

International Conference Series

Rethinking Migration / Migration neu denken

2. International Conference: Rethinking Migration: Climate, Resource Conflicts, and Politics of Migration/Refugees in Europe

October 13th and 14th 2011

Mendelssohn-Remise

Jägerstraße 51

10117 Berlin

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In public discourse, climate change and environmental changes are repeatedly represented as an essential trigger for flight and migration. It is assumed that environmental changes caused by climate change represent a significant social challenge because they lead to a worsening of many people's living conditions and increasing global inequalities. On a global level, these assumptions might be correct. To date, however, only very few studies focus on the question which impact these induced environmental changes might have on the regional and local level. On the political level, climate change is therefore not solely regarded as an environmental problem but it is predominantly discussed as a resource problem and question of equality. Parallel to that, in the course of climate change, new forms of control and regulation of temporary and permanent migration are introduced globally.

The international conference is divided into three parts which trace the questions of causes, consequences and forms of appearance of climate migration/flight as well as controversial approaches to a solution of the complex interrelation between climate and flight/migration.

Part 1: Framing of controversial debates on migration and climate change

In the framework of the first part of the conference, different discourses and controversial perspectives regarding causes and consequences of climate-related migration are outlined: The complex overlapping of ecological factors and political, social, and cultural causes of migration leads to the fact that a determination of voluntary and involuntary migration becomes less and less possible. This development, is - in turn - reflected in the definition and handling of climate-related migration and flight: because the definition of the term „refugee“ according to the Geneva Convention on Refugees would have significant impact on industrial states due to migrants' rights linked to this definition.

Part II: Regional forms of appearance, sociopolitical consequences and EU migration control

The second part of the conference has a geographical focus. On the basis of regional

examples, especially from Africa and Asia, the complex nature of environmentally induced migration, flight, and the prevention of human mobility is discussed against the background of the tense relationship between processes within a society, international politics on resources and climate, as well as EU politics of flight and migration.

Part III: Political approaches to a solution

In the third part of the conference, complementary forms of protection against environmentally induced flight and migration as well as different approaches to a solution are compared and discussed. Contradictory perspectives regarding the exploitation of resources in the northern and southern hemisphere of this world are examined. The example of EU migration and mobility control under the pretext of security politics is confronted with challenges concerning politics of equality. Central to this discussion is the question if governance approaches on a regional, global and bilateral level have been adopted within the last years and, if so, in how far they have led to a solution of the problem or have rather caused a relocation and escalation of migration movements. Which methods of resolution could be developed in order to cope with migrations caused by environmental changes? Which changes could become necessary on the European level?