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Climate and Conflict: Reviewing the Statistical Evidence

Frühjahrstagung des AK Entwicklungspolitik der DeGEval

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The Report

CLIMATE AND CONFLICT: REVIEWING THE STATISTICAL EVIDENCE

A summary for policy-makers

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Climate, Conflict, Statistics … and SDGs

- Possible synergies between SDGs and conflict prevention

- Similar methodological challenges in M&E of SDGs and quantitative climate-conflict research

Essentials of climate-conflict research

- Increasing popularity outside of academia

- EU and G7 states, among others, have highlighted the need to better understand climate-security risks and design appropriated responses

- The climate-conflict hypothesis in short
  - Climate change leads to greater variability in temperatures and rainfall
  - Resulting uncertainty and **extreme weather events** threaten livelihoods
  - In particular in the global south and among vulnerable groups
    - Possibly leading to **conflicts over** dwindling natural **resources**
    - Facilitating recruitment by **radical groups** that offer food and money
    - Or aggravating grievances by **revealing structural** social & political **problems**

Examples

Darfur (Sudan)

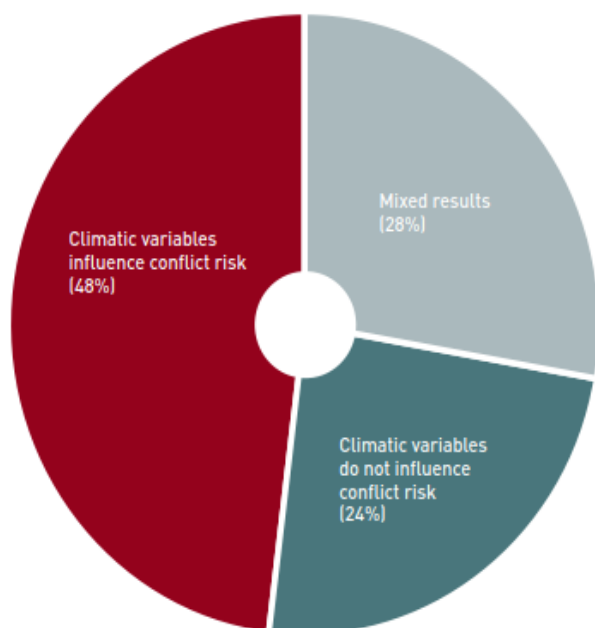**Video link**
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MF2ZAHDdoQ)

Syria

Video link
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJWbxUUi4MEht
tps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MF2ZAHDdoQ

- Is there a **systematic link** between **climate** and **conflict**?

Statistical literature on the links between climate and conflict

Climatic variables influence conflict risk (48%)

Mixed results (28%)

Climatic variables do not influence conflict risk (24%)

Results of large-N analyses that study the relationship between climate and violent conflict or political instability.*

- There is no single and unambiguous effect – effects differ...
  - By region/time period
  - By type of climatic influence/shock (e.g. sudden floods vs. mean temperature)
  - By type of conflict/fragility (e.g. civil conflict vs. urban crime)
  - By level of analysis (e.g. national level vs. local level)
 - Across temporal scales (e.g. yearly vs. monthly observations)

*Data and figures are based on a representative selection of 86 peer-reviewed studies published between 1986-2016. For more details see: Detges, Adrien 2017: Climate and conflict: Reviewing the statistical evidence. A summary for policy-makers. Berlin: adelphi.

Context matters

- Certain countries, regions or social groups are more susceptible to experience violent conflicts in connection with climatic shocks.

  - **Rain-dependent areas** in Sub-Saharan Africa have a **60% higher risk** of civil conflict following drought (von Uexkull 2014)

  - Areas with **poor road infrastructure** in Sub-Saharan Africa have a **28% higher risk** of civil conflict following drought (Detges 2016)

  - **Politically excluded minorities** in Africa and Asia are about **4.6% more likely** to partake in armed conflicts for each year of drought exposure (von Uexkull et al. 2016)

- Climatic shocks are a '**risk multiplier**' that can feed into, and aggravate already fragile political situations.

