people speak Indo-European languages that are also classified by this term.
4. The British even recruited a small number of people, mainly from Milam in the upper Gori Valley, who were sent across the Tibetan border to secretly conduct route surveys and collect information on various non-cartographic issues (Waller 1999).
5. Rajwar was the official title of the ruling powers in the Askot principality near Dharchula. They are considered as descendants of the medieval Katyuri kings of Kumaon, though their feudality became tributary to the Chand kingdom.
6. Sixteen *annas* equal one Indian Rupee.
7. Currently approximately 40 trade permits are issued per year. The main exported goods are agricultural products, hardware and cosmetics, whereas wool, animals, garments and electrical items are imported.
8. The long struggle for independence exhibits continuities with the forest rebellion of the 1920s and with the Chipko movement in the 1970s and 1980s (Linkenbach 2007).
9. Christoph Bergmann documented the performance.
10. See Sax (1991: 42) for similar ritual markings (*pithaim*) among the Pahari. In this case, however, the hosts give food and money to their ritual guests.

11. The British referred to this settlement of the 'Darma Khampas' as 'Khimling'. The presence of such prayer-flag poles was even reported in the major trade marts of Western Tibet (Sherring 1906: 86–87).

References

- Agrawal, A. 2005a. *Environmentality. Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- 2005b. 'Environmentality. Community, Intimate Government, and the Making of Environmental Subjects in Kumaon, India', *Current Anthropology* 46(2): 161–90
- and V.K. Saberwal. 2004. 'Wither South Asian Pastoralism? An Introduction', *Nomadic Peoples* 8(2): 36–53.
- Atkinson, E.T. 1996 [1882]. *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, Volume II, Part I. Natraj Publishers, Dehra Dun [originally published under the title 'The Himalayan Districts of the North Western Provinces of India'].
- Barrow, I.J. 2003. *Making History, Drawing Territory: British Mapping in India, c. 1756–1905*. Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- Batten, J.H. 1851. 'Final Report on the Settlement of Kumaon, 1848'. In *Official Reports on the Province of Kumaon with a Medical Report on the Mahamurree in Gurhwal, in 1849–1850*, ed. J.H. Batten. Secundra Orphan Press, Agra, pp. 258–356.
- Bauer, K.M. 2004. *Dolpo and the Changing World of Himalayan Pastoralists*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Bergmann, C., M. Gerwin, M. Nüsser and W.S. Sax. 2008. 'Living in a High Mountain Border Region: The Case of the 'Bhotiyas' of the Indo-Chinese Border Region', *Journal of Mountain Science* 5(3): 122–29.
- Blaikie, P.M. and J.S.S. Muldavin. 2004. 'Upstream, Downstream, India, China: The Politics of Environment in the Himalayan Region', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94(3): 520–48.
- Brown, C.W. 1984. *The Goat is Mine, the Load is Yours: Morphogenesis of 'Bhotiya-Shauka', U.P., India*. Studies in Social Anthropology, Lund.
- Cox, K.R. 1998. 'Spaces of Dependence, Spaces of Engagement and the Politics of Scale, or: Looking for Local Politics', *Political Geography* 17(1): 1–23.
- Dangwal, D.D. 2009. 'The Lost Mobility: Pastoralism and Modernity in Uttarakhand Himalaya (India)', *Nomadic Peoples* 13(2): 84–101.
- Eckholm, E.P. 1976. *Losing Ground: Environmental Stress and World Food Prospects*. McLeod, Toronto.
- Ehlers, E. and H. Kreutzmann. 2000. 'High Mountain Ecology and Economy. Potential and Constraints'. In *High Mountain Pastoralism in Northern Pakistan*, eds. E. Ehlers and H. Kreutzmann. Steiner, Stuttgart, pp. 9–36.
- Foreign Department. 1947. Annual Report of the British Trade Agent, Gartok. PS/12/4209 *Wool Trade 25th Feb. 1942 – 30th Jun. 1947*. India Office Records of the British Library, London.

