

Mountain Research and Development (MRD): Call for Papers, MRD 41.3 **Dynamic Urban Centers and Sustainable Mountain Development**

Deadline: Submission of full papers by **7 December 2020**

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Reflecting global trends, urbanization processes are also occurring in mountain regions, where they have an important impact on mountain systems and communities. By 2015, about one third of the global mountain population lived in urban areas, and more than one third in periurban areas¹. However, the situation varies substantially across different mountain regions worldwide. In South America, the urban share of the mountain population was 67 percent, whereas in Africa it was only 16 percent (FAO 2015). While these estimations give a rough overview, they cannot reveal the full dynamics of urbanization or the role it plays in the transformation of mountain societies (Brenner and Schmidt 2013). “Urbanization” comprises not only migration from rural areas to cities or the expansion of metropolitan areas, but also urban-to-rural migration. The importance of the development of small and medium-sized urban centers in mountains over the past decades should not be underestimated.

These diverse and dynamic urbanization processes have changed interlinkages between rural and urban areas and led to new patterns of relationships and exchanges in mountain areas, often making use of new possibilities offered by digitalization. Urban areas have been increasingly providing services to surrounding areas, including higher education, health, and administrative services. They are the preferred locations for new economic activities in the service sector; they attract migrants and commuters, offering employment opportunities for low-skilled workers and for highly specialized staff alike (Wang et al 2019). Rural areas are increasingly seen as suppliers of intangible goods and ecosystem services for a growing global urban population, and as preferred places for recreational activities, tourism, and secondary homes. At the same time, rural areas benefit from financial and social remittances (Bachmann et al 2019). While this increasing functional division between urban centers and rural areas may be seen as an economic opportunity for rural mountain regions, some researchers have argued that, instead of broadening the options of rural areas, the new interdependencies have strengthened a market economy that often benefits new, powerful economic and social actors who may actually narrow the options of rural areas in the long run—be it due to the activities of external investors or to disintegration of the local society (Perlik 2019). What is certain is that these change patterns have multiple impacts on overall sustainable development in mountains.

With this focus issue, MRD aims to contribute to a better understanding of urbanization processes in mountains and emerging new patterns of interrelations between rural mountain areas and urban centers in and outside mountains. We also aim to present papers that propose ways of shaping these transformation processes such that they lead to greater sustainability in mountain regions around the world, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; as well as synthesis studies and comparative studies across several mountain regions. Accordingly, MRD invites contributions from scholars and development specialists for its 3 peer-reviewed sections:

MountainDevelopment (transformation knowledge): Papers should present systematically assessed experiences and research insights into ways of shaping the multiple interactions between urban centers and rural areas in mountains that benefit people living in both areas. Papers can present findings based on systematic evaluation of innovative policies or development approaches and interventions.

¹ Based on an analysis of data prepared by Pesaresi and Freire (2016) using the mountain classes defined by Kapos et al (2000).

MountainResearch (systems knowledge): Papers should present empirical findings on the dynamics of urbanization in mountains and its impacts on mountain communities and ecosystems, as well as on the multiple interlinkages between urban centers and rural areas in mountains, eg on changes in material flows, power relations, and social practices. They also should discuss well-substantiated implications of these dynamics for sustainable mountain development.

MountainAgenda (target knowledge): Papers should provide well-referenced and up-to-date reviews of the state of the art on urbanization processes or the role of urban centers for sustainable development in mountains. Papers should conclude with agendas for future research or policy. Comparative studies of policies addressing urbanization processes and their implications on rural areas in mountains are highly welcome, as are reviews of work on the integration issues related to urban development in mountains in national or regional policies and strategies.

Submission details

- **Submit your full paper by 7 December 2020** using MRD's online submission platform.
- A short **notice of intent** can be submitted to mrd-journal@cde.unibe.ch: we will provide advice if needed or requested.
- The issue is scheduled for publication in August 2021. Guidelines for authors are available at <https://www.mrd-journal.org/for-authors/>; please check out the **NEW guidelines** for MountainDevelopment papers: <https://www.mrd-journal.org/for-authors/mountaindevelopment>.
- 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: <https://www.mrd-journal.org/about/publication-fee-policy/>.

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