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Books

Drawing the Line: Nature, Hybridity and Politics in Transboundary Spaces

By Juliet Fall. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate, 2005. xiii + 325 pp. £55, US$100. ISBN 0-7546-4331-X.

Protected areas—national parks, biosphere reserves, and the like—contribute importantly to the preservation of the ever more beleaguered wild plants and animals with which humankind shares this planet. The many thousand kilometers of national boundaries that separate the approximately 190 intensely sovereign nations (with at least half of those boundaries being undefined or contested) have become established over the years largely without consideration of habitat or ecosystem boundaries. Moreover, a state's boundary regions are often comparatively undeveloped, lightly populated, and perhaps ruggedly mountainous. As a result, hundreds of transboundary sites exist throughout the world that would, but for political obstacles, make suitable linked protected areas (PAs).

In fact, a transboundary protected area (TBPA) was recommended as early as 1924 by a bi-governmental commission in connection with a post-World War I boundary dispute in the Tatra Mountains between the Slovakian sector of Czechoslovakia and neighboring Poland (with a symbolic linking of contiguous PAs eventually coming to pass in 1955). In more recent decades, the United Nations Environment Program has suggested that TBPAs could, under certain conditions, serve the dual purpose of biodiversity protection and political rapprochement or confidence-building. Major environmental nongovernmental organizations such as the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) have shown increasing interest in promoting TBPAs, built primarily upon a foundation of ecological principles, but increasingly also with the welfare of the local population as a necessary corollary consideration.

By contrast, Juliet Fall makes a point of noting that her treatise addresses the question of TBPAs from the frame of mind of a geographer. (A propos this, one of her guiding principles is that "politics is always geographical" [p 6].) The theoretical framework the author establishes and develops in meticulous detail benefits from 5 European case studies of existing or proposed TBPAs: (1) Poland/Slovakia (the one alluded to above, but as yet without formal transborder recognition); (2) Poland/Slovakia/Ukraine (with transborder recognition via UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere [MAB] Program, although essentially inoperative); (3) France/Germany (also with transborder recognition via the MAB Program, although barely operative); (4) Romania/Ukraine (also with transborder recognition via the MAB Program, here managed through a Global Environment Facility project, although once again only minimally operative); and (5) France/Italy (without formal transborder recognition).

Following an introductory chapter that lays bare the author's conceptual approach and assumptions and how these arguments play out, she uses Chapter 2 to present the concept of "boundary" as an extraordinarily complex "socio-spatial" phenomenon, and Chapter 3 to analyze PAs (including TBPAs) as "spatial objects" in the light of their historical development, dwelling upon their establishment as a process of "social spatialization" (the author's terminology). The notion of "natural boundaries" is examined in Chapter 4, essentially denigrating it as fostering politically conservative motivations behind seemingly benign or laudable objectives.

Then, for the next 3 chapters, the text leans on insights derived from the author's own fieldwork. In Chapter 5, her case studies provide the grist for a discussion of the struggles in "postmodern territoriality" (also referred to by the author as "the new medievalism") for legitimacy in establishing TBPAs; and in Chapter 6 the implications of such struggles. Chapter 7 covers transboundary cooperation, here calling for a profoundly expanded definition of that concept. Chapter 8 addresses the politically charged area of transboundary management, here emphasizing the ambiguous and politically charged role of mapping TBPAs, thereby unveiling some of the problematic aspects of "(re)territorialisation."

The final 3 chapters return to more strictly theoretical considerations. The "myth of boundless nature" is tackled in Chapter 9 and presented as a clash between natural and political approaches. "Nature" is made intelligible ("enabled" in the author's terminology) in Chapter 10; and in the brief concluding Chapter 11, the author revisits what is—to her—the highly complex concept of "territory."

Although not so stated in the acknowledgments, this monograph is essentially the author's doctoral dissertation. The text demonstrates a huge multi-linguistic effort and great erudition in its fulfillment, all under the umbrella of an obvious devotion to the subject. The study has been enriched by information gained from more than 60 interviews and almost 600 scholarly publications (although some of them are out of order, and not all of them are linked to the text). However, I cannot readily recommend this monograph to TBPA managers, related practitioners, or involved diplomats owing to its repeated attention to minutiae, its highly theoretical approach, its repetitive nature, and its truly challenging vocabulary and phraseology. On the other hand, I can certainly suggest

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that this book should become indispensable reading for academics professing geographical theory or philosophy—especially so for those comfortable with conclusions such as those suggesting that "chimeric territory might assist in capturing some of the complexity" of the "conceptual consequence(s) of the emergence of the notion of hybrid-neo-medievalism" (p 263).

