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## English summaries

### **Jon Mathieu, Highlands-lowlands-disparities and modernisation: the hypothesis of Jules Blache**

In his global pioneering study *L'homme et la Montagne* (Men and Mountains) published in 1934, the French geographer Jules Blache remained sceptical of the prospects of development for upland regions. He believed that some of their characteristics, and notably their craggy reliefs, stood as a hindrance to human economy and communication. More importantly, he believed that these disadvantages increased over time and hence exacerbated the disparities between highlands and lowlands in the course of history and modernisation: "Having played a major role in the early stages of the settlement, the mountains seem to be passed over by people." Using this statement as a starting point, this contribution wants to give a global overview of the period between 1700 and 2000: Can Blache's hypothesis claim general validity? What indicators, what evidence can we find of this development? And were there other relevant factors besides those mentioned by him?

### **Axel Borsdorf, Relations between highlands and lowlands in the tropical Andes states: a "ménage-à-trois" of unequal partners**

During the pre-Columbian period in the tropical Andes, highlands and lowlands were economically complementary regions. In the early period the colonial process was mostly circumscribed to the highlands. With the expansion of plantation economy on the coastal plains and the river oases, the Costa's economic power increased. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Eastern slopes of the Andes and the Selva were colonized, too, under government control. Finally a new era of economic develop-

ment took off when transnational mining corporations bought large concessions for the exploitation of oil and gas. Since that time, in the Sierra (highlands) the economy, culture, and politics have evolved separately from those of the Costa and Selva (lowlands). In Ecuador and Peru the centre of command is now located in the Costa, whereas in Colombia and Bolivia decisions are still made in the highlands. In these countries, too, strong economic dynamics may be observed in the lowlands, fuelling political conflicts. The former unity of economic space has been replaced by an imbalanced structure. And yet, the three main natural and economic regions are still dependent on each other.

### **Heinzpeter Znoj, Colonial changes in highlands-lowlands relations in Central Sumatra**

Highland-lowland relations in Central Sumatra were more balanced in the pre-colonial era than James Scott has recently suggested for mainland Southeast Asia. The article shows that difficult overland transport across the island prevented downstream rulers from extending military power beyond the navigable sections of the river systems, while highland populations were free to control long-distance overland trade. Downstream rulers granted titles and gifts to engage upstream federations in lasting tributary trade relations and to acquire gold from the eastern piedmont areas. But the strategically strong highland federations sometimes shifted trade routes to other coasts and markets. With the arrival of the Dutch (early 20<sup>th</sup> century), who built transport infrastructure for their imperial ends, the highlands lost both their claim on their mineral wealth and their strategic grip on long-distance trade. In this context alone a strong antagonism arose against the – colonial – state. Arguing that in other Southeast Asia regions the colonial watershed may have similarly altered the highlands' spatial location, the paper calls for a historically-informed review of Scott's model.

### **Gilles Rudaz, Institutionalising the “highlands-lowlands” distinction, between domination and resistance**

Analysing the process of conceptual construction of “highlands” and “lowlands”, this paper focuses on how the two categories articulate and how a spatial distinction is institutionalized. Particular attention is devoted to the territoriality

of the State and to the role of scientific production in the process of building a “highlands-lowlands” frame. The analysis shows that, from a conception of unilateral relations from the highlands to the lowlands, there was a shift to a conception integrating the influence of the lowlands over the highlands. The paper then discusses the current approach, which makes it clear how the two spatial notions in fact complement each other. The paper also argues that the geographical notions of “highlands” and “lowlands” tend to hide political agendas.

### **Maria A. Borrello, The prehistoric Alps: evidence for a reconstruction of socio-economic strategies**

Different socio-economic strategies were used by prehistoric communities to settle the mountain environment of the Alps. These processes were not the result of a single cultural model but stemmed from man’s pioneering transformation and acculturation of the environment. Research in the past 30 years has revealed two distinct but interrelated problems. On the one hand, the alpine terraces were gradually appropriated by communities who had until then inhabited plain and piedmont – as we can gather from material remains and palaeo-environmental research. On the other hand, mobility allows exchange and contacts between the populations of regions located either within, or on the northern and southern approaches of the Alps. Activities which took place against the backdrop of the Alps reflect some aspects of the profound cultural changes that occurred in Europe: the decline of the predatory economies of the last hunter-gatherers, the development of sedentary lifestyles related to agricultural production, pastoralism and the rise of early metallurgy.

