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## Globalization and Marginalization in Mountain Regions: Assets and Challenges in Mountain Regions

Edited by Raghubir Chand and Walter Leimgruber. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2016. xvi + 240 pp. € 74.96. ISBN 978-3-319-32648-1.

*Globalization and Marginalization in Mountain Regions* examines the global significance of mountain systems, highlighting their ecological and socioeconomic roles in the context of globalization and rising global temperatures. Specifically, the book investigates the nature and processes of marginalization, as well as the degree to which effective responses to that marginalization have been initiated either from within or outside the affected mountain areas. The volume brings together papers delivered at the Commission Conference of the International Geographical Union (IGU) held in Nainital, India, in 2011, which was jointly organized by the IGU Commission on Marginalization, Globalization and Regional and Local Response CO8.27, and the Department of Geography, DSB Campus, Kumaun University, Nainital, India. It is thus perhaps not surprising that the papers in the volume primarily focus on the Himalayas, but its coverage is properly global, with case studies drawn from the Czech-German-Austrian mountain borderland (Chapter 5), the European Alps and the Andes (Chapter 6), the highland regions of Malaysia (Chapter 11), and the Arctic (Chapter 3).

The book is divided into 3 parts. The first section, "Explorations," focuses on the history of exploration in the Himalayas and Tibet and the importance of the Arctic. Taken together, essays by the late R. S. Tolia (Chapter 2), former chief secretary of Uttarakhand, and the late Donald F. Lynch (Chapter 3), Professor of Geography at the University of Alaska, present interesting parallels between what are otherwise very different regions, such as their fragile and increasingly threatened ecosystems, significant geopolitical relevance, and vibrant but sparse populations. Tolia, in particular, pays warm tribute to cousins Nain Singh Rawat and Kishan Singh Rawat, justly highlighting the immense importance of their exploratory work as "Pundits" to the creation of knowledge about the Himalaya and beyond.

The second section is devoted to the "Development Potential of Mountain Regions and Globalization." Development as a theme, the editors argue, is too often "concentrated on the realization of potentials of natural resources … without covering every sector or aspect of mountain life"; development is instead "a collective action comprising all aspects of life to achieve sound living conditions" and an ideology that "aims at higher value and ethics based on the dual purpose of nature and human well-being" (p 41). To this end, Bernard Debarbieux and Martin F. Price (Chapter 4) convincingly argue that the natural and cultural diversity of mountain areas must be treated as an asset of great global value—"a global common good"—and that the consequences of climate change and globalization in these areas must be assessed and mitigated.

The essays in the third and last section, "Climate Change, Mountain Ecology, and Adaptation in the Himalayas," focus on changes in water supply (Chapter 12), air quality (Chapter 13), and various aspects of vegetation (Chapters 14, 15, and 16), which reinforce collectively just how important mountains—the great "weather makers"—are to the global climate system. The editors argue that understanding these various processes and their results, at both large and small scales, is critical to prepare strategies for mitigating the effects of climate change for the benefit of local populations.

A total of 15 case studies makes *Globalization and Marginalization in Mountains Regions* a significant contribution to the literature on marginality studies in mountains. The contributors, all experts in their fields, use an integrative approach that advances the concept of mountain regions as a global common good. Specific attention is given to various topics of political relevance: that mountains are the water towers for humanity, play a major role in climate change, and are sanctuaries for biodiversity. Readers also learn that mountain peoples are among the world's poorest and most disadvantaged and that, while still facing issues related to physical isolation and social marginalization, many are now subjected to increasingly demanding market forces and are struggling with the loss of traditional culture, as well as ecosystem degradation. The sociocultural dimensions of these latter issues are touched upon by Keith Bosak and Sunil Kainthola in their good essay on the Bhotia people of the Niti Valley in the Garhwal Himalaya (Chapter 9) but otherwise go largely unexplored. One striking omission, for example, is a discussion about the issues facing mountain women, who shoulder the largest burden of poverty. How have they had to negotiate the complex and rapid changes occurring in marginal mountain regions?

The final chapter by the editors closes the volume by pointing out that the issues brought on by globalization and marginalization in mountain regions are highly political ones, "often involving strategies for conflict solution between two or more countries" (p 232), and that these challenges become even more pronounced in the present period of global economic uncertainty. This is all the more reason for practitioners, researchers, students, and other


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interested readers to take seriously the global importance of these imposing, yet sensitive ecosystems—mountains—and the challenges faced by those who call them home.

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