A final note regarding the name of the book: as to the main title, "Drawing the Line" refers to delimiting and naming an area, although "Examining the Line" (or perhaps "Erasing the Line," in reference to establishing TBPAs) would seem to have more accurately captured the thrust of the thesis. As to the subtitle, for those left at a loss for what is meant by "hybridity," the term here seems to refer to the amalgamation of natural (spatial, biophysical, ecological) and cultural (societal, historical, political) factors impinging upon boundary considerations.

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Mountains of Northern Europe: Conservation, Management, People and Nature

Edited by D. B. A. Thompson, M. F. Price and C. A. Galbraith. Edinburgh, United Kingdom: The Stationery Office, 2005. xx + 396 pp. £30.00. ISBN 0-11-497319-9.

To celebrate the UN-declared International Year of Mountains in 2002, countries with mountains around the world carried out a myriad of governmental and non-governmental sponsored activities. These ranged from mountain food, music, and film festivals to bicycle tours and mountaineering climbs, to conferences, symposia, and workshops. There were also several major international events, mainly of the latter sort, including the Global Mountain Summit at Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan, which produced the Bishkek Mountain Platform. My favorite event was held in Italy: "The Olympic Games of Mountain Cheeses," a world-scale exhibition and competition.

In the United Kingdom, one of the events was a conference held at Pitlochry, Scotland, in early November 2002, entitled "Nature and People: Conservation and management in the mountains of Northern Europe." The event was attended by almost 300 persons from 15 countries. This book is the product of the conference, which was organized and implemented by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Centre for Mountain Studies, Perth College, UHI Millennium Institute, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The book has been edited by the organizers of the conference—Thompson, Price, and Galbraith. They have done the creditable task of pulling together these mostly disparate presentations into a structural whole.

It is extremely difficult to adequately review the product of a conference that attempted to obtain geographical representation of the mountains of Northern Europe and of the wide-ranging subjects dealing with the numerous aspects of these special landforms. The book contains 38 chapters, grouped in 5 "Parts" with general headings. Within these parts there is great and sometimes distracting heterogeneity. Few specific themes are analyzed in detail from different geographic or experiential perspectives. But, how does one organize the research, experience, and perspectives for an earth feature of such scale (both physical and spiritual) and differing geographic locations? The editors have done remarkably well, but it does seem strange to find a chapter on "Outdoor education and outdoor recreation in Scotland" sandwiched between one on "SCANNET: A Scandinavian–North European network of terrestrial field bases" and one on "Frozen opportunities? Local communities and the establishment of Vatnajökull National Park, Iceland."

There are few common threads which would permit a normal book review of one or several thematic issues. There are many excellent subject treatments, well worth the price of admission, but I found the organization of the material a bit of a bother. There is one clear grouping of 5 chapters (Chapters 6–10) that deal with climate change and pollutants, and all focused on Scottish (or Welsh) mountains. Good! But these are bracketed in the same section by a chapter on "People, recreation and the mountains with reference to the Scottish Highlands" (Chapter 11) and one on "Links between geodiversity and biodiversity in European mountains: Case studies from Sweden, Scotland and the Czech Republic" (Chapter 5). The former is, incidentally, an excellent analysis of Scottish mountain recreation, and the author does pull out some of the common factors shared throughout the mountains of Northern Europe. The latter is a compelling exposition on geomorphological processes and landform patterns. In my opinion, the book would have been improved by allocating Chapters 6–10 to an individual section; by grouping the contribution on recreation (Chapter 11) with Chapter 19 on "Mountain tourism in Northern Europe: Current patterns and recent trends" and perhaps with Chapter 29 on "Tourists, nature and indigenous peoples—conservation and management in the Swedish mountains." This would have left Part 2, "Mountain Environments: Perspectives" more unified in its role of more general treatment, especially if the excellent Chapter

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12 on "The mountains of Northern Europe: Towards an environmental history for the last ten thousand years" had been brought forward into the grouping.

The chapter headings mentioned above have given a small indication of the wealth of topics covered. It would be imprudent to list all 38 of them. As previously stated, there are many gems to be found by the alert "miner" in this mine of information. Only a few can be mentioned. The foreword by the Icelandic Minister for the Environment must qualify as one of the few forewords ever written by a politician that had some "meat" in it, for she packed real information into a short presentation. I particularly learned much from the already mentioned Chapter 5 on links between geodiversity and biodiversity in European Mountains. The thoughtful analysis in "Multi-purpose management in the mountains of Northern Europe" leads to a better design of policies for sustainable development. One of the most interesting contributions for me was a Finnish/United Kingdom co-authored paper on "Natural heritage trends: An upland saga." To me, as a long-time worker in the mountain protected areas arena, perhaps the most valuable was the case study entitled "Frozen opportunities? Local communities and the establishment of Vatnajökull National Park, Iceland," which provides several lessons to be learned. For those who wish to probe the history and results of the International Year of Mountains, the second chapter by Price and Hofer is an excellent encapsulation.

