

Summaries

Kristina Dietz & Achim Brunnengräber: The climate within North-South relations. According to common perceptions, climate change is a global-scale environmental issue that, by virtue of worldwide vulnerability, requires global, resolute and co-operative political action amongst all nation states and civil society alike. However, from a north-south and socio-ecological perspective, the apparently accepted universality of the problem starts to crumble. In this article the authors argue that apart from spatial and time specific interplays between scales of causation and scales of impacts, climate change is better understood as a 'glocal' field of conflicts, and a crisis of the ways and modes in which societies regulate their relationships with nature. This line of argumentation is first grounded in an analysis of the multiple inequalities and structural asymmetries that shape north-south and gender relations within climate politics and, therefore, mediate the impacts of climate change. These inequalities are comprised of historical responsibilities, socio-spatial vulnerabilities and discursive and political powers. Secondly, it is shown that international political measures, which have been specifically designed to foster adaptive capacity and to promote sustainable development in the South, are mainly serving dominant economic interests in the North and South instead of supporting local struggles for securing livelihoods. Against this background, current political measures for mitigation and adaptation, as well as the impacts of climate change itself, have the potential to perpetuate global and social inequalities rather than alleviate them.

Oliver Pye: Sustainable Profits? The Palm-Oil-Industrial Complex and the Debate on „Sustainable Biofuels“. The controversy surrounding plans for mandatory agrofuel targets in the EU has delegitimized the current climate change regime. This article analyses the Malaysian Palm-Oil-Industrial Complex as a key nodal in governance networks that relate to the agrofuel debate. It first traces the capital concentration and vertical integration processes within the palm oil industry and the political and economic interactions between the Malaysian state and private capital, which led to the emergence of the Palm-Oil-Industrial Complex. This Complex is a key player in the expansion of palm oil in Indonesia, which has accelerated due to the anticipated growth of agrofuel markets in Europe. The expansion of palm oil production, however, has created new social conflicts as well as intensified criticism against the use of palm oil as an agrofuel, as many environmentalists doubt it can be a sustainable source of fuel for climate change mitigation. This paper analyses the industry's reaction to campaigns against palm oil by looking at the discourse of „People, Planet and Profit“ as put forward at the „International Palm Oil Sustainability Conference“ in April 2008. Faced with the potential exclusion from the European agrofuel market, certain NGOs are being assimilated into a project to certify palm oil, based on criteria developed in the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). However, new campaign coalitions between Europe and Indonesia are challenging this agenda.

Stefan Alscher: Hurricanes, Hotels, and Hopelessness: Natural disasters and environmental migration in South-eastern Mexico. In October 2005, two hurricanes left tracks of destruction across the Mexican Southeast. Only two weeks after hurricane Stan passed over Chiapas, the tourist region of Riviera Maya was affected by the category 5 hurricane Wilma. But while the Mexican state reacted quickly in the case of Cancún and its surroundings, the population of the many affected regions in Chiapas is still waiting for support. This article describes the impacts of hurricanes Stan and Wilma in the two respective regions selected, and analyzes the federal state's response towards these natural hazards; it hypothesizes that the disaster management of Mexican authorities is aggravating Mexico's disparate economic development. In the case of Chiapas, it is also shown how the impacts of natural disasters and the slow-onset of environmental degradation are affecting migration processes.

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