

## BOOK REVIEWS

### A Note From the Editors

We have not yet published reviews of a number of books obtained from publishers because those to whom the books were sent for review, after agreeing to do so, have failed to provide the reviews. Worst, they have failed, despite several written requests, to return the copies of the books so they could be sent out to other reviewers. Publishers provide only one copy for review purposes, and without the book being returned we cannot provide a review. Listed below are the books for which we have not received the requested and agreed upon reviews. Our apologies to the authors along with a plea to delinquent reviewers to return the books so they can be sent out to be reviewed by someone else.

The editors of the journal have also decided that it will be policy from this time on not to accept articles for publications or to review books of authors who have failed to live up to their agreement to do book reviews.

#### **Books Received But Not Reviewed Because of Delinquent Reviewers**

Committee on Natural Disasters. THE AUSTIN TEXAS FLOOD OF MAY 24-25, 1981.

Mileti, Hutton and Sorensen. EARTHQUAKE PREDICTION RESPONSE AND OPTIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY.

Perry and Greene. CITIZEN RESPONSE TO VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS: THE CASE OF MT. ST. HELENS.

Transportation Research Board. TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: TOWARD A NATIONAL STRATEGY.

Saarinen (ed.). PERSPECTIVES ON INCREASING HAZARD AWARENESS:

Saarinen and McPherson. NOTICES, WATCHES AND WARNINGS: AN APPRAISAL OF THE U.S.G.S.'s WARNING SYSTEM WITH A CASE STUDY FROM KODIAK, ALASKA.

**International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters, 1985**

Committee on Natural Disasters. THE CENTRAL GREECE EARTHQUAKES OF FEBRUARY-MARCH 1981: A RECONNAISSANCE AND ENGINEERING REPORT.

The Royal Society. RISK ASSESSMENT: REPORT OF A ROYAL SOCIETY STUDY GROUP.

American Red Cross. SAN FRANCISCO CORPORATE DISASTER PLANNING GUIDE.

Southern California Earthquake Preparedness Project. JAPANESE EARTHQUAKE PREDICTION/PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM.

E.L. Quarantelli. SHELTERING AND HOUSING AFTER MAJOR COMMUNITY DISASTERS: CASE STUDIES AND GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

Bryan. IMPLICATIONS FOR CODES AND BEHAVIOR MODELS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF BEHAVIOR RESPONSE PATTERNS IN FIRE SITUATIONS.

If we receive the books back, they will be sent out for review and published in the journal.

PERSPECTIVE ON DISASTER RECOVERY. By Jerri Laube and Shirley A. Murphy. Norwalk, Connecticut: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1985. 325 pp. U.S. \$26.95.

**E.L. Quarantelli**  
University of Delaware, USA

This is a very odd and puzzling book. The title is misleading since it is not generally about the social, economic, demographic, organizational, etc. aftermaths of disasters, but mostly about mental health and psychological aftereffects as Roy Popkin correctly points out in the Introduction. Two persons are listed on the title page as authors, although 10 of the 14 chapters in the book are by other listed writers which would normally make the volume an edited one. But assuming they are not editors makes the two title page authors even more responsible for whatever appears in other chapters. There are two chapters on the mass media seemingly written without the two sets of authors involved being aware of what the others were writing-

-along with a totally false claim not by the authors of one of the chapters but by the "editors" that "their chapter represents the first comprehensive paper to be published on this topic" (p. xv) when the chapter itself primarily uses and credits its key questions and ideas as being drawn from the basic volume on the topic, namely the 1980 National Academy of Sciences report, Disasters and the Mass Media. A chapter reporting a study of role conflict makes no reference to Killian's seminal article on the topic and does not allude at all to the comprehensive empirical study by Meda White, as well as the follow up research on the issue done at the disaster Research Center. The "editors" let a statement slip by that "until 1972 little attention was given to the mental health aspects of disaster because the single authoritative study in the field said there were no problems" (p. xi) ignoring Tyhurst's well known and to this day cited work (e.g. in the Psychiatric Annals of March 1985) where he claimed in the 1950s that up to 75% of victims exhibited some negative psychological effects. Scope of impact, event intensity, event duration, speed of onset and agent-versus response-produced stressors are all discussed (pp. 7-8) without any reference whatsoever to the previous researchers in the disaster area who coined and developed the terms and the concepts. There is also a chapter on children as victims in disasters which undertakes a dubious statistical analysis and has a very questionable dependent variable. The book ends with an epilogue that contains an anecdotal account about a personal reaction to a blizzard which, however, appears unrelated to anything else in the book. But then this is a book which generally ignores very relevant work such as Warheit's evaluative summary of the Three Mile Island psychological literature, Zusman's serious methodological critique of the Buffalo Creek work which found pathology, Drabek's classic experimental design study which has just about the only set of pre-impact data for any victim population studied, Golec's Teton Dam research which showed the greater importance of political rather than psychological factors in long run recovery, as well as Australian work on the cyclone in Darwin and Italian post-earthquake studies which have dealt with long run psychological effects.

