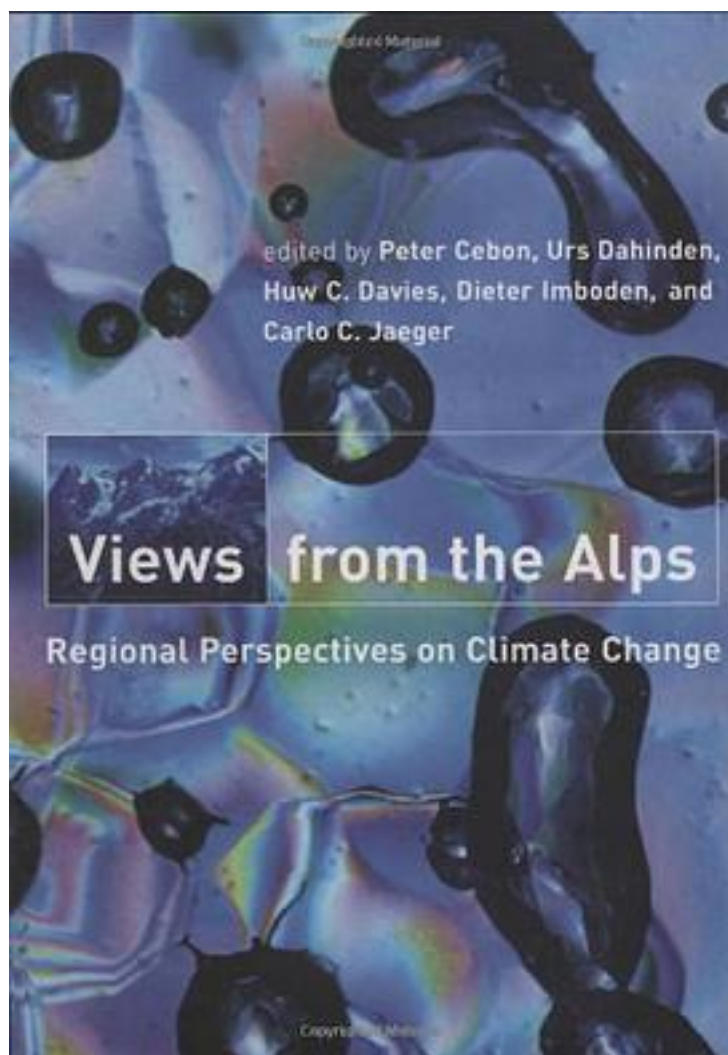


Views from the Alps



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Although climate change is a global problem, there is a growing recognition of the need to look at its regional manifestations and management. This book takes such a regional approach to the Alpine region. The result of the ongoing Swiss research program Climate and Environment in the Alpine Region (CLEAR), it incorporates the work of an independent network of approximately fifty researchers from a variety of disciplines. The Alpine region is the perfect focus for such a study because of the wealth of historical and contemporary data. The contributors avoid impractical "absolute" solutions to the problem of climate change. They explicitly recognize that climate policy involves not just environmental policy but also economic, agricultural, social, and urban policy. The science required for climate policy need not provide a single definitive answer to the problem of climate change. Rather, it can contribute a variety of insights, explanations, scenarios, and open questions to the public debate. The authors aim at a science for policy that helps to develop realistic options in an ongoing debate involving scientists as well as policymakers and ordinary citizens. Topics covered include past and current climate dynamics, scenarios for future climate development, the sensitivity of plant and soil ecosystems to climate change, scenarios for future ecosystem development, and creative policy responses to mobilize regional action for industrial innovation. The topics are addressed in the spirit of Integrated Assessment (IA), a method that combines scientific and social expertise to explore political and technical strategies for dealing with environmental problems such as climate change.

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