Nevertheless, my favorite read is the opening chapter by Magnus Magnusson, a rambling, personal presentation of thoughts on nature and people. While he was the conference opener, he was really prescient in summarizing the lessons of the many facets of this diverse collection. He stated that in terms of mountain conservation:

- We must make sure that we are sharing aspirations about longer-term goals. If there is lack of awareness of what different people seek, we can hardly be surprised if misunderstanding arises;
- We should be clear about the facts, because rational debate and the creation of an informed consensus need clear and balanced information; and
- We need to explore what values are important to different people. Sharing values is not an easily-attained goal, but if we can achieve it, the way forward becomes clearer. Sharing values is not so much a matter of conversion on some hilly Damascene road as a widening of our perspectives to acknowledge the validity of the values held by others.

The sub-title of the book is "Conservation, Management, People and Nature," and it does indeed provide an umbrella under which these many diverse presentations (chapters) can congregate.

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Key Issues for Mountain Areas

Edited by Martin F. Price, Libor Jansky, and Andrei A. Iatsenia. Tokyo, Japan: United Nations University Press, 2004. xiv + 273 pp. US$35. ISBN 92-808-1102-9.

When I received a copy of this book from the United Nations University, little did I know that soon after I would be asked to review it for *Mountain Research and Development*. I welcomed the task because the book offered potential as a new instructional resource for my teaching of mountain geography, resumed after a hiatus of 3 years of administrative duties in the Office of International Education. During my preparation, I found the latest scientific, technical, and managerial advances of mountain theory and practice, as well as the pedagogy of montology itself, to be compatible with the contents. Therefore, recalling the debate on whether sustainable development can be attained in mountain communities, and avoiding the redundancy of the sustainability mantra and keeping it unbiased, reading this book has left me with several points to share with the readers of *MRD*.

I recognize that this is an important effort in which a mountain scholar (Price), an academic administrator (Jansky), and an official conservation practitioner (Iatsenia) have joined to produce an overview of both the state of knowledge and debate on the most important topics related to mountain areas, which mountain people and scholars necessarily see as issues. It is admirable that the 3 co-editors contacted a plethora of recognized experts in their fields to produce an elegant and eloquent book on seemingly disparate topics in different regions of the world. I enjoyed reading contributions from some 31 co-authors in a wide network, representing current narratives on the geographies of mountains. Moreover, I am glad to know that the different chapters reflect the joint efforts of many mountain people who reviewed them electronically in preparation for the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit.

I am satisfied with the choice of words in the preface, written by the UN Under-Secretary General and Rector of the United Nations University, Dr. Hans J.A. Van Ginkel, who clearly points to the advancement of the mountain platform, attributable to the International Year of Mountains (IYM, 2002) and the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, in areas such as establishing

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institutional frameworks and preparing white papers for wider discussions and generation of knowledge. His call for future research priorities and for capacity development is framed with a transcendental push for political, economic, and cultural approaches to both science and education for sustainable mountain development. Moreover, his charge that "accumulation of scientific information with monitoring projects and data measurement, not research, does not generate knowledge," is an admonition relevant to what I feel is lacking in the following chapters: recognition of different knowledge systems, including traditional and indigenous techniques that should be empowered at the local level. Mountains are so diverse that homogeneous categorization is doomed from the onset. Respect for the individual conditions of mountain landscapes in different regions should be a guiding principle.

