

Mountain Research and Development (MRD): Call for Papers, MRD 39.4
The role of culture in transformation towards sustainable development in mountains

Deadline:

Submission of full papers by **1 February 2019** (should you wish to send an abstract and receive feedback from the Editorial Team, please write to mrd-journal@cde.unibe.ch)

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In 1996, the World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD) published its report on [Our Creative Diversity](#). The WCCD wanted to emphasize the fundamental relevance of culture in sustainable development and to address questions like: “What are the cultural and socio-cultural factors that affect development? What is the cultural impact of social and economic development? ... How can valuable elements of a traditional culture be combined with modernization? What are the cultural dimensions of individual and collective well-being?” (WCCD 1996:8). With this Focus Issue of MRD, we would like to highlight the importance of these questions for sustainable development in mountains. Indeed, mountains worldwide are home to a rich cultural diversity, expressed in mountain populations’ identities, languages, arts, agricultural practices, socioeconomic arrangements, governance, and music. Most mountain landscapes are cultural, as they have been shaped over the centuries by mountain communities and reflect their worldviews and knowledge about natural resource management. Mountain areas often play an important spiritual and social role, having a special meaning in people’s identities, religions, and ritual practices, or being simply places sought for recreation and social gathering.

Mountain communities are undergoing profound and rapid processes of sociocultural change, caused by drivers such as outmigration, urbanization, and increasing insertion into the market economy. These changes are undoubtedly threatening the rich cultural heritage found in mountains—for example the hundreds of ethnic groups who have found different ways of adjusting and thriving in the harsh mountain environment. However, many mountain communities are responding and adapting to change in creative ways, drawing on this cultural heritage to develop their own development pathways. They may, however, also retreat (or be forced to retreat by development agencies) into culture as a cocoon that will supposedly preserve their identity and values. Moreover, a defensive attitude aiming to protect a cultural identity can lead to conflicts. Are we in a position to make sure that culture is a source of creativity and empowerment, that it constitutes the roots upon which a global ethics can grow, and that it helps bridge the divides between the individual and the communitarian, as expressed in the WCCD’s 1996 report?

MRD is looking for contributions for its 3 peer-reviewed sections:

MountainDevelopment (*transformation knowledge*): Papers should present systematically validated experiences and research insights into development solutions that consider mountain communities’ cultures and social practices. Topics may include, for example:

- How can the local knowledge of mountain communities contribute to sustainable development and/or natural resource management?
- How can mountain cultures become a resource for adaptation and resilience building?
- What social innovations work for sustainable development in mountains and how can technical innovations (including digitalization) help maintain social cohesiveness?
- How can cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity become a factor of sustainable mountain development, and how can one deal creatively with opposing forces such as individualism and communitarianism?

MountainResearch (*systems knowledge*): Papers should take an integrative approach to analyze the way mountain cultures are affected by, and respond to, drivers of sociocultural change such as migration, urbanization, and market integration, amongst others. Topics may include, for example:

- Cultural ecosystem services in mountains
- Dynamics of mountain cultural landscapes
- Reinvention of mountain identities in the context of global change and/or international or national conflicts
- Threats to and resistance of cultural heritage in mountains

MountainAgenda (*target knowledge*): Papers should provide well-referenced overviews of mountain cultures in a context of global change, and of how cultural initiatives in mountains relate to sustainable development. These overviews can be based on a systematic stakeholder process or a review of the literature. They should conclude with agendas for future research or policy aiming at increasing sustainability in mountains. Topics may include, for example:

- Mountain communities' visions of wellbeing and of development
- Designing agendas for cultural sustainability with mountain stakeholders
- The contribution of mountain cultural heritage to the SDGs

Submission details

- **Abstracts** indicating your main research question, your conceptual framework, and your methodology (max. 500 words) can be sent to the Editorial Office: mrd-journal@cde.unibe.ch
- **Submit your full paper by 1 February 2019**; publication of the issue is foreseen in November 2019
- Guidelines for authors are available at: http://www.mrd-journal.org/submission_GAuthors.asp
- For more information on the journal, see: <http://www.mrd-journal.org>
- As a not-for-profit open access journal, MRD charges authors a publication fee to offset part of its production costs: http://www.mrd-journal.org/About_pubfee.asp

REFERENCE:

WCCD [World Commission on Culture and Development]. 1996. *Our Creative Diversity. Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development. Summary Version*. Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing.

Thomas Breu, David Molden, MRD Editorial Office
Alexey N. Gunya, Deputy Chief Editor of the journal *Sustainable Development in Mountain Territories*
(for the first time, *MRD* and *Sustainable Development in Mountain Territories* are issuing a similar call;
submissions in Russian should be made to *Sustainable Development in Mountain Territories*:
<http://naukagor.ru/en-gb/>; for submissions in English, please consult the guidelines of each journal and
submit only to the journal with the most appropriate scope and aims.)

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