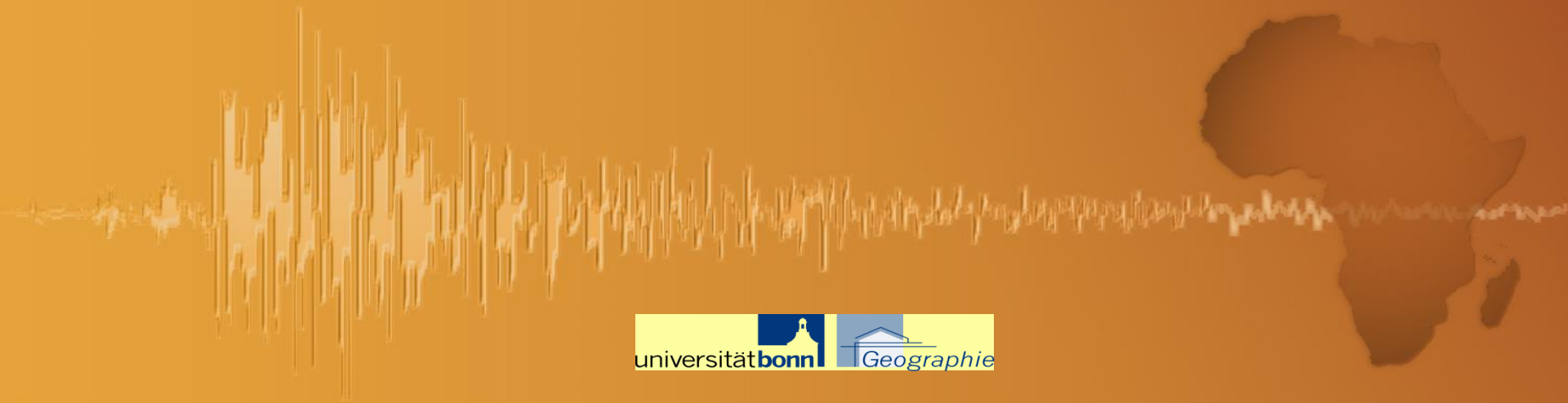


Navigating through risky territories – Changing climates, future natures and the manufacturing of risks in Africa

Conference on “Negotiating Concepts of Nature and Future in Africa”

Detlef Müller-Mahn, Bonn

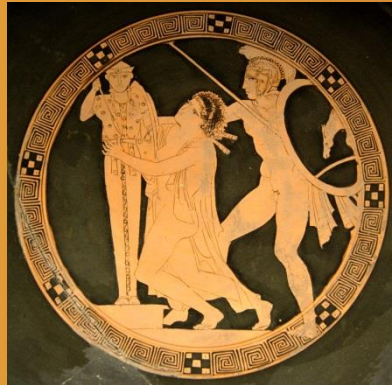
Bayreuth, 20.06.2014



Navigating through risky territories –

Changing climates, future natures and the manufacturing of risksapes in Africa

Conference on “Negotiating Concepts of Nature and Future in Africa”