We have presented enough illustration to indicate the poor organizational and substantive qualities of this volume. Any knowledgeable student of the disaster area would have no difficulty finding other instances of unusual editing and poor scholarship, as well as reinventions of conceptual and observational wheels. But is the book a complete waste of time for veterans in the disaster field and misleading for novices? No it is not. There is a chapter by Mary Evans Mellick entitled

"The Health of Postdisaster Populations: A Review"; It is an excellent analysis and also shows first class scholarship. It may be the best article so far on the topic and may attain the status of a minor classic. In addition, Hartsough does a respectable job of laying out how individual psychological effects might be measured following a community disaster. Also, those not familiar with the comprehensive post-impact study of the 1976 Guatemalan earthquake undertaken by Dr. Frederick Bates and his colleagues, can find a selective presentation on certain topics of that research in the paper by JoAnn Glittenberg.

The possible audiences for this book baffles me. Besides problems already noted, the articles are unintegrated with one another, deal only with some of the possible relevant major topics even on mental health and psychological aspects, and are written at levels that range from the Readers Digest to highly exotic specialized research journals. Even though my name is among those most cited in the index, I can not recommend that any individual buy the book. Apart from the fact that purchases might unfortunately encourage other publishers to put out similar volumes, the money required to get a copy can far better be spent on obtaining four or five of the generally high quality publications put out at the University of Colorado Natural Hazards Information Center. However, highly specialized disaster research libraries should get a copy; it is after all their responsibility to collect anything of a disaster relevant nature irrespective of its quality. Besides, if a few libraries do not get the book, researchers instead of using a copying machine will have to write for her article directly to Mellick at the Special Projects Research Unit of the State of New York Office of Mental Health in Albany, New York.

VICTIMS OF THE ENVIRONMENT-LOSSES FROM NATURAL HAZARDS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1970-1980. By Peter Rossi, James D. Wright, Eleanor Weber-Burdin, and Joseph Pereira. New York: Plenum Press, 1983, 238 pp. \$24.50

**Alcira Kreimer**

George Washington University, USA

This volume, the third in a series of monographs on the effects of natural hazards events in the United States, focuses on households that were directly affected by natural hazards during the period 1970-1980. The research design is based on a large-

scale data collection effort. The estimates of hazardous events are derived from mail and telephone surveys of a large sample of households that experienced the impact of floods, tornadoes, hurricanes or earthquakes during the period 1970-1980. To provide a comparative frame, experiences with household fires were also studied. And to take the comparative frame one step further, the five "trivial and nontrivial natural hazards" (fires, floods, etc.), were compared with "bad-luck" events and "personal breakdowns".

The data collection effort that included an initial 36108 telephone numbers and apparently achieved a reasonably good percentage of phone numbers with at least one contact--56.7 percent according to table 3.1, or 57.6 percent according to the text on page 26--was significant. However, the conceptualization in the study of hazardous events, disaster experiences, and victimization is weak. Indeed, this book shows that massive data collection cannot substitute for an analytical framework that is missing.

The reader needs to be cautious in interpreting the findings. For example, the study covers an eleven year period that is unrepresentative for those events, out of the five hazards analyzed, that have long return cycles (e.g. earthquakes vis-a-vis household fires). Or, under the heading "The Spatial and Social Distribution of Natural Disaster Events", the tabulation reflects each household at its present location and not at the location where the hazard took place. Thus, as the authors acknowledge, given the considerable migration and mobility patterns of the United States population over an 11 year period, the location of disaster events is not related to regional distribution but to the location of the respondent when answering the survey.

