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Resilient city making in the time of climate catastrophe: Imaginaries, Processes, Paradoxes, Futures, and Promise

My research examines how a flood-resilient Metro Manila is being built in the aftermath of the 2009 Ondoy flood disaster that reconstituted the Philippines' disaster risk management framework. I conduct a critical discourse analysis of in-depth interviews and an array of texts including policies, plans, reports, and archival documents and read this through the concepts of resiliency revanchism, agnotology, mobility justice, urban edge, and disaster reparations. This unfolds in five empirical and analytical chapters which I designate as Imaginaries, Processes, Paradoxes, Futures, and Promise. I begin my discussion by examining the construction of slum-free imaginaries of a flood-resilient Manila to show how expertise produced ignorance to legitimise the demolition of riparian and coastal informalised settlements as fundamental to building resilience. Next, I elaborate the two contiguous processes of flood-resilient city making—clearing the land and fortifying the landscape—to sketch what future histories of urbanisation and urban flooding are being postulated in the time of climate catastrophe. Then, I consider the paradox of urban poor retreat from waterways and elite terraforming along the coast to argue that resilient city making itself is a paradox and to underscore the centrality of peripheries and peripheralisation to the resilience agenda. As such, I proceed to trace the edges produced by resilient city making by following flows of displacement and emplacement, and in doing so, expand Kristian Saguin's concept of the urban edge. Here, I also reflect on people's ideas of 'ginhawa' (breath, well-being, and relief) which I then juxtapose with the ambitions of national and multilateral frameworks and plans to characterise the aspirations and transformations they envision for the urban poor. Finally, I elaborate the promise of the edge as a radical and reparative space and end by theorising resilient city making and the resilient city.