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Climate Change Security Nexus: Achievements and Shortcomings

Contextualizing and Assessing the Climate Change and Security Discourses and Policy Debates (2000-2012): Stages, Schools and Qualitative Approaches

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Abstract

The linkage between climate change and security has been addressed since 1988 by policymakers and scientists. The scientific debate gradually emerged in the 1990s and since 2002 the policy debate started in Europe (UK, Germany) in the context of international security, since 2004 in the US as a national security issue, and since 2007 in the UN in the frame of international and human security. In the scientific debate four schools coexist: 1) determinists or dramatizers who claimed that climate change will lead to wars; 2) empiricists analysed with qualitative and quantitative methods whether environmental stress and climate change contributed to forced migration and violence; 3) sceptics pointed to a lack of evidence in the peer-reviewed, quantitative literature; and 4) deniers challenged the links between climate change and conflicts. Further, at least five different scientific approaches have emerged: a) policy analyses, b) scenario analyses, c) discourse analysis, d) conceptual and model analyses and e) theoretical and empirical analyses that use a wide range of scientific approaches, theoretical orientations, and methods to analyse the 'observed' and 'projected' interrelations among physical and societal effects of climate change on the state, society, the economic sector, and on individuals, community groups, states, and humankind.