Migration and Vulnerability after Hurricane Katrina

University of Hamburg

63-190 Climate and Society: Climate Security, Natural Resources and Conflict Geography

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Structure

- Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans
- Forms of migration after Hurricane Katrina
- Vulnerability after Hurricane Katrina
- „The City that care forgot“
- Conclusion
Hurricane Katrina

- Stroke the gulf coast on 29th of August 2005
- Biggest migration movement since the dust bowl in the 1930s
- Economic damage of more than 125 Billion US Dollar
- 80 per cent of New Orleans was flooded
- More than one million people in the metropolitan area of New Orleans flew from Hurricane Katrina
Path of Hurricane Katrina
Elevation profile of New Orleans
Forms of migration

- *spillover*-migration
- permanent migration or return migration?
spillover-migration
Social vulnerability is a product of social inequalities—social factors and forces that create the susceptibility of various groups to harm, and in turn affect their ability to respond, and bounce back (resilience) after the disaster.“ (Cutter 2006)

The most vulnerable people of New Orleans were hit hardest

- People with lower socioeconomic status
- African-American
- People without cars
- Very old or sick people
- Families with many children
Vulnerability

- People with lower socio-economic status
  - Are more likely to live below the poverty line
  - Are less likely to own cars
  - Are more likely to live for rent
  - Often live in flood-prone areas of New Orleans
  - Rarely can bear the costs for a return migration
  - Are often less well educated and are therefore less informed about assistance programs in New Orleans
Vulnerability

- African Americans are more likely to have a lower socioeconomic status, to be tenants, to have larger families and to not own a car than people of white skin color

= Characteristics that make them more vulnerable to disasters like Hurricane Katrina
„The City that care forgot“

- The Flood protection system in New Orleans was not maintained for decades
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was not sufficiently equipped for evacuation
- At the day of the storm all bus and train connections were cancelled
Conclusion

- The flood of the city after the Hurricane was caused largely anthropogenic.
- The socio-economic status of a person has a large influence on the migration probability and the vulnerability after Hurricane Katrina.
“More recently, the poor without private transport, elderly and disabled, in New Orleans were abandoned by officials and could not flee the city ahead of hurricane Katrina. Their only option was the sordid conditions of the Superdome as shelter. Over a thousand died. But can we call these deaths „natural“ - the unavoidable confrontation of human beings with the fury of nature?“ (Wisner 2008)
Thanks for your attention!


Cutter, Susan (2006): The Geography of Social Vulnerability: Race, Class, and Catastrophe. Text abrufbar unter:


FAZ (03.09.2005): “Jetzt kehrt die Zuversicht in unsere Herzen zurück”. Text abrufbar unter:


