



ORDA – CALL FOR PAPERS

N° 4 – Water and Vulnerabilities in the Americas

Editors :

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Call for communications

As the social, economic and climatic context evolves, the question of water management has become central as far as health, national security, quality of life and development are concerned. Water resources are more and more heavily exploited, and they consequently suffer, both in terms of quality and quantity. This problem, combined with the anxiety born of the impact of global warming, leads to serious questions about the vulnerabilities and resiliency of our societies. The worsening of natural disasters directly related to the question of water (pollution, droughts, floods...) in a world which has also become more and more technologically advanced can only underscore the vulnerability of our societies when faced with these types of risks. Man-made phenomena—such as floods caused by urban streaming, water contamination, or the drying up of humid zones—are undeniable and they evidently make things worse, but social vulnerabilities must also be considered a decisive factor in the genesis of natural disasters.

One way to approach such vulnerabilities is to see them as an intrinsic characteristic of a given social group, independently of climatic or geographic conditions. In this case, they mostly affect social groups relegated to the social or economic margins. From this perspective results a reflection on the extent to which water-related risks make such 'inherently' weak societies even more vulnerable, without losing sight of the fact that, inversely, the way they anticipate and adapt to these risks can lead to original and more or less officially recognized solutions.

In most cases however, vulnerabilities can be linked to one specific risk. Those cases include material, functional, or structural vulnerabilities. The first kind is defined by material damages which destroy the physical integrity of a given space. The second kind disturbs the normal way economic or social entities are supposed to function. The last kind of vulnerability affects structures or organizations, and it tends to become increasingly

common, given the way societies have been evolving (dependence on modern comfort and production, increased value of urban development in floodplains etc...).

The contexts and the stakes of vulnerabilities have considerably increased over the last few decades. Rural spaces have gone through rapid and intense mutations, both socially and geographically—see for example the spreading of intensive models of agriculture based on irrigation in elevated tropical regions. As for urban growth, characterized by its rapid and rarely regulated nature, it has generated huge socio-spatial disparities which have increased vulnerabilities, though these are often underestimated. In this context, the zones of contact between different spaces have become crucial and complex, to such a point that they will probably become the theatre of new conflicts and vulnerabilities in the future.

Water-related risks are consequently diverse, as are the local or institutional abilities to combat them. The Americas illustrate this multifaceted reality, both through similarities and differences between the North and the South of the continent. A comprehensive approach is of course impossible, but with this issue we hope to present a sample of these diverse vulnerabilities and the many examples of resiliency they have brought about, may it be at the grassroots or institutional level. We will accept many different approaches, focused on spatial, as well as social, hydrological, economic or chemical analysis, or a combination of them.

Our hope is to offer a few solid hypotheses which will fuel further reflections on water-related vulnerabilities in the Americas—papers must indeed rely on examples located in the Americas and take into account one of the following points:

- understanding the origins and the mutations of social vulnerabilities linked to water and assessing their recent evolutions
- assessing the strength of coping mechanisms at the local level and identifying the tools which make them possible (environmental policies, local adaptations, participatory management...)
- urban vs. rural, and the interconnection between these two spaces: comparing their divergent approaches in the management of space or in the adoption of mechanisms of protection, as well as their different capacity of resiliency in the face of social vulnerabilities
- North America vs. Latin America: comparing their respective experiences and memories of water-related vulnerabilities and their adaptation mechanisms

So, we expect your proposals in order to illustrate and/or to cross these various questions about social vulnerabilities related to water in the Americas.

Deadline and instructions

Paper proposals (with a title, key words, and an abstract no longer than 3000 signs, in French, English, or Spanish) must be sent to Alexandra Angélie-Descamps (angeliau@univ-tlse2.fr) and Anne Peltier (peltier@univ-tlse2.fr) before **April 30, 2013**

Information about the selected abstracts will be given on **May 15th 2013 and the selected texts must be selected on **July 30th 2013** for release on **January 2014**.**

The articles will be submitted in one of the four languages of the publication of the journal (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese). The abstracts and five key words, for at least two of the four languages of the journal in which the original language is English (the Editorial Committee is responsible for the translation of the summary and the key words in the two other languages). For further details, see the website of the journal.

The journal l'Ordinaire Latino-Américain (ORLA), which is supported by IPEALT (Institute of Multidisciplinary Studies on Americas in Toulouse) takes a new dimension. Multidisciplinary journal focused on the humanities, and art and literature, now called l'Ordinaire des Amériques (ORDA), the journal is open to all the Americas, it becomes an online journal, and it strengthens further its scientific legitimacy by combining great personalities of the academic world to its scientific review committee.

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