

Special Event

Center for African Studies

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2009

Understanding the Roots of Community Vulnerability and Adaptation in the Congo Basin

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PLACE: 101 International Studies Building

TIME: 12-1pm

In the Congo Basin, the issue of vulnerability to climate variations and climate stimuli is more and more every day tackled in its bio-physical dimensions. Very often, scientific explanations dealing with social and policy dimensions related and correlated to community organization, power relations, rights to resources, market and institutional governance are avoided or very limited. This talk is a first attempt at understanding the social, economic and policy dimensions of vulnerabilities to climate variations and adaptation in the Congo Basin, as they are generated and reproduced by community organization and natural resource policies. For instance, statutory or state tenure allocates all the substantive rights to the State and almost nothing to the local communities. This situation leads to an increasing community vulnerability in the whole region. The talk characterizes social and policy-determined vulnerabilities, including weak local governance, inequitable access to resources, weak livelihoods, legal marginalization, ecological submission to the concessionary model and material poverty. According to the presenters, the future of natural resources in the Congo Basin is an eminently policy issue. The most required adaptation mechanisms at this juncture are also, both a priori and a posteriori, rooted in policy mechanisms.

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