

PANEL PROPOSAL

Persistence and change in local knowledge in dealing with natural hazards in the Philippines

Convener: Soledad Natalia M. Dalisay, Ph.D., sol.dalisay@yahoo.com
Department of Anthropology
University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City
Philippines

People deal with hazards in their environment in various ways that they consider to be meaningful and have been helped them overcome these hazards through several encounters in the past. In many instances in their past a group of people have engaged with particularly damaging hazards using tried and tested ways that have saved their lives. Such ways form part of a group of people's local knowledge and practices. Local knowledge and practices include worldviews that explain the occurrence of a natural hazard, predicting its occurrence and potential impacts as well as several ways of effectively stemming the potential damage these hazards can bring. Two dominant views regarding how people engage with hazards are presented by Oliver-Smith and Hoffman (2002) and Slater (2014). Oliver-Smith and Hoffman believed that when faced with a hazard, people will "recant or reinvent their cultural system". Slater on the other hand, contended that several disaster ethnographies have shown persistence in local knowledge and practices that people systematically hold on to familiar "cultural and social schema" in adapting to hazards in a given environment. Studies have shown that in several communities in the Philippines, people have dealt with natural hazards with both persistence and change in terms of their local knowledge and practices. This panel delves into local explanatory models for a natural hazard, signs found in nature that predicted the onset of a hazard, as well as the practice of religious rites and rituals in peoples' attempts to stem great devastation because of a hazard. Through the various studies in this panel it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the processes involved in persistence and change in local knowledge and practices in the context of resilience as people engage with natural hazards in the Philippines will be developed.

Single session