KASSANDRA

– The curse of anticipation



Changing climates, future natures and the manufacturing of riskscapes in Africa

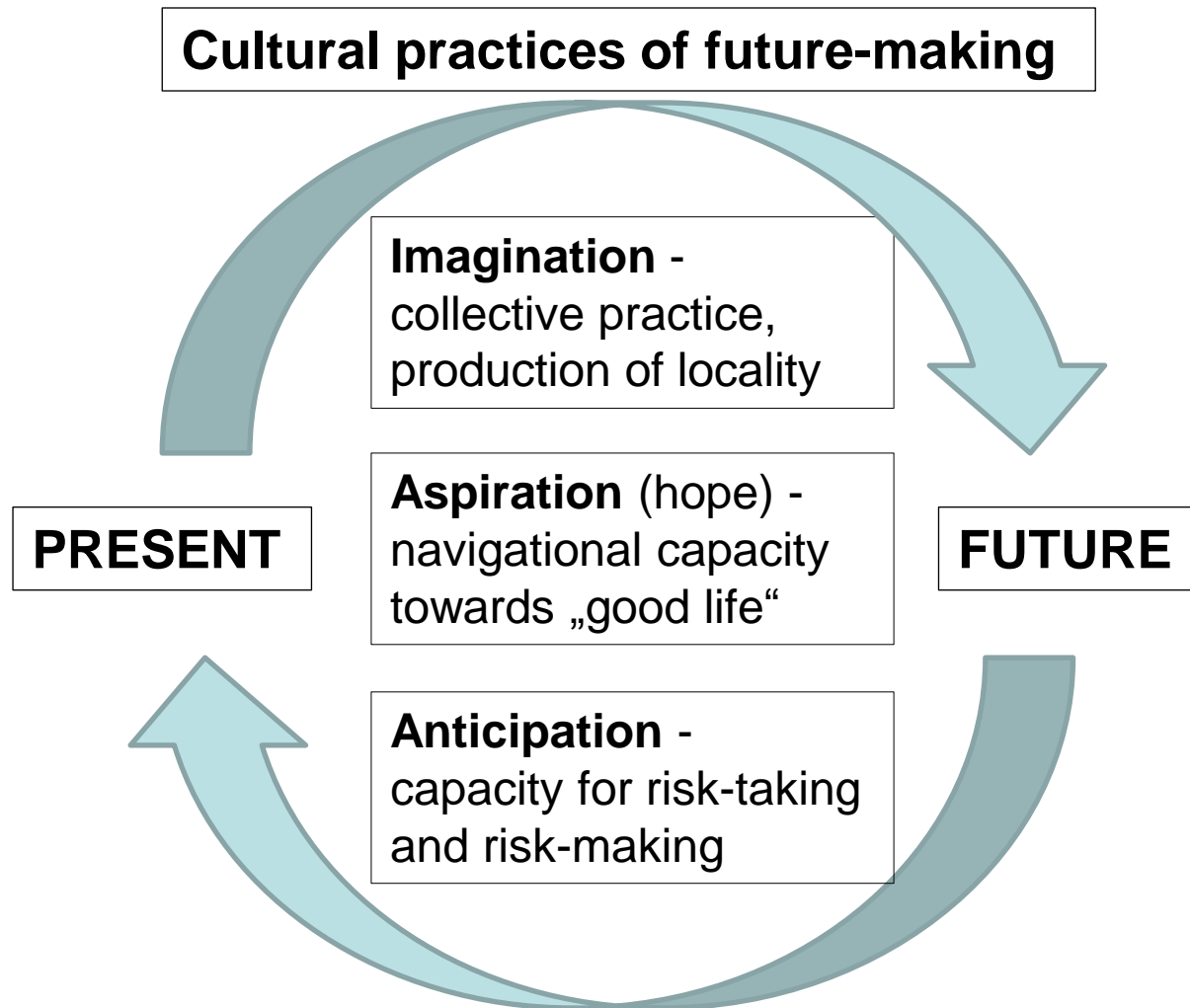
1. Future-making through anticipation
2. Future natures: Anticipated climatic changes in Africa
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Navigating futures...

...with Arjun Appadurai





Navigating futures...

...with Ulrich Beck

*“Risk is not the same as catastrophe, but the **anticipation of future catastrophe in the presence**”*

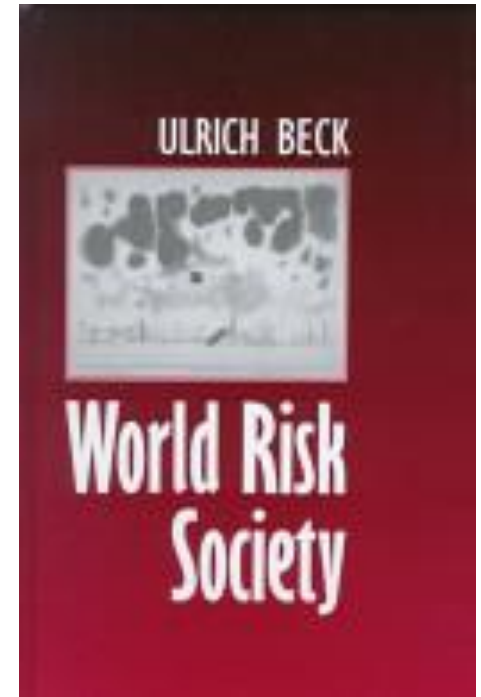
Beck 2009: Critical Theory of World Risk Society: A Cosmopolitan Vision

*“we do not know what it is we don’t know
but from this dangers arise, which threaten mankind!
The perfect example here is ... the debate about
climate change.”*

→ **Staging of future catastrophes**

→ How to “understand the manufactured uncertainty,
lack of safety and insecurity of world risk society”?

Beck 2006: Living in the world risk society, Economy and Society, Vol. 35, 3: 329-345



features of world risk:

- de-localization
- incalculableness
- non-compensatibility, irreversability



Navigating futures...

