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KNOWLEDGE



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Open panel

OP 056. Critical Issues in the Anthropology of Risk and Disaster

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Abstract: Anthropology has become a major contributor to the understanding of risk and disaster. As our involvement in the problem has increased, critical issues have arisen in our examinations and our foci, both on the ground in field situations and in our discernment and analysis. It is not unconnected that simultaneously all manner of calamitous events, from hurricane to earthquake, famine, fire, flood and more have occurred worldwide impacting or imperiling ever larger numbers of peoples, ever more societies and time-honored cultures. As the global situation concerning risk and disaster has become more critical and our involvement as social scientists, humanitarians, and advisors has also grown, so have the critical issues and topics that have come to the fore of our concerns. This panel endeavors to explore the scope of the anthropological involvement in both the subject and actuality of risk and disaster. It proposes to act as a review of the of themes, situations, understandings old to new that have emerged. Some of the critical issues could include: the increase in disaster events and the driving factors; particular place and events; the gap between what we know and what enters policy and practice; the lingering consequences of colonization and decolonization to vulnerability; the expansion of nation state involvement and, greatly, of NGOs involved; climate change and its impacts on people and life ways; not only risk reduction but the matter of risk creation, including the effects of development, urbanization, coastalization, and neo-liberal exploitation; the greatly expanded and more so threatened resettlement of people from their environments and sustenances; ideology, symbolism, myth, art and literature, and other social and cultural factors encompassed. The panel is open to a wide variety of contributions.

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