

Armando Lares. *La Conducta Humana en los Desastres*. Caracas, Venezuela: Fondo Editorial Comun, 1977, 256 pp. (in Spanish)

Armando Lares, author of *La Conducta Humana en los Desastres*, is professor of Sociology of the School of Public Administration of the Universidad Central de Venezuela.

The book is divided into four sections. The first section, on psychological theories of human nature, includes chapters reviewing the ideas of social behaviorism, social learning and motivation, human needs, socialization, G. LeBon's work on collective behavior, and a review of T. Parsons' social action theory. The second part, dealing with disasters as events, includes chapters on the definitions

and extant sociological conceptions of disaster. The third part deals with reactions to disasters and to earthquakes in Venezuela. In the fourth section Lares presents the results of interviews with persons in disaster areas in Honduras (Hurricane Fifi) and in Peru (Earthquake of October 3, 1974).

As a first attempt to introduce the study of disaster in Latin America the book represents a worthwhile idea. Obviously, there is a dire need to establish current knowledge of disaster processes on a crosscultural bases. Unfortunately, however, this book suffers from a number of serious shortcomings. Thus, the first part on theories of human nature does not relate at all to the rest of the book. Similarly, the second part is a mere description, albeit incomplete, of North American disaster knowledge without an attempt at critical evaluation of the applicability of these ideas in the Latin American societies. This reviewer would have preferred to see a greater emphasis being placed on the local conditions or context. It is to be hoped that future work on disasters in Latin America will reflect a greater emphasis on criticism and synthesis.

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