

frames of identification of "Ladakhiness" and the accompanying claims to truth; relevance and legitimacy in the highly politicised context of social identification in Ladakh. The dissertation is an attempt to pin-point how such identification carries consequences for the practice of sustainable development - which, in spite of the initial critique, should not be discarded but further elaborated to address issues of social justice in a more distribution-independent manner. The consequences of identification along the lines of "community" is exemplified by the case of Ladakh Ecological Development Group, a local NGO with strong commitments to the preservation of "traditional" life in Ladakh. In the case of LEDeG, it is seen that the logic of communal identification in combination with the outlook and practical activities of local influential "interpreters" of contemporary life in Ladakh combine to create an organisational weakness and inability to change practices in favour of greater involvement/participation in activities. In conclusion, the dissertation asks for a reconsideration of the dual distributive basis (descriptive/normative) of the concept of sustainable development. In this respect, an emphasis on identification in relation to rights is suggested which should be informed by history and practice in a given context, rather than the assumption of distribution as empirical fact/normative goal.

**Isabelle Riaboff:** *Le Roi et le Moine. Figures et principes du pouvoir et de sa légitimation au Zaskar (Himalaya occidentale)*, University of Paris X-Nanterre, 1997, 401 p., 3 vol., photogr., maps and diagrams.

This dissertation is the result of twenty-two months of fieldwork in Zaskar in the western Himalayas (Jammu and Kashmir State, north-western India). It is a study of the connections between religion and polity in a Tibetan community. The author examines the separation between the monastic authorities and the Zaskari monarchistic structures (the King of Zangla, leader of a small kingdom, maintained his prerogatives until 1950).

After a lengthy introduction to Zaskar's geography and history, the thesis successively describes the main features of Zaskari social order, the political and religious figures, the economic foundations of the exercise of power and the ritual roles played by the King and the monks which symbolically contribute to ensure their authority and power.

In conclusion, the author considers the association between the Tibetan king and monk in comparison with the Hindu king and Brahmin as

analysed by Louis Dumont. In both cases, the hierarchy is linked to the distinction between status and power, and the pair is in a "hierarchical reversal" form of relationship. However, great divergences appear: on one hand, the Tibetan monasteries and hierarchs' economic life is not entirely comparable to the material dependence of the Brahmins upon their clients; on the other, the Buddhist king is somehow linked with the divine sphere (indeed, the idea of a strictly secular nature of the Hindu king, asserted by Dumont, is decried by numerous Indianists).

**Martijn van Beek :** *Identity Fetishism and the Art of Representation . The long struggle for regional autonomy in Ladakh*, Cornell University, 1996. 410 p., map, fig., tabl.

This study seeks to understand the mutually conditioning influences of a global hegemonic discourse of rights, rooted in contradictory imaginings of the world as populated by sovereign individuals and collectivities such as peoples, nations, tribes, communities, and state practices of resource allocation and access (globally, inter-nationally, nationally) and the complicity of (social) science in these processes. The study further investigates the links between this hegemonic grammar of identification, representation and justification, and the daily practices of people who seek to make a living under rapidly changing conditions, characterized by commodification and the (perceived) loss of decision making power to centralized institutions. It is argued that most social science and political practice suffer from identity fetishism: the perception that the social is comprised of a natural order of stable, unambiguously bounded, communities/peoples/cultures. Conceptions of justice and democracy are built on the principle of representation assuming a convergence between 'identity' and 'rights'; both multiculturalism and racism are rooted in this misrecognition of the nature of being and belonging, effectively producing the very difference that is supposed to be represented, and instituting a logic of fragmentation without end. The study uses the struggle for regional autonomy in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir, India, as an illustration. In spite of the fluidity of lived experience and practices of identification in Ladakh, the most recent agitation after 1989 pitted Tibetan Buddhists and Muslims against each other. In-depth archival and field research of the conflict and its historical background carried out during prolonged visits over a ten-year period, shows that neither causes, nor form