

Preface

In a world characterized by persistent and increasing socio-spatial unevenness and inequality, concerns about geographical marginalization are all the more concerning and need to be effectively understood in order to develop appropriate and sustainable responses. Rather than living in a world of decreasing differences, sadly we live in a time and space, where differences and inequalities appear to be growing and where concerns over the marginalization of people and places have yet to be fully understood and addressed.

International research challenges us to rethink the concepts of differences between and within nations and societies. There is abundant evidence, from around the world, that while levels of extreme poverty appear to have been reduced, inequality levels within most societies are increasing. This reflects both the inability of all people to participate fully and to the same degree in the dominant economic system and complex overlays of social exclusion, discrimination, displacement and conflict which sadly remain features of the world in the twenty-first century.

It is in this spirit that this book series seeks to extend our collective human understanding of what marginalization is and how it impacts on people and places, from both evidential and theoretical perspectives. Over time, the gathered evidence will, hopefully, facilitate the better informed analysis and understanding of what marginality and marginalization are and how it might be responded to.

This, the second book in the series 'Perspectives of Geographical Marginality', seeks to extend the academic debate on these issues through a particular focus on, as the title suggests, societies, social inequalities and marginalization. This book is a continuation of themes explored in the first volume. The majority of its chapters have also been prepared from papers presented at the conference of the International Geographical Union's (IGU) Commission on Marginalization, Globalization and Regional and Local Responses C08.27 held in Nainital, India, from 1 May to 9 May 2011, jointly organized by the IGU's Commission and the Department of Geography, DSB Campus, Kumaun University, Nainital, India. The conference theme was 'Local and Regional Responses to Globalization in the Mountains and Marginal areas of the World'.

The concept of marginalization has been applied in a broad variety of disciplines and perspectives and remained the focus of academic debates. In the last two centuries, marginality was perceived as a subject of economic and social discrimination, physical remoteness and political exclusion, overburdened by colonial suppression both in developing and in developed countries. Marginality became a relevant topic of geographical research and was viewed as a response to the deep-seated socio-economic and political changes and increasing complexities created by the on-going process of globalization in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Marginal regions are undergoing structural and demographic changes with increasing social insecurity and cultural clashes depicting interconnected positive and negative consequences affecting individuals in different kinds of marginal societies in the twenty-first century.

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Societies, Social Inequalities and Marginalization

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