



Coping mechanisms through experience and collective memory

There are frequent examples in the literature on disaster and disaster management that show cultures which are often exposed to extreme phenomena to create coping mechanisms so as to include the abnormal character of disaster into a routine, and, therefore, into the normalcy of everyday life. According to Bankoff, for instance, for Filipinos, hazard and disaster are simply accepted aspects of daily life, what can be termed a frequent life experience. (...) It is so ordinary that Filipino cultures are partly the product of adaptation by communities to these phenomena through processes that permit the incorporation of threat into daily life, or what can be called the “normalization of threat” (Bankoff, 2009, p. 265). As Bankoff discovered, normalization of threat by the, for example, Filipino, implied the creation of distinctive patterns of activity as well as behaviour, and that, despite the dissimilarities between various ethnic communities. From materials used in architecture to agricultural patterns or seasonal migration patterns, cultural norms and every day practices seem to have been regulated so as to avoid and contain the effects of seismic and meteorological disasters that frequently affect the country. Material culture practice may or may not be of relevance to other countries in other climates. They belong to the local and maintain across the centuries local value as long as they are still integrated by modern communities. Psychological and emotional adaptation strategies integrated into cultural norms may, on the other hand, bear greater relevance and importance for cultures across the world as they can always be trained and exercised through education, preparation and training. Cognitive and behavioural responses designed to reduce psychological distress, passed on from one generation to the next with the help of collective memory represent one of the cultural mechanisms that must be correctly assessed and benefitted from. In the Philippines, migration and relocation can be regarded as preventative coping practices, as they attempt to prevent the same set of circumstances from recurring (Bankoff, 2009, 265).

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Attitudes toward authorities](#), [Customs/traditions/rituals](#), [Norms/values](#), [Worldviews](#), [Individual/collective memory](#)

Disaster Phases: [Prevention](#), [Preparedness](#), [Response](#), [Recovery](#), [All disaster phases](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [Local authorities](#), [Non-active citizens](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#), [Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations](#), [Man-made intentional hazards](#)

Recommendations:

- [Develop guidelines for disaster practitioners that take into consideration the different needs of and approaches to different ethnic groups](#)
- [Foster the adoption of a culture of disaster prevention and resilience by informing and motivating citizens to take action](#)

Source

[Deliverable D8.1 "Report on risk communication models and best practices" \(page 51\)](#)



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