

Call for Papers for a Proposed Research Panel at the 11th IMISCOE Annual Conference, 27-29 August, Madrid, Spain

Immobile and Trapped Populations in Areas Affected by Environmental Changes

Convenors: François Gemenne (CEDEM-University of Liège/UVSQ), Caroline Zickgraf (CEDEM-University of Liège), Nathalie Perrin (CEDEM-University of Liège)

****DEADLINE EXTENDED: March 31, 2014****

A common misconception amongst the public and policy-makers is that those who migrate as a result of environmental changes count amongst the most vulnerable groups of a population. Yet empirical research shows exactly the opposite: the most vulnerable are usually immobile in the face of environmental changes – trapped in hazardous areas lacking the capital to leave (Foresight 2011). And if they move, they are most likely to do so in unsafe conditions, such as irregular migration or trafficking. An empirical evidence of this pattern is the case of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, where about 60,000 people failed to evacuate and remained trapped for several days in the flooded city without any assistance or supplies (Masquelier 2006). This trend is also verified in the case of slow-onset environmental changes such as desertification (Jonsson 2011): in most cases, the most vulnerable households tend to allocate their rarefied resources to the satisfaction of their primary needs, sometimes adopting coping strategies (e.g. takes children out of schools) which potentially weaken the household's ability to migrate in the future (Warner 2012). Migration (requiring some degree of financial and social capital) becomes a luxury that they cannot afford during and even in the aftermath of environmental crises.

There is first a need to understand the reasons why the most vulnerable do not migrate, as most research on the linkages between environmental changes and migration has focused on the migrants rather than on the immobile population. Second, the relationship between those who stay and those who go remains underexplored empirically and theoretically. What are the consequences of migration for those populations that are either unwilling or unable to move in the face of environmental transformation?

Considering immobile and 'trapped' populations (Foresight 2011) within environmental migration studies contributes to both our understandings of environmental drivers of migration, alternate adaptation and/or coping strategies for trapped populations, and to our understanding of the relationship between environmental mobility and immobility. This panel invites abstracts that explore the immobile and/or 'trapped' populations in environmentally sensitive areas, whether affected by slow-onset climate change or sudden environmental shocks that contribute insights into the vulnerability and adaptation capacity of immobile populations, but also abstracts that explore the linkages between immobile and mobile populations in the context of environmental changes.

Please submit abstracts of 250 words to Caroline.Zickgraf@ulg.ac.be, Nathalie.Perrin@ulg.ac.be, and f.gemenne@ulg.ac.be no later than March 31st, 2014. Applicants will be notified of acceptance by May 31st. Accepted papers must be uploaded no later than August 1st, 2014.

For more information on the IMISCOE Conference, please see www.imiscoeconferences.org