- Forest Department. 1889. Damage Caused to Forests and Grazing Land by Sheep and Goats. 59/1880-1893, Box 118, Collectorate Office Records. Regional Archives Kumaon, Nainital.
- . 1898. Grazing of Bhutia Sheep and Goats in the Forests of the Kumaon Civil Division. 12/1896-1897, Box 62, Commissioner Office Records. Regional Archives Kumaon, Nainital.
- . 1905. Petition Received from Certain Bhotias Complaining of the Insufficiency of Grazing near Ramnagar, dated 25 April 1905. 61/1903-1907, Box 147, Commissioner Office Records. Regional Archives Kumaon, Nainital.
- . 1921. Annual Progress Report of Forest Administration in the United Provinces for the Period April 1, 1921 to March 31, 1922. V/24/1332 United Provinces, Forest Department: Progress Report of Forest Administration in the United Provinces, 1918/19-1924/25. India Office Records, London.
- . 1934. Annual Progress Report of Forest Administration in the United Provinces for the Period April 1, 1933 to March 31, 1934. V/24/1334 United Provinces, Forest Department: Progress Report of Forest Administration in the United Provinces, 1933/34-1936/37. India Office Records, London.
- Fürer-Haimendorf, C. von. 1975. *Himalayan Traders: Life in Highland Nepal*. Cox & Wyman Ltd., London.
- Garhwal Post. 2009. *Nishank Briefs IFAD President on State's Development*, 26.11.2009.
- Gill, B.G. 2000. 'India's Trade with Tibet: Early British Attempts', *The Tibet Journal* 25(4): 78–82.
- GoI [Government of India]. 1966. *Census of India 1961*. Manager of Publication, Delhi.
- . 1973. *Census of India 1971*. Contr. of Publication, Delhi.
- . 2003. *Census of India 2001. District Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand*. Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Delhi.
- Gooch, P. 2009. 'Victims of Conservation or Rights as Forest Dwellers: Van Gujjar Pastoralists between Contesting Codes of Law', *Conservation and Society* 7(4): 239–48.
- GoU [Government of Uttarakhand] 2003. *Livestock Survey for the Tehsil Munsiri, 2001*. Veterinary Department for the District Pithoragarh (unpublished).
- GoU [Government of Uttarakhand] 2010. *Government Order 98-PA/8-3[2]*. Forest Department of Uttarakhand, Dehra Dun (unpublished).
- Goudge, J.E. 1903. *Almora: Final Report on the Assessment of the Almora District and the Hill Patis of the Naini Tal District*. V/27/314/643. India Office Records, London.
- Grierson, G.A. 1909. *Linguistic Survey of India*, Volume III, Part I. Superintendent of Government Printing Press, Calcutta.
- Guha, R. 1989. *The Unquiet Woods. Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*. Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- Hoon, V. 1996. *Living on the Move: Bhotiyas of the Kumaon Himalayas*. Sage, London.
- Ingold, T. 2011. *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. Routledge, London.
- Joshi, M.P. and C.W. Brown. 1987. 'Some Dynamics of Indo-Tibetan Trade through Uttarakhand (Kumaon-Garhwal), India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 30(3): 303–17.

- Kapila, K. 2008. 'The Measure of a Tribe: The Cultural Politics of Constitutional Reclassification in North India', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14(1): 117–34.
- KBPF [Kumaon Bhotiya Peoples' Federation] 1947. *The Report of the Kumaon Bhotiya Peoples' Federation. Submitted Before the Minority Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly's Advisory Committee on 17th April 1947* (kindly handed over by Dr S.S. Pangtey, September 2006).
- Kreutzmann, H. 2006. 'People and Mountains. Perspectives on the Human Dimension of Mountain Development', *Global Environmental Research* 10(1): 49–61.
- Kumaon Division 1842. Letter from Senior Ass. Kumaon to Lieutenant Governor N.W.P. Rohilkund Division. *Political Letters Issued*, Vol. 50. State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow.
- Kumaon Division 1843. Letter from G.J. Lushington to H.M. Elliot Cesquire. *Revenue Letters Issued*, Vol. 15. State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow.
- Lamb A. 1986. *British India and Tibet: 1766–1910*. Routledge, London.
- 1989. *Tibet, China and India 1914–1950. A History of Imperial Diplomacy*. Roxford Books, Herfordshire.
- Leach, M. and R. Mearns 1996. 'Environmental Change and Policy: Challenging Received Wisdom in Africa'. In *The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment*, eds. M. Leach and R. Mearns. The International African Institute, London, pp. 1–33.
- Linkenbach, A. 2007. *Forest Futures: Global Representations and Ground Realities in the Himalayas*. Seagull, London.
- Metz, J.J. 2010. 'Downward Spiral? Interrogating Narratives of Environmental Change in the Himalaya'. In *Culture and the Environment in the Himalaya*, ed. A. Guneratne. Routledge, London, pp. 17–39.
- Mittal, A.K. 1986. *British Administration in Kumaon Himalayas*. Mittal Publications, Delhi.
- Mohan, C.R. 2007. 'Soft Borders and Cooperative Frontiers: India's Changing Territorial Diplomacy towards Pakistan and China', *Strategic Analysis* 31(1): 1–23.
- Montero, R.G., J. Mathieu and C. Singh. 2009. 'Mountain Pastoralism 1500–2000: An Introduction', *Nomadic Peoples* 13(2): 1–16.
- Montgomerie, T.G. 1868. 'Report of a Route Survey made by Pundit, from Nepal to Lhasa, and thence through the Upper Valley of the Brahmaputra to its Source', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 38: 129–218.
- Moorcroft, W. 1818. 'A Journey to Lake Manasarovar in Undes, a Province of Little Tibet', *Asiatic Researches* 12: 380–536.
- and G. Trebeck. 1976 [1837]. *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab*, Volume I. Faran Academy, Lahore.
- Murray, W.H. 1951. *Scottish Himalayan Expedition, 1950*. J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London.
- Nautiyal, S., K.S. Rao, R.K. Maikhuri and K.G. Saxena. 2003. 'Transhumant Pastoralism in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, India. A Case Study in the Buffer Zone', *Mountain Research and Development* 23(3): 255–62.
- Nawa, K. 2000. 'Ethnic Categories and their Usages in Byans, Far Western Nepal', *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research* 18: 36–57.

- Niamir-Fuller, M. 1999. 'Toward a Synthesis of Guidelines for Legitimizing Transhumance'. In *Managing Mobility in African Rangelands. The Legitimization of Transhumance*, ed. M. Niamir-Fuller. Intermediate Technology Publications, London, pp. 266–90.
- Nüsser, M. 1996. *Nanga Parbat (NW-Himalaya): Naturräumliche Ressourcenausstattung und humanökologische Gefügemuster der Landnutzung* ['Nanga Parbat (NW-Himalaya): Natural Resources and Human-ecological System of Land Use']. Dümmler, Bonn.
- 2006. 'Ressourcennutzung und nachhaltige Entwicklung im Kumaon-Himalaya (Indien)' ['Resource Utilization and Sustainable Development in the Kumaon Himalayas, India'], *Geographische Rundschau* 58(10): 14–22.
- Pant, S.D. 1935. *The Social Economy of the Himalayas. Based on a Survey in the Kumaon Himalayas*. George Allen and Unwin, London.
- Patterson, G.N. 1962. 'Recent Chinese Policies in Tibet and towards the Himalayan Border States', *The China Quarterly* 12: 191–202.
- Political Department 1895. Rajwar of Askot, Almora Districts. 24/1896-1897, Box 50, Commissioner Office Records. Regional Archives Kumaon, Nainital.
- Prasad, R.R. 1989. *Bhotia Tribals of India. Dynamics of Economic Transformation*. Gian Publishing House, New Delhi.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1922. *The Andaman Islanders: A Study in Social Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Rajan, R. 2006. *Modernizing Nature: Forestry and Imperial Eco-development 1800–1950*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Rangan, H. 2004. *Of Myths and Movements: Rewriting Chipko into Himalayan History*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Raper, F.V. 1812. 'Narrative of a Survey for the Purpose of Discovering the Source of the Ganges', *Asiatic Researches* 11: 446–564.
- Rawat, D.S. and S. Sharma. 1997. 'The Development of a Road Network and its Impact on the Growth of Infrastructure: A Study of Almora District in the Central Himalaya', *Mountain Research and Development* 17(2): 117–26.
- Rhoades, R.E. and S.I. Thompson. 1975. 'Adaptive Strategies in Alpine Environments: Beyond Ecological Particularism', *American Ethnologist* 2(3): 535–51.
- Roy, T. 2003. 'Changes in Wool Production and Usage in Colonial India', *Modern Asian Studies* 37(2): 257–86.
- Saberwal, V.K. 1999. *Pastoral Politics: Shepherds, Bureaucrats, and Conservation in the Western Himalaya*. Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- Sax, W.S. 1991. *Mountain Goddess: Gender and Politics in a Himalayan Pilgrimage*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- Schendel, W. van. 2005. *The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia*. Anthem Press, London.
- 2007. 'The Wagah Syndrome: Territorial Roots of Contemporary Violence in South Asia'. In *Violence and Democracy in India*, eds. A. Basu and S. Roy. Seagull Books, Calcutta, pp. 36–82.
- Scoones, I. 1995. 'New Directions in Pastoral Development in Africa'. In *Living with Uncertainty. New Directions in Pastoral Development in Africa*, ed. I. Scoones. Intermediate Technology Publications, London, pp. 1–36.

