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Natural Disasters and Development in a Globalizing World
(review)

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some way (p. 131)” and he goes on to explain the mechanisms by which humans intervene (land use changes, legislation, and so forth).

If there is a shortcoming to this text, it is that there is heavy emphasis on breadth relative to depth. For example, Davie engages in a discussion of water quality and begins with a fair treatment of waste water treatment, which is certainly very important. However, it would be useful to see equal space devoted to other forms of water quality control, such as the major technologies being used for the purification of drinking water. Additionally, only one paragraph is devoted to point-source pollution and little more attention is given to diffuse or non-point source pollution. To his credit, though, Davie does cover some of these issues in a case study on the control of water quality within the Nashua River in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Davie’s text accomplishes its mission. He touches on many important issues in hydrology, from the current understand-

ing within the scientific community of the major hydrological processes, to data and their acquisition and analysis, to important geographical issues regarding scale. There are few errors within this text, which certainly adds to its appeal. For introductory courses in hydrology, I certainly recommend its use because of its breadth in content.

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Natural Disasters and Development in a Globalizing World

Mark Pelling (editor). Routledge, London, 2003. xv and 250 pp., illustrations, maps. \$31.95 paper (ISBN 0-415-27958-5)

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There are generally two types of edited volumes in academic literature. The first type articulates a very clear theoretical position based on a detailed literature review and gaps within the existing literature. The contributions in this type of volume typically use case studies or theoretical reflections related to the central

thesis to build a case for why the central theoretical position of the volume is relevant and useful. The second, and the more prolific, type of edited volume tends to be wide ranging surveys related to a particular theme, say environment and development, globalization, and so forth. The volume under review falls within the second

category, and unfortunately it suffers from many of the weaknesses of this later genre of edited volumes.

Natural Disasters and Development, has fifteen chapters divided into five sections. The editor Mark Pelling writes the first and last sections titled, "Introduction" and "Conclusion." The remaining thirteen chapters are divided into three sections, namely: "Global processes and environmental risk," "International exchange and vulnerability," and "Local contexts and global pressures." The introductory chapter by Pelling undertakes a very useful review of the hazards literature, particularly in the radical tradition to demonstrate the importance of linking hazards with issues of development and globalization. The discussion of globalization is sandwiched between two sub-sections on development in the chapter, which may leave an informed reader quite dissatisfied with the discussion in either one of the sections on development. The entire discussion seems to generally draw upon the political ecology literature and that is indeed expounded as one of the key theoretical frameworks for the volume at the end of the introduction. Rather unexpectedly, a discussion of complexity theory is also offered as a twin theoretical perspective. Since the complexity theory discussion is not quite developed in the preceding literature review, it ends up reading like a superfluous afterthought in the organization of the introduction.

Of the three substantive sections, the first one, "Global processes and environmental risk," is the strongest. The contributions by Neil Adger and Nick Brooks, Ben Wisner, and Maureen Fordham offer useful reflections on the state of vulner-

ability in a climate change future, the role of capitalism in constructing vulnerability, and the need for integrating gender into disaster and development studies, respectively. The last chapter in the section (by Muhammad Dore and David Etkin) is the first chapter among many that follow it, which is theoretically and politically out of step with the theoretical perspective elaborated in the introduction. The chapter makes a very poor case for disaggregating concern with vulnerable sectors of society into projects. Many practitioners and theoreticians of development have been of the view that the project approach is typically the worst option if the objective is long-term sustainability, social justice, or environmental quality (e.g., see Mitchell 1997).

The contributions in the section on "international exchange and vulnerability" leave much to be desired. The discussion of "Actors in Risk," reads like a simple description and does not draw upon any of the wealth of literature on state, and civil society synergy, or coproduction of social capital. The contribution ends in its last paragraph by abruptly springing the concept of a "triage" (a supposed policy incarnation of the medical term) as a useful way of linking risk with development. Development, of course, is very problematically equated with economic growth in this case. The conclusion is very unclear precisely because we only meet the key concept of triage in the third to last paragraph of the chapter, and most readers may end up being as unclear about the meaning of the term as I am, despite repeated readings.

The contribution on disaster diplomacy briefly lists and discusses instances of the

success or failure of disaster diplomacy to offer a modest conclusion that disasters can have a catalytic impact on international affairs, but they also may not have any effect at all. The last contribution in this section (on the insurance industry) I found somewhat frightening. As if the insurance industry is not already one of the most profitable of global businesses, a case is made that given the prospects for an increase in natural disasters, insurance premiums should be raised in the interest of maintaining the financial viability of the industry. I wonder how many readers and the vulnerable of the world would share this positive view of the industry.

