



Parallel Worlds? Environmental Change, Regional Adaptation and the Role of Migration

Call for paper

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International Conference

Cologne, 3 - 4 July 2014

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Content

In the current debate on environmental change, mobility and migration are basically discussed as an important part of coping or adaptation strategies in response to effects of environmental change, especially in the developing world. When considering *sudden* events (such as storms, floods) this nexus seems to be clear - spatially and maybe temporally shifting (parts of) livelihoods function as a coping strategy serving immediate needs such as saving lives and livelihoods. Many NGOs are involved in providing on-the-spot aid and introduce external solutions to these places. When it comes to *long-term* environmental changes (such as changing rainfall patterns, rising sea levels, desertification, salination), the links between environmental change and mobility/migration turn out to be far more complex. Whereas the development community, especially supranational bodies and NGOS frequently underline the impact of environmental change on present and future migration, most scientists are less outspoken on the existence of a neat relationship between these two phenomena. Still, non-scientific actors cover an important field of knowledge production and their position has gained momentum in recent years.

Regarding the lack of evidence on clear links between environmental change and migration, scientists rather point to parallels between increasing manifestations of environmental change and the rising dynamics and magnitude of migration systems. They are also beginning to explore alternative approaches to understand the complexity of migration and mobility by interpreting them as one possible asset in a set of systemic responses to local crises. Here, the analysis of migration and mobility serves as a *starting point* of analysis. Under which conditions and for whom do migration and mobility contribute to coping and adaptation strategies? Which gender differences are reproduced and/or transformed?

The presence of migration and mobility is emphasized as an essential part of local knowledge systems, as produced by narratives and determined by risk perception and as influenced by local groups and national as well as international actors (in development cooperation). The focus of research gravitates towards an understanding of migration and mobility as non-linear processes, pointing to migrant trajectories and fluid forms of diasporic social organization. With changing mobility regimes empirical research also seems in need of more flexible and tailored research methodologies that combine macro- and micro-approaches, and a blend of ethnological and multi-scaled and -sited analysis. Can a focus on migrant trajectories and on changing mobility regimes help to better understand the complex nature of migration? How important is the active exploration of the reconnections of migrants to global circuits and flows? What does migration tell us about the rationales of survival and adaptation as well as about the expectations of a very active group within the social fabric? What is the impact of new forms of social organization by migrants such as trans-local, bi-local and transient forms of living on the persistence of international migration?

This international conference aims to discuss the two perspectives: Firstly, the representation of the discourse on environmental change and migration as it is produced through the lens of NGOs and various political players; and secondly, new research horizons in migration research currently which highlight the role of migration within changing environmental realities and relating to the questions of this CFP. We especially appreciate contributions that include a gendered perspective on the topics of the conference.

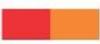
The conference is interlinked with students' work in Cologne on regional case studies. Their work will be presented in the form of country profiles, providing regional case studies and the state of research. The results of the workshop/conference will be published either in a specialized journal or in book form.

Deadline for the application of abstracts: April, 6th 2014. Please send your proposal to this email address: environment-migration@uni-koeln.de.

Information about acceptance: April, 16th 2014

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