

Reviewing the place of Migrants in Disasters: A personal perspective

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The proposed presentation generally aims to explore the intersections between migrant studies and research on disaster risk reduction. In particular it examines how migrant vulnerabilities and strengths are regarded in selected literature on disaster risk reduction from the perspective of a particular migrant cohort.

The discussion draws from the early phases of my work as a Filipino-born PhD student in Victoria, Australia. Inspired by global frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Global Compact for Migration, I eventually hope to generate data that examines perceptions of disasters among Filipino migrants in Australia, as a foundation for developing migrant risk reduction schemes.

This presentation shares reflections from my initial review of literature, through which I infer that inadequately accounting for migrant status in disaster reports overlooks critical aspects of strengths and vulnerabilities. However, when migrant identity is racialised, this also limits insights. While migrant problems and strengths can be self-evident to migrants themselves, these can be lost in national discourses that privilege dominant perspectives of what is significant in disaster studies.

This stage of my literature review has been helpful in analysing frameworks for reviewing the place of migrants in disasters. The evolution of disaster conceptions through sociological, anthropological, ecological and cultural perspectives matches the realisation of the need for broader frameworks with which to understand the complex challenges faced by migrants in developed countries like Australia today. Ultimately, disaster research approaches need to account for socio-economic and policy structures that overlook migrants or regard them as powerless in disaster scenarios. By sharing these views, I hope to help amplify this perspective on a conceptual level as well as in actual practice.

Emerging voices and pathways to inclusive disaster studies