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IGU CONFERENCE NEPAL 2019
IGU COMMISSION ON MARGINALIZATION, GLOBALIZATION,
AND REGIONAL AND LOCAL RESPONSES

8-14 December 2019, Kathmandu, Nepal

The IGU Commission on Marginalization, Globalization, and Regional and Local Responses was created in 1992 (initially “The Study Group on Development Issues in Marginal Regions”), chaired between 2000-2004 by one of its founders, **Professor emeritus Walter Leimgruber** (University of Fribourg, Switzerland); Prof. Leimgruber is the secretary of this Commission since 2005, and the Chairperson of the Steering Committee between 2020-2024 is **Prof. Borna Fuerst-Bjeliš** (University of Zagreb, Croatia) who succeeds **Prof. Steve Déry** (Université Laval, Canada).

The mission of the Commission is to research marginality and the processes of marginalization with a geographical basis, including the understanding of relations between the globalization process and the marginality at the local and regional levels; another issue is the understanding of the local and regional responses to different forms of marginality and marginalization processes.

This IGU Commission has an annual Conference, the one from 2019 being organized in Kathmandu, Nepal. The theme of the Nepal IGU Conference was “Natural Disasters, Marginalized Regions and Labor Migration”, and its scope was to understand and discuss the different dimensions of marginalized regions: natural hazards (landslides, floods, avalanches, droughts, earthquakes), social and economic issues (poor infrastructure, poverty, marginalized communities, gender problems, emigration of local people, especially the young ones) and to formulate solutions. The Conference Convener was **Prof. Pushkar K Pradhan**

(Tribhuvan University, Nepal) and the Convener Associate was **Assoc. Prof. Puspa Sharma** (Tribhuvan University, Nepal).

The Conference consisted in two major activities: scientific paper sessions and excursion. The presentations were made by participants from Asia (Nepal, Japan, China, Malaysia, India, Bangladesh, Israel), Europe (Poland, Germany, Romania), and South America (Brazil). The conference had eight topics:

1. Nature and types of marginalized regions and their causes
2. Vulnerable regions and societies
3. Socioeconomic activities and migration
4. Marginal communities & their conditions
5. Unequal ecological exchange
6. Challenges and Opportunities of marginalized regions & people
7. Measurements of marginality
8. Strategies and measures

Speakers and Chairs included internationally recognized professors and researchers in economic geography, urban science, environment, natural resources, social inequalities, integration of marginalized groups, gender studies, both from universities and research institutes and from NGO's: Ruth Kark, *Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel*; Ivaldo Lima, *Fluminense Federal University, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*; Ainong Li, *Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment, Chinese Academy of Science, China*; Paweł Churski, *Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland*; Doo-Chul Kim, *Okayama University, Japan*; Sumitra Manandhar Gurung, *CEO of Mahila Sahayatra Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd, Nepal*; Eran Razin, *Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel*; Walter Leimgruber, *University of Fribourg, Switzerland*; Nurul Islam Nazem, *University of Dhaka, Bangladesh*.

Romania had one presenter, Gabriel Camară (*Faculty of Geography and Geology, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași*), who presented the paper "Labor Emigration - a Symptom of Marginality: towards a Labor Crisis in Romanian Cities". In this paper the author analyze the decrease of the number of employees at the national level (from 8.15 million in 1990 to 4.94 million in 2017) then in the Romanian cities, influenced by

the decrease of the total number of inhabitants (from 22.4 million in 2000 to 19.5 million in 2018) and of the international emigration (with outward migration responsible for more than 75% of this decline, OECD, 2019). To attend the Conference, this proposal was funded by the Ministry of Research and Innovation within Program 1 – Development of the national RD system, Subprogram 1.2 – Institutional Performance – RDI excellence funding projects.

The paper presentation sessions were completed by local city tours and sightseeing around the cities of Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Swayambhu, with UNESCO World Heritage Sites, renowned for their age-old medieval art and architecture, pagoda temples and monuments) and field trips to Pokhara Valley and its surroundings including Sirubari and Bandipur, renewed for the Himalayas panoramas and their culture.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 Conference of this IGU Commission was postponed until 2021, in conjunction with the 34th International Geographical Congress in Istanbul, between 9-10 of August 2021 and organized fully online in partnership with the Centre for Regional Geography of Babeş-Bolyai University, from Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

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