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Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability in the Americas (review)

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Chapters four through ten are organized by the three nation states and have different points of entry into the general theme. Chapter two provides the historical context useful in interpreting current dimensions of the circulation. Chapter three is more central to the comparative theme that the author posited. Six aspects were analyzed: the spatial pattern of the three migrant populations within the United States; the spatial dimensions of the transactions that link home to their current residences in the United States; how emigrants are incorporated into the US labor market; the level and types of remittances for each group; how migrants are labeled by public discourse in sending and receiving societies; and finally, the racial composition of the migrants.

The comparisons are very nicely summarized in the final chapter in a table that illustrates where differences and similarities are drawn. Space does not permit elaboration of all the findings and comparisons. These are captured, however, in the labels the author assigns to each country's transnational experience. Cuba is the "disinterested and denouncing state" stemming from its long animosity to the United States. This antagonism has significantly influenced how migrants are able (or unable) to maintain linkages across borders. The Dominican Republic, in contrast, is a "transnational nation-state" with its own unique history of relationships with the United States, where barriers to transactions across borders are more permeable. Puerto Rico's unique form of transnationalism is shaped by the "transnational colonial state" status it holds with the United States.

The book is a valuable addition to the literature on Caribbean migration. Moreover it comes at an important time as the public discourse on immigration, particularly from Hispanic nations, is satiated with hyperbole. Contributions that help us comprehend the nature of contemporary migrant behaviors can help provide a better understanding of the issue. The transnational framing provides an excellent lens for interpretation of the migrations and helps move the dialogue beyond rhetoric. The author's personal experiences in the region add an important, albeit measured, perspective to the volume. My criticisms are minimal and certainly do not detract from the overall value of the work. I found the case studies of individual countries less helpful in developing the comparative summary. One can easily draw a straight line between chapter three, the comparative analysis, and the summary at the end by touching ever so slightly the content in the country cases. Indeed the book could have presented a stronger argument by pushing the summaries at the end into the comparative chapter and then using the case studies to reference back to those. Finally, I believe the author became too cautious at the end when posing the question of whether borders are really blurred. Also posing some new directions to move transnational research forward would have been valuable.

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Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability in the Americas. Francisco Dallmeier, Adam Fenech, Don MacIver and Robert Szaro (eds.). Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press. 2010. ix + 183 pp., color plates, figures, tables, bibliog. \$48.31 cloth (ISBN 978-0-9788-4607-7).

Seldom does the title of a book promise themes so alluring to earth scientists as climate change, biodiversity and sustainability, such that the temptation to own an

exemplar or order a copy for the institutional library is great. However, edited volumes often suffer from coherence problems, particularly if they are assembled by lax editors or when they consist of papers presented at symposia without a thorough screening of contributors.

This is, unfortunately, the case of these eight unrelated monographs. The brief six-page introduction does not provide a guide to assure unity of purpose and thematic consistency. The terms of reference for climate change, biodiversity and sustainability—all precious subjects to geographers specializing in Latin America—are not satisfactorily spelled out at the onset, as it would be expected in a primer. Sifting through the bibliographies of the chapters one notices the striking absence of even a single entry authored by a Latinamericanist geographer, an omission that disregards diversity of approaches and ignores interdisciplinary collaboration.

The complexity of contemporary climate change is addressed at an elementary level that cast doubts about the authors' understanding of the atmospheric sciences. In fact, although the term "climate change" appears in the titles of half the contributions, this seems to be a mere catch phrase in order to conform to the title of the book. Climate-linked adaptations in sensitive ecosystems are treated as localized occurrences, disconnected from broader global events, e. g. *Population Trends of Montane Birds in Southwestern Puerto Rico: Eight Years after the Passage of Hurricane Georges* by A. G. Tossas.

From a conceptual viewpoint, no distinction is made among climate oscillations, climate variability, climate singularities, or climate change, even though the specialized literature is particularly meticulous in establishing clear distinctions among these concepts. Only the chapter by M. B. Karsch and D. MacIver grasps the intricacies of climate modifications, as the authors cautiously choose the term "climate extremes" to refer to cyclical or random deviations from established climatic norms.