The section on case studies was the weakest. Most of the case studies were shockingly superficial, and did not pay much attention to the theme of globalization. As if that was not enough, it was not too difficult to decipher the lack of analytical rigor, and therefore at times the espousal of some western neo-conservative arrogance masquerading as liberal sympathy for the poor of the world by many of the contributors. Francis Fukuyama's 1995 piece on how the West is not only the repository of material wealth but also of virtuous trust in the world seemed to feature in at least two of the contributions, one on Ecuador and the other on Bangladesh and the Netherlands (see Fukuyama 1995). Not unsurprisingly, the contributions either reach quite conservative or simply prosaic conclusions. The hazard victims in Egypt are fatalistic, while those in Britain are suspicious of technical authority. The Dutch are hyper-consensual and the Bangladeshis cannot seem to agree on anything unless they are offered money. The Ecuadorians cannot help themselves and seem to accentuate ex-

posure to landslides, therefore they need greater planning control by enlightened 'soft engineers.' One contributor quite uncritically and almost approvingly cites somebody else's argument that Turkey's shortcomings in the face of the Marmara earthquake were because it is a "culturally fatalistic society" (Ozerdem 2003, 209). The contribution on China reads like the old regional geographical monographs on the Yangtze Basin. The contributor on China also has no problem blaming the victim—the ethnic minorities in China—who are supposedly vulnerable because of their "technical backwardness, a reliance on traditional production modes and related environmental impacts" (Guojie 2003, 224). Also, in a statement reminiscent of the worst excesses of Stalinism, one of the recipes suggested for addressing vulnerability is the settlement of nomadic groups! So much for cultural sensitivity or humility in the face of complexity.

The conclusion of the anthology stands alone and does not follow at all from most of the contributions in the book. Pelling's attempts at teasing out a human rights agenda in the light of the foregoing review seems forced at best. I did not think that most of the contributors shared "an orientation towards the rights (and responsibilities) of the individual, with nods to broadly communitarian political philosophy," as Pelling insists (Pelling 2003, 236). Overall the contributions in the study, with a few honorable exceptions, did not even attempt to frame their discussion in the context of globalization or with any reference to the nuances in the development literature. Perhaps the editor of the volume was being too ambitious in terms of the breadth of the hazards, development and globalization nexus. An

anthology with fewer but more focused and critically analytical pieces could have better accomplished his laudable objective in putting together this book on a very important issue in environment and development.

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The Institutions of Local Development

Fabio Sforzi (editor). Ashgate Publishing Co., Burlington, VT, 2003. x and 195 pp.
\$89.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7546-3247-4)

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This collection of empirical and theoretical research papers makes a valuable addition to the literature on local development, with a rich variety of case studies and numerous significant findings. Although much of the debate in development geography has been focused on the global scale, the work assembled in this volume provides an important look at competitiveness, trust, and the evolution of social capital at the local scale, while not losing sight of implications to globalization. The reader is not likely to be disappointed since there is not a single weak chapter in Sforzi's collection of papers from the Study Group on Local Development of the International Geographical Union (IGU).

The authors of Chapter 1, Hallencreutz, Lundquist, and Malberg, offer insights regarding cultural, structural, and political embeddedness of the Swedish music industry, but their choice of the music sector is perhaps less socially relevant to the critical issues often at the core of development geography, such as agricultural production (Chapter 4), industrialization (Chapter 8), or at its periphery, biotechnology (Chapter

3). Safer and Schnell's (Chapter 2) discussion of the Israeli-Arab economy is quite strong, though the reader will not find links between local networks and broader global dynamics as in other chapters. Nevertheless, their interviews pointing to failed partnerships between Jewish and Arab entrepreneurs are critically important in light of the need for synthesis in the region's economy. The third chapter of Part I, dealing with place-specificity of competitiveness, explores further networking between firms in the context of biotechnology as well as information and communication technology. Cook and Huggins have chosen the economy of Cambridge, U.K. to clearly demonstrate that not only networking, but clustering and collaboration are evident and quite pronounced in the high-technology sector.

Part II shifts the reader's attention to trust shaping collective action. In Chapter 4, Fergus Lyon provides a compelling challenge to Garrett Hardin's premise that communal sharing of resources is undermined by individual profit maximization. Lyon's case study of cooperative palm oil production in Ghana illustrates the