- Sherring, C.A. 1906. *Western Tibet and the British Borderland. The Sacred Country of Hindus and Buddhists. With an Account of the Government, Religion and Customs of its Peoples*. Edward Arnold, London.
- Shneiderman, S. 2010. 'Are the Central Himalayas in Zomia? Some Scholarly and Political Considerations across Time and Space', *Journal of Global History* 5(2): 289–312.
- Smith, N. 1993. 'Homeless/Global: Scaling Places'. In *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, eds. J. Bird, B. Curtis, T. Putnam, G. Robertson and L. Tickner. Routledge, London, pp. 87–119.
- Spenggen, W. van. 2000. *Tibetan Border Worlds. A Geohistorical Analysis of Trade and Traders*. Kegan Paul International, London.
- Srivastava, R.P. 1966. 'Tribe-Caste Mobility in India and the Case of Kumaon Bhotias'. In *Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and Ceylon*, ed. C. von Fürer-Haimendorf. Asia Publishing House, Bombay, pp. 161–212.
- Statesman, The. 1981. *The Inner Line Legacy. Trend towards Isolation*, 28.12.1981.
- Tolia, R.S. 2010. 'Great Tribal Diversity of Uttarakhand'. In *Amtikar* [magazine distributed by the Rang Welfare Association], Pithoragarh, pp. 49–56.
- Traill, G.W. 1832. 'Statistical Report on the Bhotiya Mehals of Kumaon', *Asiatic Researches* 17: 1–50.
- Tribune, The. 2009. *Border Roads. China ahead of India by Miles*. 15.10.2009. <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2009/20091015/dplus.htm#1> Accessed 24 May 2011.
- Waller, D. 1999. *The Pundits: British Exploration of Tibet and Central Asia*. University of Kentucky Press, Lexington.
- Walton, H.G. 1911. *Almora: A Gazetteer*, Vol. XXXV of the District Gazatteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Government Press United Provinces, Allahabad.
- Willis, C.M. 2007. *A Descriptive Grammar of Darma: An Endangered Tibeto-Burman Language* [dissertation presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Liberal Arts]. University of Texas, Austin.

Photo Credits: Christoph Bergmann

Christoph Bergmann is Research Assistant and Ph.D. student at the Department of Social Anthropology at the South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg. His research interests are mountain pastoralism, ethnicity and ritual practice, with a regional focus on the Central Himalaya.
Email: c.bergmann@uni-heidelberg.de

Martin Gerwin is Research Assistant and Ph.D. student at the Department of Geography at the South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg. He has specialized in development studies, mountain geography and natural resource use in the Central Himalaya.
Email: martin.gerwin@uni-heidelberg.de

William S. Sax is Professor and Head of the Department of Social Anthropology at the South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg. He has been conducting research in Uttarakhand, India, since 1977 and focuses on issues such as religious practice, local social structure and politics, territoriality, forms of theatre and performance, as well as ritual healing.
Email: william.sax@urz.uni-heidelberg.de

Marcus Nüsser is Professor and Head of the Department of Geography at the South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg. He focuses on issues of human-environment interaction, landscape transformation and regional development processes in the high mountains of South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.
Email: marcus.nuesser@uni-heidelberg.de