Biodiversity, a central theme in environmental and conservation studies, deserved an exhaustive consideration in the introduction. A review of this issue that has been intensively discussed by contemporary ecologists, would have integrated human intervention as a key modifier of species variation in the earth's ecosystems. In this respect, the most insightful contribution is that of M. Sarlo, C. Healy and C. Potvin on carbon storage in a Panamanian forest for it unveils the close connections between forest management, carbon sinks, and biodiversity. By comparison, the survey on biomass accretion and carbon storage in Costa Rica, by W. Fonseca et al., is merely descriptive and fails to place the observations in a broader regional perspective.

Even less satisfactory is the treatment of sustainability, an ample concept that has deep social and economic connotations, as well as political economic imbrications. At least on paper, environmentally-minded governments formulate conservation guidelines and seek to optimize the management of their natural resources. With the exception of the mention of sustainability in the book's title, there is scarce reference to sustainability in any of the eight contributions. The omission of this dominant paradigm in the development discourse is indeed troubling. The numerous articles, monographs, and books on sustainability in the Americas that have been written by rural sociologists, development-oriented political scientists, regional geographers, engaged ecologists, and environmental managers have gone entirely unmentioned.

While the chapters can be of empirical interest and local relevance, the editors missed an opportunity to assemble a large volume of scientific literature, panel discussions, and protocols on themes as socially relevant and politically pertinent as climate change. This task still lies ahead for a geographer with a profound understanding of the global interweaving of climate variation, species adaptation, and sustainable development. Furthermore, a future text will have to stress the progress made by collective and

individual research, and the actual the state of knowledge in the environmental sciences concerning biodiversity and sustainable development as they relate to climate variability.

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Turn Right at Machu Picchu: Rediscovering the Lost City One Step at a Time. Mark Adams. New York: Dutton, 2011. 333 pp. maps, photographs, glossary, chronology, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$26.95 cloth (ISBN 978-0-525-95224-4).

This book documents the journey the author, Mark Adams, undertook to visit the Inca ruins that Yale University historian Hiram Bingham III sighted in his exploratory trips during the 1910s. Bingham gained international fame for allegedly discovering these ruins, Machu Picchu in particular. At the same time, Bingham was notorious for overstating the significance of his findings, especially considering that Machu Picchu had been locally known—and probably looted—before Bingham saw it for the first time in 1911.

Initially, Adams' travelogue seems to serve mainly as a device to recount Bingham's archeological trips and assess what the academic community, politicians, and even pop culture have made of Bingham's legendary findings. To this end, Adams alternates his travel journal with a narrative of Bingham's life and times, especially unraveling Bingham's exploratory trips in tandem with his own progress in reaching the same archeological landmarks. This narrative allows Adams to discuss in a refreshing way what has happened to these ruins since Bingham brought global attention to them. Archival research and a review of Bingham's Inca-related publications and personal journals add an important historical component to the book. Adams' historical accounts seek to fill the gaps between 1) what was known about these abandoned Inca settlements at the time Bingham conducted his explorations; 2) what Bingham theorized about Machu Picchu and other findings; 3) what Bingham might have deliberately avoided discussing in his publications in order to establish the relevance of his discoveries and the validity of his theories; and 4) what is known contemporarily about the original function and meaning of these settlements and constructions. For instance, a historical thread in the book focuses on the conflicted relationship between Manco Inca Yupanqui and Francisco Pizarro, the *conquistador* who originally instrumented Manco Inca's rise to power. Adams indicates that while Bingham believed Machu Picchu might be Vilcabamba, the city where Manco Inca retreated when pursued by Pizarro in the 1530s, current theories establish that Machu Picchu was devised and erected under Pachacutec's rule (1438-1471).

For all the historical review and discussion of Bingham's works and field adventures, it is Adams' travelogue that constitutes this book's backbone. The author vividly—and often humorously—recounts the physical and emotional hardships of his personal journey, providing a candid account of his interactions with local guides, villagers, and government employees working in the archeological sites visited. Adams hired the Australian explorer John Leivers to organize and lead two excursions to Machu Picchu. Surprisingly, as the relationship between the author and Leivers is shown to deepen, Leivers becomes an increasingly important presence in the book, whose passion for exploring is at times compared—in a positive light—to Bingham's thirst for adventure and