Throughout the text, the use of factual statements as well as the lack of clarity in style lead to misinterpretations of the findings. For example, the authors report on p. 86 that "Owners were somewhat less exposed than renters to personal breakdown events. An white households were more likely to experience natural hazards, most likely snowstorms and hailstorms, that were so large a component of these additional hazards. Whites were also more likely to experience 'bad-luck' events, and these were also more likely to occur for those who lived in large cities". Since these findings are derived from the answers of a group of people to a questionnaire and were not checked for accuracy against other records concerning the reported phenomena, it would be safer for the reader to assume that in fact owners perceived themselves as less exposed than renters to personal breakdown events; that white households perceived themselves

as being more exposed to snowstorms and hailstorms than other types of households; and, that whites living in large cities perceived themselves as more exposed to "bad luck" events than other groups. That is, readers will have to exercise good judgment and realize that the study findings stating that whites in large cities are more likely to experience auto accidents, crime, shootings, unemployment, the birth of a defective child or an unexpected death of a family member (all phenomena included in the "bad luck" category) should not be taken as an indication of reality, but as the result of the specific way data were collected and analyzed by the researchers. In the same vein, when the authors report that "noxious events and natural hazards behave differently, the former being heavily dependent on the region and the latter being more dependent on the household characteristics" (p. 86), common sense indicates that the reader should assume that this is a question concerning the way the survey findings were analyzed rather than the factual behavior of natural hazards or of noxious events.

Contradictory statements in the text do not help to shed light on the problem of losses from natural hazards in the United States. On page 51 we read the following statement: "Even under our rather lenient and inclusive definitions, hazard experiences were **relatively rare** (emphasis added). All told, a little more than one in every four households (25.3 percent) experienced at least one of the five hazards (fires, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and earthquakes) in that period". On page 86 we read a statement that contradicts the one above: "Experience with natural hazards--fires, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes and earthquakes ... is **relatively frequent** (emphasis added) for the American population as a whole. Over the decade of the 1970's about one household in four experienced such an event". Should the reader conclude that the fact that natural hazards are experienced by one in four households is a relatively rare or a relatively frequent event?

Certainly the number of words used throughout the study to refer to natural hazards is abundant. However, after reading about "the routine garden variety hazard events"; "noxious events that include other hazard events"; "trivial" and "nontrivial" events and "serious events" that are defined as those events that "include a home fire that destroyed a five-dollar waste paper basket as well as one that destroyed the whole house", we are left in a daze. It is comforting to learn at the end of the study, that in spite of all the confusion surrounding natural hazards--to which this book makes a significant contribution--most of the victims of serious hazard events receive help. Most are contacted by a least one help-giving agency, and most

of the victims contacted reported a high degree of satisfaction with the services received.

EINFÜHRUNG IN DIE SOZIOLOGIE DER KATASTROPHEN.  
By Lars Clausen and Wolf Dombrowsky (eds.), Bonn: Osang Verlag,  
1983. 209 pp. DM 20. (In German)

Philipp Sonntag  
West Germany

The book is adequately named "Introduction into the Sociology of Catastrophes". It is too early for an established "textbook" with a coherent theoretical structure, but at the same time the state of the art is well beyond a mere "workshop report" of diverging special subjects. Both editors are members of the Institute of Sociology, University of Kiel, an old Hanseatic harbour town on the Baltic Sea. This Institute is the center for a German group dealing with the sociology of catastrophes. It is in close contact with members of the American sociological disaster research institutions, as is documented by several contributors to the book.

From the outset the editors claim a surprisingly wide range of potential readers. They wish to write for:

- social scientists
- political representatives
- practitioners in organizations such as the Red Cross and other administrative agencies.

The overall purpose is to demonstrate the importance of knowledge covering the political and societal consequences of disasters. In Germany, research covering disasters has, by and large, been carried out by engineers, with some contributions by medical, psychological or judicial experts, but only rarely by sociologists or political scientists. There has been a bitter debate about what in German is called "Notstandsgesetze": What power should a government have in the event of an atomic war, a major terrorist challenge or a major catastrophe to establish law and order? How should we prevent a misuse of this power?

Most studies on civil defense used a merely technical approach and lacked an understanding of the basic reactions of ordinary people. Dombrowsky clearly mentions this phenomenon in his historical outline: There is a broad and yet unjustified consensus among politicians, administrators and practitioners; namely

that one could successfully cope with any catastrophe, even nuclear warfare, if only the equipment, training and guidance could be made perfect. But we have a tendency to be perfect in Germany anyway. We have an abundance of judicial regulation, laws, administrative notes and organizational management instructions. Not only are seven ministries in Bonn concerned with Civil Defense, but also numerous other local agencies and military offices. In a desperate attempt to combine all the divergent regulations within one law, the Ministry of the Interior has now, in 1985, put forward a draft for an all-encompassing new law for Civil Defense called: "Entwurf eines neuen Zivilschutzgesetzes". While Dombrowsky could not have forecast this recent draft bill in his 1983 writing, his critique of desperate and still helpless bureaucratic attempts is markedly appropriate. Political lipservice and judicial perfection could never mobilize adequate resources, neither the cooperation of the public nor the financial means which a rich society might invest if it really wanted to do so.

