Linda Wallbott

*International policies of climate change and disaster prevention as tools of sustainable peacebuilding – suitable concept of Western paternalism?*
Outline

- Main argument

- Background assumptions
  - relevance of the issue
  - vulnerability approach

- International policies on climate change/ disaster risk reduction
  - formal 'evolution'
  - implementation

- 'Character' of the international climate change regime

- Conclusions
Argument

International policies of climate change and disaster risk reduction have the potential of being important elements of sustainable peacebuilding/ international security governance.

However, this potential has not been realized so far due to
- inadequate consideration of adaptation issues and
- inadequate implementation of mitigation approaches.
Background assumptions_ relevance

- Climate change is happening, however is not a sole environmental issue

- Three processes as conflict-fuelling knock on-effects of climate change:
  1. Resource scarcity
  2. Sea-level rise
  3. Intensification of natural disasters

- 46 countries likely to explain violent conflict
- 56 will have great difficulties in coping with climate change challenges
Occurrence of natural disasters 1975-2004 (www.em-dat.net)

Fig. 1. Trend in disaster occurrence and impact 1975–2004

Polynomial trends in numbers of natural disasters, persons killed and persons affected: 1975–2004

Source: EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database.
http://www.em-dat.net, Université Catholique de Louvain, Brussels, Belgium.
Risk of conflict due to climate change (Smith/ Vivekananda 2007)
Conflict-promoting factors in the context of climate change and a natural disaster

- undemocratic regime and governance structures
- political instability/ brevity of peace
- sluggish economic growth
- weak functional capabilities of the government in relation to other groups of actors
- strong migration and urbanization
- male youth buldge
- food insecurity

→ human security: all those „social and economic entitlements that are necessary to reduce an individual‘s vulnerability (or increase their ability to adapt to environmental changes“ (Barnett/ Adger 2005: 4)

- horizontal inequality
## Discourses on nature-society-relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Biophysical approach</th>
<th>Vulnerability approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic assumption/</td>
<td>physical hazards as external forces</td>
<td>coupling of social-ecological system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object of analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem perception</td>
<td>distracted ecology</td>
<td>socio-economic and political processes put</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>people at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural disasters</td>
<td>... as violent forces of nature</td>
<td>... as a result of disadvantageous conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution</td>
<td>predictability of 'trends':</td>
<td>adaptation ('entitlements') plus technological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- better science and technology</td>
<td>innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- mathematic models</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- quantitative risk assessment</td>
<td>human security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Natural disasters: The discourse often focuses on natural disasters, viewing them as violent forces of nature, rather than as a result of disadvantageous conditions.
- Biophysical approach: Emphasizes the physical hazards as external forces, focusing on predictability of trends through better science and technology, mathematic models, and quantitative risk assessment.
- Vulnerability approach: Highlights the coupling of social-ecological systems and the socio-economic and political processes that put people at risk.
Tasks for the international community

- to capture climate change and its negative effects
  - task: slow down climate change (mitigation)
  - task: enhance development and reduce vulnerability (adaptation)

- to reduce the risk for violent conflict
  - task: reduce horizontal inequality

→

- to implement development policies
- to implement policies of adaptation/ disaster risk reduction
- to consider side-effects on horizontal inequality in this context
However...

International policies traditionally characterized by

- focus on mitigation → biophysical approach
- to the disadvantage of adaptation issues → vulnerability approach

- furthermore: inadequate implementation of formal commitments in both areas
International politics and policies on climate change/ DRR

- 1972: Conference on Earth and Development
- 1979: World Climate Conference

1990-99: International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

- 1992: Conference on Environment and Development → UNFCCC
- 1994: Yokohama Strategy – Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation
- 1997: Kyoto-Protocol → CDM, JI, emission trading
- 2000: Millenium Declaration
- 2005: Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe) → Hyogo Framework: Building Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters
- 2007: Bali Road Map/ Action Plan
Implementation

Mitigation

- 1990-2007: increase of CO2-emissions 38%
- since 2000: growth of anthropogenic CO2-emissions with 4-time pace in comparison with previous decade

Adaptation (self-evaluation of donors):

- mainstreaming of DRR practices ‚elusive‘
- ODA centred in areas with more ‚immediate‘ results
- focus on recovery and reconstruction ≠ vulnerability reduction
- inadequate participation/ contextualization of policies
Climate change policies - hegemonic project?

Approach: naturalization/ technocratization of the problem:

• objective and 'true' issues, promoted by experts (IPCC)

• „numerical objectifications“/ „quantitative vision of the world“ → simulate and process average data to govern (regulate) the world

• manageable issues → neoliberal instruments

• West: global risk manager

• 'common sense' → status quo orientation

• 'successful' implementation: statistical values are reached
Conclusion

To become an effective element of an agenda of sustainable peace, international policies on climate change and disaster risk reduction shall put forward an integrated problem-solving approach:

- implement mitigation goals
- address the social, political and economic aspects of vulnerability (→ find common language)
- include assessments of horizontal inequality
- institutional ‘clarity’
- provide adequate financial means
Thank you for your attention