

International Workshop

Gendering a Sustainable Future: Conflict, Genocide and Climate Change

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Main Goal

This workshop bridges the three policy agendas of “climate change and conflict”, “climate change and gender” and “conflict and gender”; taking into account the gender dimensions of conflict resilience and of adapting to climate change and their differential impacts on long-term sustainability at local, regional, national and international levels.

Why Gender, Genocide, Conflict and Climate Change?

Climate change impacts and adaptation systems have been widely recognized as not genderneutral. In most of the regions identified as climate change hot spots (IPCC 2007), women are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change as they tend to be poorer, less educated, and have limited direct access to ownership of natural resources and to Economic Cultural and Social (ECS) rights. Yet, women are responsible for the food security of their families and are, therefore, more dependent on ecosystem services and natural resources; in the global South, women produce 60 to 80% of staple foods but own no more than 10 % of cultivated land (Rodenberg 2009). Also of note, in post disaster scenarios, as well as conflict and post-conflict scenarios, women face a heavier workload (Rodenberg 2009; Ahmed & Green 1999). Left with virtually no income generating activities, women are often discriminated against in the distribution of resources and are in greater danger of becoming victims of violence (Rodenberg 2009) even in post-conflict states, to say nothing of the role of women as victims in times of mass atrocity. It is generally recognized that women are major actors in adaptation and mitigation measures (IUCN 2007; Rodenberg 2009; UNDP 2009; UNDP, IUCN, UNEP, WEDO 2009) as they play a pivotal role in ensuring food security; they have extensive knowledge about their natural surroundings and are at the forefront of conservation and harvest insurance through the selection of seeds of different crops (UNDP, IUCN, UNEP, WEDO 2009:122). The Cancun Agreements (UNFCCC 2010:art. 7) acknowledge that gender equality and the meaningful participation of women are important for effective actions on all aspects of climate

Thus, we see that the relationship between sustainability and gender is clear; this workshop seeks to extend this relationship to analysis of the interaction between gender sustainability in conflict, and particularly mass conflict, regions of theory and case study analysis. Gender has a unique place amongst conflict literature more broadly and genocide literature specifically: women play important roles on both sides as victims and perpetrators; women have a unique ideological role as the embodiment of the perpetrator group in cases of

total genocide (Mouton 2007; Murray 2011) and, as such, are specifically targeted as victims as a way to ensure the destruction of the victim group (Sharlach 2000). Though men tend to be both primary perpetrators and victims in cases of genocide (Shaw 2003), addressing how and why women are victimised has been largely overlooked; equally, though women are more likely than men to survive, they are just as unlikely to escape victimization through crimes against humanity, particularly female-targeted sexual violence such as rape and forced marriage (Astourian 1990; Akçam 2004; Warren 1985). Gender 'groups' are not one of the groups identified in Article II of the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, which include national, ethnical, racial and religious groups; however, quite a substantial amount of literature has now been written on 'gendercide' or the targeting of a gender group for mass violence (for example Saikia 2004; Jones 2004; Carpenter 2002; Mojab 2003) to the extent that this is, amongst scholars, a widely accepted form of mass atrocity. The law, too, reflects this dynamic as women have testified and won suits in international trials, from Nuremberg to ICTY. In short, women have a unique role in cases of genocide and mass conflict.

Equally clear is the inverse relationship between sustainability and conflict. The UN has claimed that sustainability, particularly when looking at sustainability mechanisms in areas of high risk for climate insecurity, is nearly impossible in states and regions in conflict (Ross 2011). Climate change and climate instability is certainly a factor in a growing number of conflicts, due in part to changing resources and resource scarcity, both real and perceived (Hsiang, Meng & Cane 2011; Homer-Dixon 1993; Homer-Dixon 1999). Though climate change should be viewed as only one amongst many causes of conflict and overemphasising the impact of climate change on the security agenda can have negative consequences (Brzoska 2009; Scheffran et al. 2012), conflict severely undermines virtually all sustainability mechanisms from social trust to internal coping mechanisms and international aid, including aid target for offsetting the effects of climate change (Dirks u.a. 1980).

In certain conflict regions, such as Eastern Africa and parts of the Middle East, women play an instrumental and growing role in the peace-building process (Lyons 1994); however, this process is hindered ad infinitum as women are targeted in the very conflicts they are trying to cease. In short, in these cases, 'sustainability' and the gendered focus on women in sustainability mechanisms grow in times of conflict to include, largely to the exclusion of all other internal sustainability norms, conflict cessation. This workshop seeks to elucidate these themes and the influential impact gender and gender roles have on conflict and genocide. Support for research and the establishment of research networks in this area are crucial for shaping a sustainable future if we are to seek peace in an era of climate change.

Applications

The organizers are therefore calling for papers on the intersection between gender, mass atrocity and climate change. Regional and methodological approach is open. Scholars interested in applying should send a three hundred word abstract, and short biography to elisabeth.hope.murray@uni-hamburg.de by no later than 10 June 2013.

Final papers should be sent no later than 1 September to be included in the publication resulting from the workshop.

We look forward to receiving your abstracts!