The reserved public debate on civil defense and the limitations of all efforts in this area are much the same in both the United States and Germany. Yet, the editors put emphasis on two issues:

they call American catastrophe sociology 'scientific pragmatism lacking basic theory' while at the same time they appear jealous of the comparatively advanced and very well established research capabilities of the Americans and recognize the knowledge of the American school as the state of the art worldwide. They link the pragmatism to the focus on catastrophes rather than on warfare. They criticise the generalization of experiences in limited catastrophes to the totally different situation regarding major nuclear war where radioactivity paralyzes many attempts to rebuild a society.

German Civil Defense, even with the most limited resources, achieved a remarkable alleviation of suffering even during the mass destruction of World War II. But this effort is hardly recognized because 'right' as well as 'left' wing political forces, after decade-long debates, now acknowledge the fact that even a small percentage of the tactical nuclear weapons of NATO, if used for defensive purposes, would destroy the country beyond repair, regardless of what Civil Defense preparations were at hand. Therefore to mention Civil Defense success is frowned upon, as if it implied atomic war would be tolerable.

Civil Defense, in Germany in particular, reminds the older people of the most adverse experiences of World War II. There

have been hardly any significant natural catastrophes in Germany which might call for major preparations. This situation contributes to a climate of scientific avoidance of the subject. There have been hardly any pragmatic sociological projects which could be financed. Even then the practitioners had their own very technical and narrow research topics, mostly lacking any theory of psychological or societal behavior, while the theoreticians, the few professors of sociology or political science who selected these subjects, remained well sheltered in their ivory towers.

The book is a very useful review of the multitude of worldwide research. Case studies are put into a matrix framework of time (warning, threat, impact etc.) and social response (social change, stress, isolation etc.). While such categorizations are helpful to train students, the practical value can only emerge gradually from good and bad experiences while using them.

The administration wants push-button tactics, but group dynamics cannot be programmed like a computer. Accordingly, Dombrowsky mentions the failure of FEMA's attempt to provide an "all-hazard readiness and response orientation". The social scientists point out that social certainty (well founded hopes; successful support for own relatives; professional leaders, even if self-elected etc.) does markedly increase a cooperative attitude among the population. While the phenomenology of disasters is very well documented, including the behavior of the population, there is still a lack of "basic theory" on how to organize the optimal cooperative attitude in the middle of chaos after a catastrophic impact.

Clausen cautiously does bring forward a first "sketch of a model" of macro-sociological processes. After mentioning the mental forerunners from Immanuel Kant and Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy to Norbert Elias and Wieland Jäger, he describes the dynamics of "radical, rapid and ritual" change, where the actual disaster (tornado, war etc.) actually is "only" the trigger for a societal breakdown. Before the impact, the economic and social structures already had a liability to breakdown, and after the impact new coping mechanisms may or may not emerge, as the case and the crisis management may be. Clausen distinguishes six states, in order to describe the dynamics of breakdown and recovery of societies. A transition from I to II, III, IV, V and through VI back to I is possible, but any other transition between the states might also occur. The essentials in a simplified form:

- I The establishment of peace through professional and efficient elimination of dangers and damage.

- II Business as usual with a relaxed, but inexperienced and therefore vulnerable control of dangers.
- III The formation of class structures. Elites of experts are confronted by exploited and thus suspicious laymen, competition ruins cooperation and increases the vulnerability of the society. While efficient reforms could bring the society back to state II or I, any increasing radicalisation of societal process and neglect of environmental care can promote state IV.
- IV Catastrophe: Its impact in a sense proves the elites wrong if they cannot prevent or cope with the situation. Secrecy and rigid displays of power can increase the tensions and bring state V closer.
- V The end of cooperative measures. Clausen describes the breakdown of expert elites, of organizational structures, even of family ties. It is the decay of the society into single persons or ad-hoc hordes seeking survival on a day to day basis.
- VI The liquidation of values. This cauldron of broken manners, values and hopes can provide resources for a new emerging pragmatism, possibly leading through deliberate hardship toward state I again.

This theory would only consist of naked bones, if it were not for the flesh of historical events which Clausen quotes over and over again to explain his theory and its dynamics. In order to establish a consistent theory of catastrophes, he uses the entire field of social science, in order to speak about personal rigidities and about the "decline and rise of societies".

While these theoretical considerations mainly have an aesthetic value, especially for teaching purposes, their practical value will depend on their application to policy. The message is that the impact of catastrophes is to a large extent a function of the vulnerability of the society, which can be narrowed down to a few essential factors.

