

Call for Abstracts

The 5th International Conference of the Initiative on Climate Adaptation Research and Understanding through the Social Sciences (**ICARUS**), June 30 – July 2, 2016

Title: Climate Social Science: Towards a transformative science of climate change

Venue: India School of Business, Hyderabad, India

Website: <http://www.isb.edu/ICARUS-V>

Governmental, social, and household level responses to future climate change must be undertaken despite substantial uncertainty about the location, intensity, frequency, and disruptive potential of many climate impacts and ongoing social transformations. At the same time, responses to climate change must occur in the context of policy systems and political relations that are often highly unequal and resistant to change. It is precisely for these reasons that greater systematic knowledge of the constraints on human responses to this variability assumes critical importance. Historical and contemporary patterns of vulnerability and adaptation, in contrast to inferences derived mechanistically from projected future climate impacts, share a key characteristic with the kind of human responses that are desirable: they occurred in response to climatic phenomena as these were experienced in concrete social, economic, cultural, and political settings.

Concrete human responses to climate change need greater scholarly and research attention. We invite papers for the 5th ICARUS Conference that advance a deeper understanding of how such responses emerge in specific settings, as derived through fine-resolution social science research. The crucible of responses to climate change – crafted by the multiple ways in which the past, the present, and the future overlap and interact – needs to be understood at different temporal and spatial scales of its contingent formation rather than being derived mechanistically purely through analysis of presumed climate impacts.

In pursuing this broad vision of a transformative science of climate change, we invite abstracts for paper addressing the following three themes:

1. **Security in Diversity:** Among scholars of livelihoods, diversity has long been viewed as a central determinant of livelihood security. At the unit level, be it households, firms, regions, or economic sectors, it is assumed that diverse income streams help to guard against the failure of any single source or productive activity, while a diversity of production strategies helps to ensure the integrity of production systems more generally. At the household level, this diversity is rooted in both the constraints and opportunities that different households face, structured by endowments of assets, access to natural resources, participation in commodity and labour markets, and benefits from a broad array of public assistance programmes, among other factors.

Papers under this theme will seek to disentangle the myriad factors and relationships that influence productive strategies to better understand the ways that diversity functions in concrete settings. What kinds of diversity should be valued, and with respect to which livelihoods and which assets? How should different kinds of diversity be compared — and at what scales? Under what circumstances might diversity serve to

diminish livelihood security rather than promote it? We invite papers that trace the casual pathways through which diversity enhances livelihood security (or undermines it) and advance understanding of the role of public assistance in advancing desired outcomes.

2. *Topographies of Governance*: A long tradition of scholarship has sought to investigate the multi-faceted ways that citizens encounter state institutions and the implications of these interactions for human welfare and development outcomes. A dominant strand of this scholarship has focused on the ways that citizens' interactions with state institutions are mediated by a variety of social, political, and bureaucratic interlocutors and, as such, are often governed by extra-constitutional forms of social power as much as (or more than) formal rights, entitlements, and stated policy goals. While these forms of informal 'political mediation' may provide crucial channels of access for citizens that lack the ability to interact with state institutions directly, they also often reinforce patterns of exclusion. We refer to these as uneven topographies of governance because they 'bend' differently around individuals of contrasting social, economic, and political positions and in relation to geographically-distributed centres of power. At the same time, these topographies are also constantly being reworked through new institutions, strategies of governance, and forms of political practice — a process which will continue through the reinvention of programmes and policies through greater attention to climate risk and change.

In this theme, we focus on the networks of social and political relationships through which citizens gain access to resources and benefits from multiple state agencies. Several sub-themes present themselves, including: (a) the networks of social and political relationships through which citizens gain access to resources and benefits from multiple state agencies, (b) the ways that citizens seek leverage on public services through democratic institutions and processes at multiple scales, and (c) the means through which powerful social groups continue to reproduce patterns of dominance and exclusion through control over public resources. Research under this theme aims to provide empirical evidence on the multitude of ways in which citizens encounter public institutions within an ever-changing topography of governance and the implications of these interactions for vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

3. *Technology and society*: Over the last two decades, the salience of technology in proposals for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change has increased exponentially. Ranging from the construction of sea walls and cloud seeding to biochar and mini-grids, technology has become enmeshed in debates around responses to climate change from household to global scales. Information and communication technologies, it is fervently believed, have the potential to improve bargaining power by providing access to market prices, provide a platform for building larger information networks, and improve access to specialised knowledge and resources. And yet, despite this celebration of technology, there remains surprisingly limited social science research on the ways that these technologies are incorporated into livelihoods and the ways that they, in turn, alter the economic and life opportunities of their users (as well as their limitations in doing so).



This theme aims to build critical understandings of the ways that technology has altered production strategies and networks or reconfigured patterns of exposure to climate risk — with implications for social relationships, economic opportunities, and the susceptibilities of those most vulnerable to climate change. We seek papers that attend to the social and institutional dimensions of technology, including but not limited to: (a) institutional pathways for specific technologies to lead to changes in vulnerability to climate-related risks, (b) mechanisms through which technology is implicated in adaptation actions (information, efficiency, productivity), and (c) the role of intellectual property and ownership of technology in its transformative potential.

Please check the [conference website](#) or write to icarus_v@isb.edu for updates and any additional questions and clarifications.

Participation and Format

The conference will include multiple formats – regular paper sessions, speed presentations, round table discussions, and plenary talks. We have limited funding available to support participation, especially for students and authors located in low-income countries.

Applications, Deadline, and Timeline

To apply, please submit an abstract through the conference website that outlines your contribution in relation to one of the themes above.

Deadline: Abstracts must be submitted on or before 5pm Indian Standard Time on February 25, 2016.

Successful submissions will be notified on or before March 7, 2016.

Location and Venue:

Hyderabad is a dynamic city of 6.8 million (metropolitan area) and an economic and cultural center of growing importance both within India and internationally. Attractions include the famed ‘Char Minar’ monument at the heart of the old city as well as Faluknama Palace.

The conference and accommodation will be on the campus of the Indian School of Business (ISB). One of the premier business schools in India, ISB has developed a tradition of engaging in matters of public policy and development. The facilities are modern and comfortable; campus is easily accessed from the Hyderabad’s main airport.

Hyderabad has a comparatively moderate climate compared to many other parts of India. The peak of summer heat is in May, but temperatures decline by mid-June after the monsoon sets in. By late June the weather is likely to be warm but pleasant.

Please note that most foreign nationals will require a visa to enter India. Although citizens of some countries are now eligible for a ‘visa-on-arrival’ scheme, this nevertheless requires advanced registration online well before your scheduled departure. Citizens of many countries will require a visa in advance. In either case, we recommend that you research your specific requirements carefully and begin making



plans several months in advance just to make sure that everything is taken care of in adequate time.

Registration Costs:

To make **ICARUS** sustainable, we are requesting a registration fee of \$100 for students and individuals located in low-income countries and \$200 for everyone else. This fee includes accommodation on the campus of the Indian School of Business for three nights as well as all meals. Accommodation will be shared – two to a room – with other conference attendees, arranged by gender. Individual rooms may be available in some instances for payment.