



M5: Impacts of environmental migration on conflict and cooperation

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Summary of themes covered in workshop

Links between climate-related disasters, conflict and migration:

- Disasters and violent conflicts as causes of migration
- Disasters as (i) conflict drivers, (ii) social unifiers and (iii) transformation accelerators
- Links and feedback loops between disasters, migration and conflict/cooperation, relevant context factors for such interlinkages

Political ecology and migration on Yucatan peninsula (Mexico):

- Environmental stress and climate change, but also socio-economic change as threats to the ecosystems and livelihoods of the local Maya population
- Circular labour migration as a common adaptation strategies
- Reforestation would increase resilience and improve livelihoods, but fails due to several institutional factors (e.g., lack of technology, bad government-farmer relations, corruption).

Climate change, conflict and migration in Somalia and Kenya:

- Climate change interacts with local (and human-made) environmental changes and vulnerability to facilitate migration and conflict, but magnitude of the effect is unclear
- Armed conflict is a main driver of migration from Somalia to Kenya, while droughts only have a minor impact
- Droughts are one driver (among many others) of violent conflicts in northwestern Kenya

Most controversial question that came up in this workshop?

Can we identify the relative impact of climate change on migration and conflict given the multiplicity of drivers of and the complex interlinkages between those phenomena.

Results of the discussion

- Disasters are linked to conflict (and cooperation as well), but only rarely and under certain circumstances (e.g. pre-existing cohesion, distribution of costs related to the disaster, management of humanitarian assistance)
- Considerable uncertainties regarding the role of migration in the disaster-conflict nexus
- Local institutions and positive community-government relations increase resilience towards global environmental change
- There are usually several (intertwined) drivers of conflict and migration, attribution to individual causes is difficult, policies should hence not only focus on (but incorporate) climate change
- Data deficits, especially on the subnational level, limit research
- Successful adaptation (not resulting in conflict) need more attention
- Communal conflicts are often driven by wider socio-economic and political factors (availability of weapons, national-level politics, international attention)

Research gaps identified

- Role of humanitarian assistance as a facilitator and/or inhibitor of post-disaster conflict
- Relevance of climate change vis-a-vis other factors in causing migration and conflict
- Cooperative and peaceful adaptation strategies (positive examples)
- Better subnational data

Next steps

Coffee break ;-)

Other

NA

3-5 keywords that characterize the session

Natural disaster, environmental stress, migration, conflict, cooperation