### **Donata Degrassi, High- and lowlands: the eastern Alps in the Middle Ages**

The relation between high- and lowlands depends not only on morphological and environmental features, but also on the way human communities experience it. Accordingly, the paper analyses the southern slopes of the Eastern Alps from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the early Middle Ages, as a result of climate and social changes, life became tough in plains and valleys, while the highlands gained in importance. With the new Millennium, the mountain areas evolved and

so did their relationship with the plains. Trans-Alpine traffic expanded further, and crossing the mountains was organised in well-articulated stages between Gemona and Villach, which stood at the two ends of the journey. Mountain-dwellers were involved in support activities for the movement of people and goods. First, they provided food and shelter for travellers; secondly, they supplied beasts of burden for goods transport, and served as guides and caravan drivers. The mountain resources – timber, minerals, livestock – covered mostly the needs of the great, distant city, Venice. After Venice conquered the Patriarchate of Aquileia (1420) the eastern mountain chain became the border area of the outskirts of the Venetian Dominion.

### **Luigi Lorenzetti, Dependency and disparity. A comparative reading of the relation between highlands and lowlands: Canton Valais and Canton Ticino, 1870–1930**

In studying the relation between the alpine world and modernisation, richly inspired by the dependency theory, scholars have drawn attention to the Alps gradually becoming peripheral to the economic centres of Western capitalism. However, several surveys have prompted us to reconsider the axiom according to which modernisation may be to blame for the rise (and exacerbation) of spatial-economic disparities caused by the hierarchical relation between centre and periphery. Applying a comparative approach, the article shows that the highlands-lowlands argument is not a replica of that between centre and periphery. The demands of modernisation (industry, tourism) issuing from the lowlands certainly increase the highlands' dependency on them. And yet their impact on the disparity between highlands and lowlands can be mixed, and may depend largely on the highlands' ability to integrate modernisation into their socio-economic system.

### **Matteo Troilo, Demographic and economic differences between mountain villages in "Appennino Abruzzese" after the Second World War**

A typical feature of some regions of central-southern Italy is the big difference in population between coastal and mountain villages. This model was typical, for instance, of the Marche region, in which, from the 1950s, the population

gradually moved from inland to coastal villages. The drop in population density, however, did not involve the internal major cities or some areas of Abruzzo, which stood up better against economic decline and indeed showed remarkable dynamism. Abruzzo today, despite the many problems, not least the severe earthquake of 2009, is a reality in which we can refute the classic clichés about highlands-lowlands disparities. This paper analyses the Abruzzo region as a special case study on the highlands-lowlands relationships. Its main focus is on population growth and on the economic system after the second world war. Our argument will be based on the statistical data of the ISTAT census and, more particularly, the decennial censuses.

### **Louis Chaix, Highlands, lowlands: the development of livestock resources in the Alps, from pre-history to antiquity**

Analysis of faunal remains discovered in prehistoric sites is a tool for the study of complementarity between lowlands and highlands. The taxa represented and the seasonality of their exploitation contribute to our understanding of a site's function. Since early prehistoric times, the Alps have testified to human settlements and raids at high altitudes. In the early Holocene, when the climate improved, groups of hunters are an indication of the divide between residential plain settlements and hunting camps in altitude. During the Neolithic, livestock constitute a walking-larder, and hunting expeditions become unnecessary. Nevertheless, sheep and goats turn increasingly mobile by migrating towards alpine meadows, foreshadowing future transhumance.

### **Mark Bertogliati, Between plains and mountains. Role and perception of woodland and forest resources in Canton Ticino (1803–1912)**

The article analyses the changing relationship between forests and society in various parts of Canton Ticino during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It focuses on the social relevance of woodlands and forest resources, and on the local repercussions of broader political and economic processes. While some territorial differences emerge from a superficial overview, perception and use of forest resources are difficult to clearly identify in Canton Ticino, an eminently mountainous, rural and largely wood-dependent region in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the time, the



supervision of Swiss alpine forests was gradually being shifted from local communities to the rising federal authorities. This was triggered by major political and socio-economic changes, but also by the “paradigm-shift” in forest management that took place at that time. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reactions against forest and agrarian reforms were strong in most rural areas of the Canton, particularly in the highlands. There was fierce opposition to the abolition of old easements, traditional forest management systems and grazing rights, in addition to the costs of the reforms, which were partly charged to the local communities.

