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Natural Hazards and Human-exacerbated Disasters in Latin America

Edited by Edgardo G. Latrubesse. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Elsevier, 2010. Special Volumes of Geomorphology: Developments in Earth Surface Processes 13. xiv + 510 pp. US$ 128.00. ISBN 978-0-444-53117-9.

Since 1989, Elsevier has published many collections of high-quality research papers in the series, *Developments in Earth Surface Processes*; the present volume maintains this high standard. Edgardo Latrubesse is to be congratulated for editing a selection that focuses on Latin America, a region where many natural disasters occur and which is not very well known outside of specialized research circles. All contributors are highly regarded in their fields and, as might be expected, not only does the volume report high-quality research, it also presents this work in an attractive and accessible way that should appeal to the senior undergraduate, graduate student, and established academic alike.

The volume comprises 20 systematic chapters and concludes with the editor's fine essay, "A Latin American Perspective on Geomorphological Hazards and Related Disasters." The systematic chapters report findings on: climate- and geomorphology-related disasters in Latin America (Garcia, Ferreira, and Latrubesse); geomorphology as a tool for analyzing seismic sources (Costa, Audemard, Audin, and Benevente); changing coastlines in South America (Isla and Schnack); disasters in Mexico and Central America (Alcántara-Ayala); the construction of vulnerability and high levels of seismic risk in Venezuela (Laffaille, Ferrer, and Laffaille); natural hazards and human-induced disasters in Venezuela caused by high rainfall (Bezada); hazards in the Colombian highlands (Hermelin and Hoyos); disasters in Ecuador (Sarmiento), Peru (Young and León), and Bolivia (Latrubesse, Baker, and Argollo); soil erosion in Brazil (Castro, Pereira, and Neto); landslide disasters in Brazil (Coelho-Netto, Souza Avelar, and Lacerda); urban flooding in Brazil (Stevaux, Latrubesse, Hermann, and Aquino); seismic and volcanic hazards in Argentina (Perucca and Moreiras); landslides in Argentina (Moreiras and Coronato); floods in Argentina (Latrubesse and Brea); desertification in Patagonia (Mazzonia and Vazquez); hazards and human-induced disasters in Chile (Cecioni and Pineda); climate change and its effects on permafrost in South America (Rabassa); and possible future changes in geomorphological hazards in Latin America (Goudie).

In a volume of uniformly high quality, it is difficult to highlight particularly noteworthy papers, but this reviewer particularly appreciated contributions on: geomorphology as a tool for analyzing seismic sources; soil erosion in Brazil; seismic and volcanic hazards in Argentina; and hazards and human-induced disasters in Chile. One negative feature of the book is that the photographs and maps are not of a uniformly high standard; indeed, some of the maps are too small to be easily read. At a price of US$ 128, this volume will only be purchased by the most specialized researcher, but it is highly recommended for library use, and the availability of an electronic version should greatly assist its use within the student market. Overall, it is an excellent volume that I am pleased to commend.

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