Risk of conflict/increased fragility in the event of climatic shocks
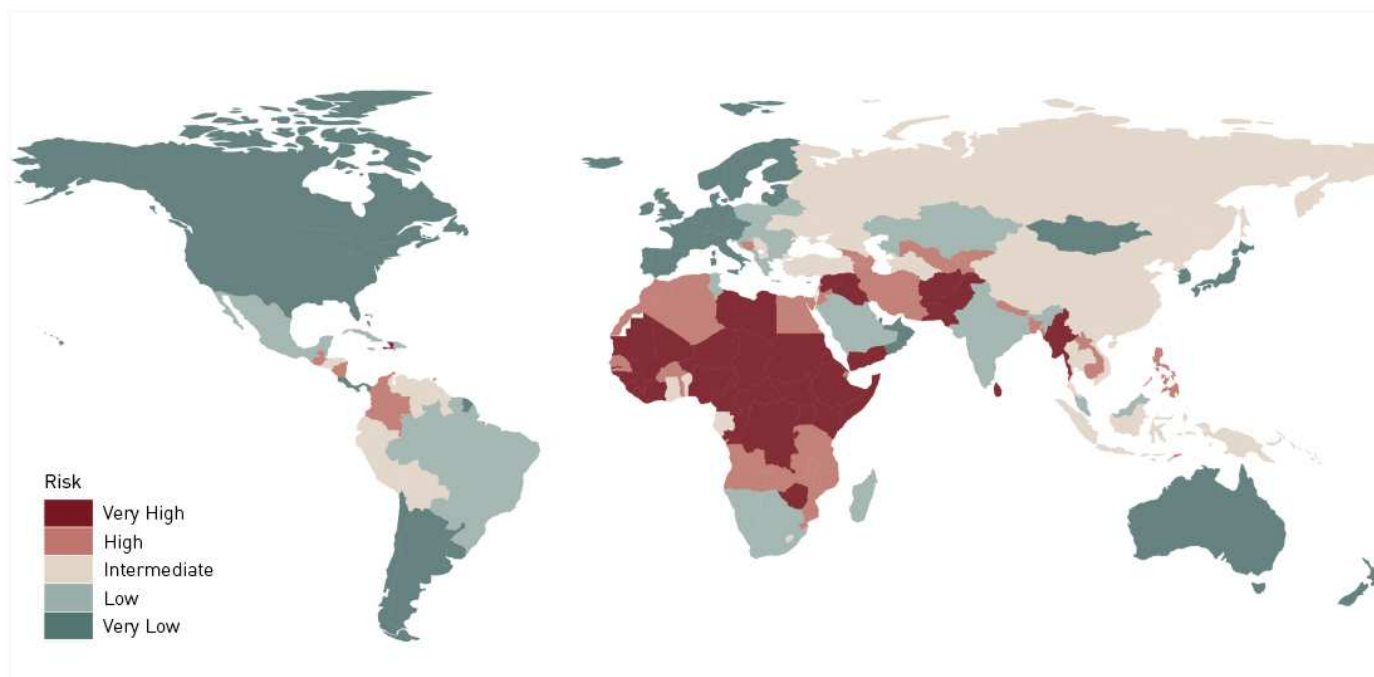

Heat map of countries with group grievances, high social inequalities, poor public service provision and/or weak democratic institutions - Data from the Fragile States Index 2016 (see fsi.fundforpeace.org).

Additional entry points for conflict prevention

- Where they emerge, climate-conflict connections are often mediated by the negative impact of climatic shocks on the livelihoods of vulnerable rural communities.
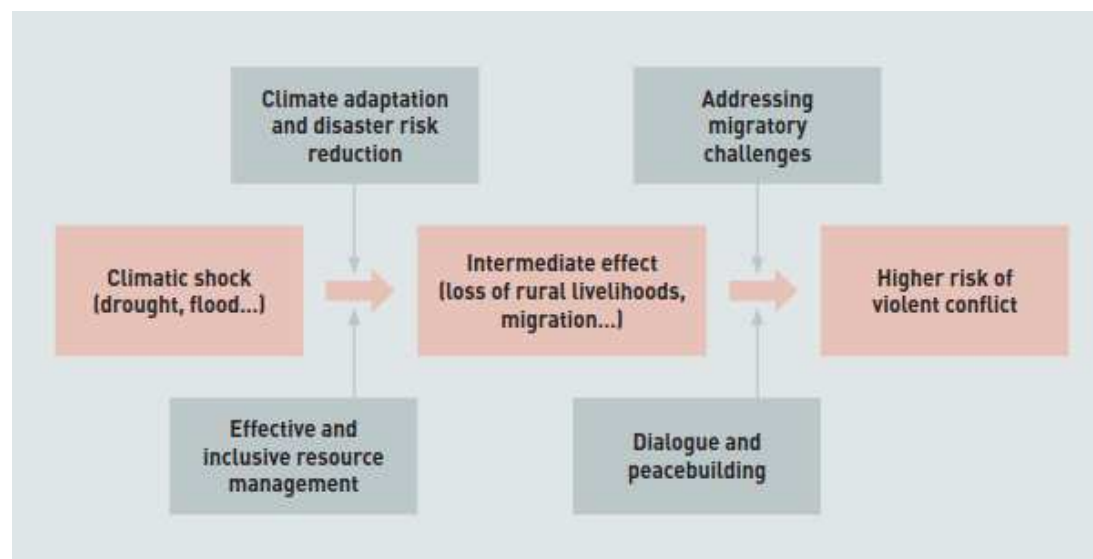
- Climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction offer entry points for conflict prevention in addition to more conventional peacebuilding approaches.

Possible synergies between SDGs and conflict prevention

- **Preventing climate-security risks** through climate adaptation, resource management or disaster risk reduction

- Working on **common drivers** of climate vulnerability and political instability
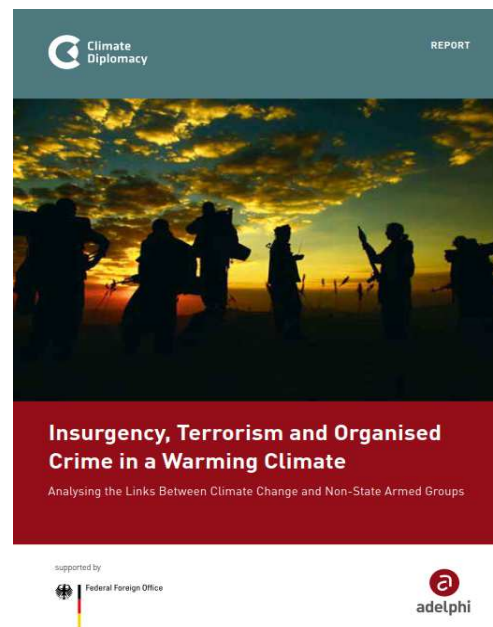
- But approaches need to be ''**conflict-sensitive**'

Integrating M&E of SDGs and quant. Climate-conflict research

- **Data generated during M&E** can be used to predict and understand climate-security risks

- **Conflict data and models** can help making development and humanitarian action 'conflict-sensitive'

- (…)

⋯ Further reading

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