**Mihai Ciprian Mărgărint, Adrian Grozavu, Radu Ionuț Dimitriu,  
The dynamics of afforested areas in the hydrographic basins  
of Ozana and Topolița rivers (eastern Carpathians, Romania)  
during the last 120 years**

In the Romanian Carpathian area, land use is characterized by a certain inertia contrasting with the neighbouring low regions, demographically and economically more dynamic. This inertia – magnified by specific social, administrative and legal factors on a local or regional scale – emerges from an analysis of topographical maps of different periods (1894, 1940 and 1984) covering two river basins, Ozana and Topolița (Romanian Carpathians, North-East). For the last century we can notice a conservative trend in land use, especially of the forest, owing to its juridical regime (owned by monasteries except for the communist period) and to the population’s excessively traditional lifestyle. By analysing more recent maps, we show the different impacts of human activities on the forest: both between highlands and lowlands (morphological entities) and between one period and another: a relatively full preservation of the forest in the highlands during 1894–1940 and a shrinking of the wooded areas in the surrounding lowlands during 1940–2010.

**Antoine Marie Graziani, Corsica: a civilized space?**

A well-considered reading of texts on Genoese Corsica (14<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries) shows an ideology inherited from antiquity based on a series of prejudices. The distinction between civilized and uncivilized is a recurring theme, and this

distinction primarily disguises the contrast between plains and mountains. Thus, the Bishop of Nebbio, Bishop Giustiniani justified the abolition of the Niolo *pieve*, arguing that it was a mountain *pieve* (country church). Land unfavourable to crops, the mountain climate and a wild natural environment could only produce feral men. Civilization, to Giustiniani and his many followers, was a coastal and urban phenomenon, and it was important to distinguish between “barbarian regions” and “coastal places”. On this basis, a sound policy will aim to subdue the semi-wild populations of the Corsican mountains. It could take the form of scorched earth policy against the mountain lords in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries; of the relocation of mountain populations to insalubrious coastal areas, or even of a forced desertification in the higher reaches of the island when the 16<sup>th</sup> century wars ended.

### **Gerhard Siegl, The national socialist agrarian policy in the austrian Alps: a “lowland-policy” in the alpine highlands?**

This paper focuses on the ideological and economic position of the Austrian mountain farmers within the National Socialist agrarian policy. When the Nazi regime took over in Austria in March 1938, Germany was confronted with a completely different agriculture in terms of topographical and structural characteristics. Ignoring the voices calling for the closing of mountain farms for reasons of economic inefficiency, Germany established a special department (“Berglandabteilung”) within the ministry of food and agriculture that was responsible for the mountain farmers only. Many of the so-called “actions” initiated by the *Berglandabteilung* turned out to be quite advantageous for the alpine highlands (e. g. investments in rural infrastructure). As it was counterproductive to fund an inefficient branch on a large scale in a wartime economy, the reasons for this approach can be found in the so far underestimated “blood-and-soil”-ideology. The mountain farmers were seen as the best raw material for the breeding of the “Nordic race” and therefore in a racial context considered as superior to other (lowland) farmers.



## **Luca Mocrelli, The economic miracle of the Aosta valley between government intervention and structural intervention: a rigged chase?**

This paper analyzes the process of economic growth recorded in the Aosta Valley in the aftermath of World War II. In the wake of this growth, this region hit record peaks in Italy's GNP but, paradoxically, failed to plough back the new wealth into further growth. The birth of post-industrial economies and societies helped redress the historical imbalance of per-capita wealth and economic potential between highlands and lowlands. Tourism and the service industry were the main drivers: relying either on qualified human capital or on landscape (a non-renewable resource), they somehow made up for the downsides of the highlands in terms of availability of raw materials, capital or infrastructure. However, the Region failed to exploit this opportunity. Its newly acquired status of semi-autonomous region stymied its economic development largely as a result of the public sector's take-over of the economy. The Aosta Valley's economic evolution can be better understood by comparison with the case of the Bolzano province, also benefiting from a special-statute autonomy, but which seems to be set on a more successful development track.

## **Hugues François, Emmanuelle George-Marcelpoil, The Tarentaise valley: from the creation of a "Plan neige" to an innovative environment in the field of winter tourism**

This chapter invites us to retrace the history of the development of mountain tourism in France, in particular in the valley of Tarentaise in Savoy. Thus we suggest that a truly innovative form of tourism, launched at Courchevel, later spread to a wider area during the "Glorious Thirty", to culminate in an unprecedented concentration of winter sports resorts in Tarentaise valley. Setting up this tourist system implies, as we will show, an overhaul of the traditional agricultural and pastoral economies, and requires a coordination between global dynamics and local integration. From these premises, the departmental initiative at Courchevel defined the constitutive principles of mountain resorts, which the "Plan Neige" of the 1960s (not a region-bound doctrine) ratified and circulated on a larger scale. In this context, the local economies connected up with the national policy. In particular, the nature and the role of the actors involved were a relevant basis

for analysis; and they help us to better understand the active involvement of the Tarentaise in the development dynamics of their valley.

