

Climate Belongings?

Reconfigurations of Alterity and Belonging amidst the Climate Crisis, and socio-ecological responses in migration societies

CfP– Panel Proposal for the 24th IMISCOE Annual Conference, Brussels, 6–9 July 2027

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Climate change is transforming societies in ways that reach far beyond environmental politics. It raises fundamental questions about responsibility and solidarity, redistributes vulnerabilities, and creates new political conflicts as well as negotiations over desirable futures. Yet we still know little about how these transformations intersect with the social realities of diverse migration societies. Moving beyond a focus on climate migration as such (e.g. Nash 2019; Waters 2025), this panel asks **how the climate crisis is shaping migration societies and their ongoing (re-)negotiations of belonging, difference and citizenship** – including the very categories of “self/us” and “other(s)”? And how do, in turn, these re-negotiations – and thus the shifting relations of diversity inherent in migration societies – **shape socio-ecological responses and ways of dealing with climate change?**

The panel proposes the notion of **climate belongings** to explore how climate change and its politics become ‘arenas’ in which social and political positions, relationships and identities are (re-)negotiated within the context of diversity and migration (Hills 2025; Turunen et al. 2026; Méndez-Barrientos et al. 2023; Verlie 2024; Turhan and Armiero 2019; Shokry et al. 2025). How are existing categories – self/other, (non-)migrant, minority/majority, North/South – reproduced or unsettled through climate politics? To what extent do (post-)migrant subjects and organisations become actors in socio-ecological transformations and just transitions (Fry et al. 2024)? Whose experiences, emotions and knowledge become visible and meaningful (Hernandez et al. 2022; Van Speybroeck et al. 2026)? Such questions also point towards central tensions of climate politics. The **planetary character of climate change** potentially invokes imaginaries of a shared world, and of responsibilities transcending national and culturalized borders (Roos & van der Sluijs 2025; Skrefsrud 2025; Smalen 2026). Debates around **environmental, planetary or climate citizenship** (Thompson 2001; Dobson & Derek 2006; Running 2013; Bauböck 2026) challenge territorially bounded understandings of political community – **while little is known about how such imaginaries become operative within everyday contexts of difference and belonging**. At the same time, the climate crisis unfolds within societies structured by unequal citizenship, racism, colonial legacies and contested migration (Baldwin 2022; Verlie 2024). Imaginaries of *one planet* thus coexist with nationalism, racialized fears of climate migration and unequal exposure to environmental risks. In sum, the climate crisis and its politics can potentially both exacerbate social conflicts (Henrique 2024) and generate **new transboundary alliances** as well as **new forms of post-migrant solidarity, visibility and political subjectivity** (Muraca 2020; Turhan & Armiero 2019; Armiero et al. 2024; Neef and Sheller 2024; Hills 2025).

Migrant organisations, (inter-)religious communities, climate justice movements, neighbourhood initiatives and municipal actors increasingly encounter one another in local socio-ecological projects and struggles (Kieslinger 2023). Intercultural networks for climate protection, initiatives linking climate justice with migration justice (Farbotko et al. 2022; Neef et al. 2024), and projects mobilising migrant subjects’ experiences of climate impacts in the Global South for political education in the North all display potential reconfigurations of belonging and alterity – pointing to the ways how diverse migration societies (re-)articulate climate politics (Roos & van der Sluijs 2025). These dynamics may also take place **in everyday settings and through more mundane practices** (Liedholz 2020) – for instance, when a local mosque installs solar panels on its roof and thereby, almost incidentally, becomes visible as an actor in the socio-ecological transformation of the city; or when residents of diverse neighbourhoods share different

experiences with climate change and heat in everyday encounters. These practices, whether explicitly political or more mundane, can subtly reposition actors within local contexts: organisations perceived through the lenses of migration or integration may become visible as actors of socio-ecological transformation, reshaping public perceptions.

Finally, this also opens up reflections on **climate knowledge(s)**. Experiences and practices shaped by migration and **transnational lives** (Van Holstein & Walker 2023; Ou-Salah & Van Praag 2025) increasingly enter climate debates in European societies, shaping socio-ecological alliances and responses (Van Praag 2023). For example, initiatives encouraging migrant subjects to act as ‘witnesses’ regarding climate impacts in the Global South (e.g. “Klimagesichter”; Winkler 2026), or initiatives that strengthen (post-)migrant experiences of belonging and exclusion as an intersectional contribution to climate movements (e.g. “Klima.Gerecht.Machen”, Munich; “queerstadtein”, Berlin, Germany) make this particularly visible (Garcia & Tschakert 2022; Daniel 2025): they raise questions about how migrant experiences or transboundary (e.g. intercultural) relations are translated into climate (justice) knowledge (Klocker et al. 2018; Walker 2020; Mascia 2020; Kotsila 2024; Fry et al. 2024; Smalen 2026). Whose experiences are recognised as relevant knowledge for understanding and responding to climate change? How do they interact with dominant forms of climate expertise? And how does the recognition – or marginalisation – of (post-)migrant perspectives affect who can speak and act as a legitimate ‘climate subject’? (Baldwin 2022; Verlie 2024; Winkler 2026). At the same time, such initiatives themselves require critical scrutiny as they may reproduce paternalistic notions of integration (Nies et al. 2015), victimize migrant subjects or reproduce processes of othering.

The session invites **theoretical and empirical papers** examining these dynamics as they play out within the postmigrant and diverse societies of the Global North. It asks:

- What climate-political practices, knowledges, claims and socio-ecological responses emerge from the experiences, relations and struggles of diverse migration societies?
- How do climate politics reshape positions, relations and forms of recognition within diverse migration societies (e.g. Kieslinger 2023)?
- How do these intersections and negotiations become manifest in and through mundane and everyday practices, material transformations and changing forms of visibility?
- What happens within migration societies when climate change becomes an increasingly pervasive horizon of everyday life, politics and social transformation? How does the climate crisis reconfigure the ways in which belonging, citizenship, participation and political community are imagined, practised and lived?

Both traditional paper presentations and short inputs followed by questions for the audience are welcome, as are creative and multimedia formats. I look forward to receiving **short abstracts (approx. 150 words) by 22 September 2026** at: jan.winkler@geo.uni-halle.de

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