I found the selection of chapters and the issues they cover quite engaging; this should stimulate further geographical and ecological inquiries. Not only the array of possible research topics that can be discerned from these pages, but also the different methodological approaches students could take to deal with each issue, are beneficial. When using the book as a textbook for my undergraduate class, I will be able to assign certain chapters rather than the entire book. Each chapter provides a wealth of information on its subject. Topics covered include 1) an overview of sustainability in mountains (M.F. Price); 2) environmental challenges due to the implications of climate change for water, natural resources, hazards, and desertification (M. Iyngararasan, L. Tianchi, S. Shrestha, P.K. Mool, M. Yoshino, and T. Watanabe); 3) access, communications, and energy infrastructure in mountains (T. Kohler, H. Hurni, U. Wiesmann, and A. Kläy); 4) compensatory legal and economic mechanisms for mountain sustainability (M. Koch-Weser and W. Kahlenborn); 5) poverty reduction and livelihood opportunities for mountain economies (S. Parvez and S. Rasmussen); 6) conservation of biological and cultural diversity through mountain tourism (W. Lama and N. Sattar); 7) democratic and decentralized institutions for mountain sustainability (J. Pratt); 8) peace and conflicts in mountain societies (F. Starr); 9) national policies and institutions for sustainable mountain development (A. Villeneuve, T. Hofer, D. McGuire, M. Sato, and A. Mekouar); 10) prospective international agreements for mountain regions (W. Burhenne); and, in the concluding chapter, 11) the role of culture, education, and science in sustainable mountain development (B. Messerli and E. Bernbaum).

The book contains 8 figures and 10 tables that succinctly illustrate complex conceptual and regulatory information on the above issues. I found it useful that the book comprises 3 appendices dealing with the Bishkek Mountain Platform, the UN resolution for the IYM, and the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions. The 102 acronyms listed on 3 pages reflect the target audience of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit and justify the official and institutional jargon present in almost every chapter. The list contains the names of institutional agencies, technical documents, and advisory boards that deal with mountain themes.

I wonder if my students of mountain geography will remember next semester what those acronyms stand for; however, it is intriguing that some mountain collectives are not listed. Because of my close relation to the mountains of South America and my beloved Tropandean landscapes, it was easy to detect the lack of any reference to AMA, the Andean Mountains Association. AMA's tri-annual meetings since 1992 have become both a mechanism to gauge academic efforts in mountain research for sustainability in the continent and a forum for practitioners of Andean sustainable development. Aside from the lack of other Latin American agencies concerned with mountains that were very active in IYM, such as the Fertile Crescent in Brazil, the fact that the African Mountains Association (the "other" AMA) is also not mentioned prompted me to appraise the contributors' affiliations. I could not find any Latino name in the roster, nor any African name, apart from FAO officials.

Despite the inclusiveness and transparency of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, this book deals with issues listed and debated from a traditional Western cultural outlook, often in university settings of the developed world. It also emphasizes the representation of United Nations officials and other likely counterparts in non-governmental international organizations such as IUCN, WWF, and others. In short, in many instances I perceived an abridgment of individual reports provided by projects either sponsored or underwritten by those institutions, with the proverbial Northern expertise on Southern realities. Yet this is precisely the value of bringing those points up for discussion among a larger readership.

Because of the nature of activities defining the road to Bishkek and beyond, emphasis on positive experiences with sustainable mountain development is given without a corresponding enumeration of drawbacks or negative experiences. For example, the Italian Committee is mentioned for actively hosting IYM celebratory events and executing high-mountain monitoring projects, but nothing is said about the lack of response to efforts by Andean scholars hoping to link with

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the Italians for further funding initiatives proposed at the Alpine Forum 2000, which never materialized. There is little said about the lack of trained professionals in developing countries or the lack of commitment by UN agencies to fund sustainable mountain development demonstration programs executed by scientists from the developing world. It is obvious to those seeking funds for mountain research that a discontinuity exists, flanked by what is said and what is actually done, funding permitting.

I envisioned a chapter that would guide the reader through discussions of issues such as equity, environmental justice, or redistribution of wealth associated with development—some key components of the political ecology of mountain systems—but these concepts are difficult to find. I would also have welcomed a chapter on the environmental ethics of mining in mountain protected areas in the developing world, as well as a critique of how globalization is taking hold in isolated mountain communities, destroying ethnicity and creating markets without regard to or concern for acculturation. Traditional research questions (eg what, where, when, who, to whom, whose, how much) are interspersed in the literature; however, the most critical question (ie so what) is elusive. Finding it will become a fascinating didactic exercise for students.

I would recommend this book to a wider readership interested in mountain lore. Readers with a utilitarian perspective and minimal exposure to the "Water Towers of the World" will be intrigued by the complex and challenging oxymoron of mountain development. Those with an ecocentric perspective will be glad to read about progress made from Rio de Janeiro, through Chapter 13 of Agenda 21, to Bishkek and beyond. There will be those whose ethnocentric perspective will lead to inquiries about alternate and vernacular solutions for what is expected with regard to mountain issues in the developing world. Students will learn from well-written, thought-provoking chapters, whatever their perspective on mountain issues. I will keep this book handy in my arsenal of references on montology.

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