The book then presents five research topics of practical relevance, mainly in order to demonstrate the state of the art of the 'American School' of catastrophe sociology.

Dombrowsky reports models of the development of catastrophes from a "stage model" to a "capability profile" for crisis management. Roland Perry discusses the crucial decision whether to stay in or leave a dangerous (especially a radioactive) area. Kathleen Tierney stresses the importance of social factors for the prevention and control of chemical catastrophes. E.L. Quarantelli reports on different types of group behavior during and after catastrophes, exploiting the experience of more than 200 empirical studies carried out in the Disaster Research Center

since its foundation in 1963. Interestingly, he notes that research has focused on the spontaneous formation of ad-hoc groups, which may be much more efficient in crisis management than the officially intended committees.

Thomas A. Drabek investigates the search-and-rescue measures employed after major catastrophes. Besides the old and well known phenomenologies - like people mostly don't panic - the author provides a comprehensive overview of the many measures of support for victims carried out by official or unofficial groups.

The complex network of different organizations involved after the impact of a catastrophe is investigated by some of the researchers using different methods based on different theories. The comparative studies, for example, reveal marked cultural differences of reactions among nations.

The overall emphasis of the book is to demonstrate the professional experience achieved in the field after a few decades of systematic research. It is clear that at this time there are more open questions than answers in many areas. There is another cultural difference that should be mentioned: The German emphasis on theory and "serious scientific research" is a result of the organization of science. University institutes are established according to mainstream academic faculties. It is next to impossible to destroy them. Funds for projects are side affairs, a kind of extra "pocket money" for professors who are part of the establishment. Research projects are often carefully selected by the government so that business as usual may not be challenged. Ivory tower theory without a risk of practical consequences is therefore preferred, especially in the social sciences. Any and all critical, especially Marxist, social science projects are abhorred, an attitude which was often reinforced by meaningless and elitist abstract theories. In the USA, the very existence of many institutes depends on the practical relevance of their research. That is a more healthy situation, but it implies the risk of an altogether too pragmatic viewpoint and a lack of generalizable theory. The shortcomings of the German scientific culture in contrast to this were often a lack of practical application. The book is a deliberate attempt to demonstrate both at the same time: Scientific seriousness and practical usefulness. Did the authors succeed? My impression is: The book is a step forward to establish the research among their social science colleagues. More difficult is a gradual change of old political and administrative habits in the field of catastrophe planning and civil defense. Understanding the sociology of disasters in the public will remain a slow process. At least the process has been started; the book is number 14 in a series of civil defense publications closely connected to

the Ministry of Home Affairs after the first 13 publications had been of a merely technical and medical nature. Now being part of the establishment, the German catastrophe sociologists should watch their step, yet keep their pace and direction.

## NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Papers must be written in English. Authors should recognize that the journal has an international audience and is read by those for whom English is not their native language. Therefore, the style should be kept as simple as possible. Allusions to local phenomena not readily recognizable outside of national boundaries must be explicitly explained. Acronyms should not be used unless universally known.

Text material may be presented in any order appropriate for the topic being discussed. However, headings and subheadings should be judiciously used to divide a solid text. Substantive discussions should be ordered in the most relevant manner, but special attention should be paid to the following matters: theoretical and research articles must be scholarly as well as scientific, i.e., they must provide more than prefatory or nominal references to the literature and offer an awareness of existing trends and issues in the area under discussion. For an article to be a contribution to the field, authors should indicate where its place is in the history of disaster studies and avoid another "discovery of the wheel". Implications of theoretical and research articles must also be made explicit. The contribution of the article to public policy, or planning, future research and/or theoretical advances must be clearly stated. Within the article itself, authors must give readers an answer to the question, "so what?" Articles without an appropriate treatment of the literature or clear indications of substantive implications are very unlikely to be accepted for publication.

The journal is multi- and inter-disciplinary, so jargon peculiar to one field must be avoided. The active is preferred over passive voice. Articles may be written in the first person, as well as the third person. Sexist and racist language is unacceptable.

There are no fixed lengths for theoretical and research articles, but manuscripts over 30 double-spaced typed pages (including footnotes, tables, and references) would have to be highly exceptional to be accepted. It is the responsibility of authors to determine the length of their papers. Therefore, extra long manuscripts should not be submitted in the hope that journal referees and editors will suggest how a shorter, more acceptable paper could be produced. Such recommendations will not be provided. Brief articles of only several pages are acceptable, but authors should consider if such a contribution might be