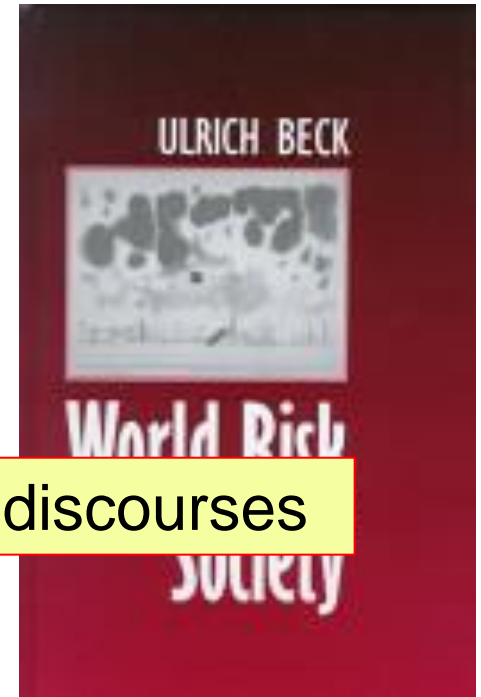


local agency

Anticipation



Global discourses



prerequisite for risk-taking
and risk-making
Appadurai 2013

manufacturing of uncertainty,
'wake-up call'
Beck 2007

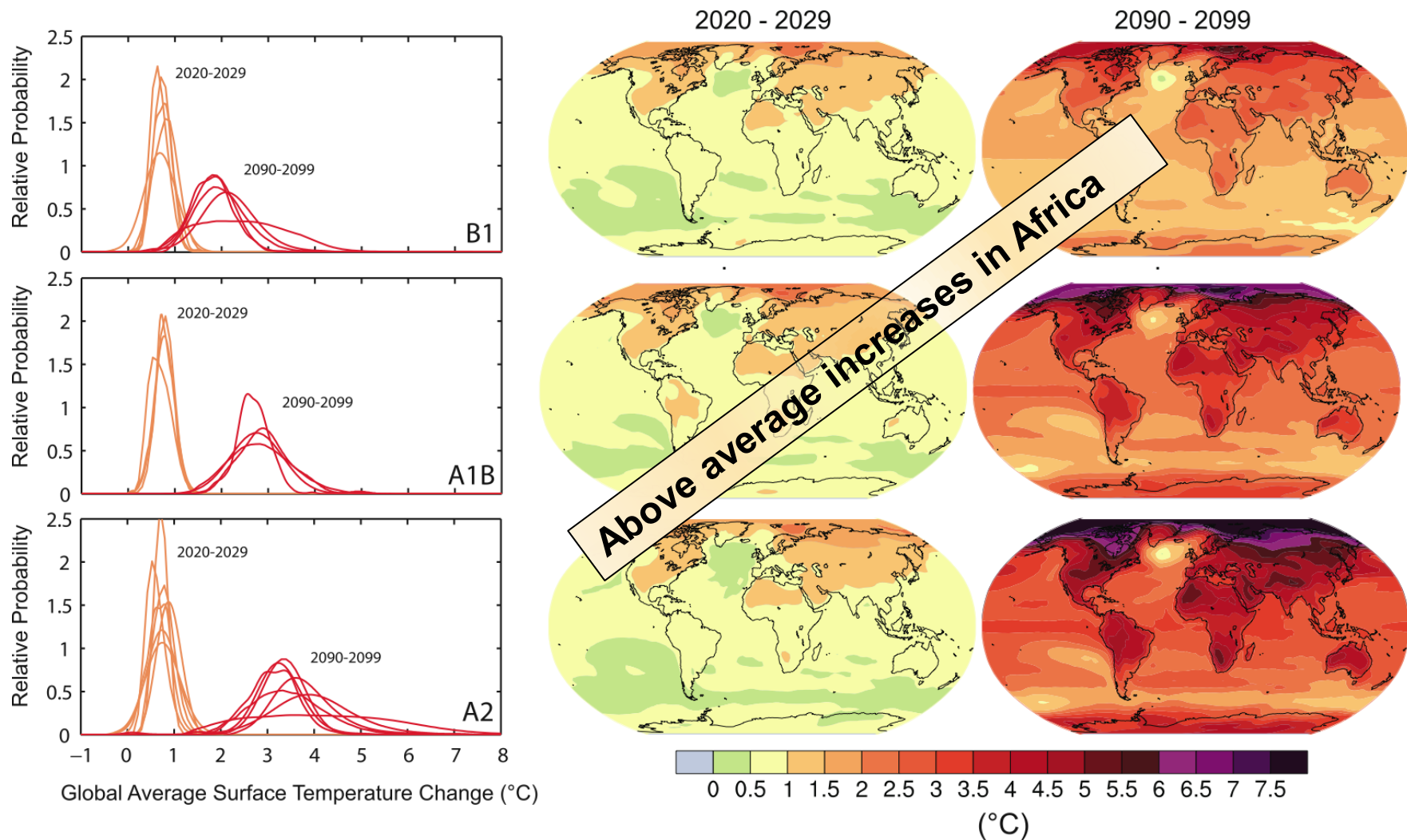
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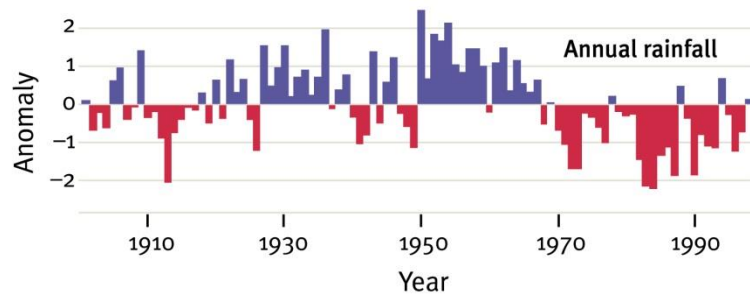


Anticipated temperature increase 2030 - 2099 (IPCC 2007)

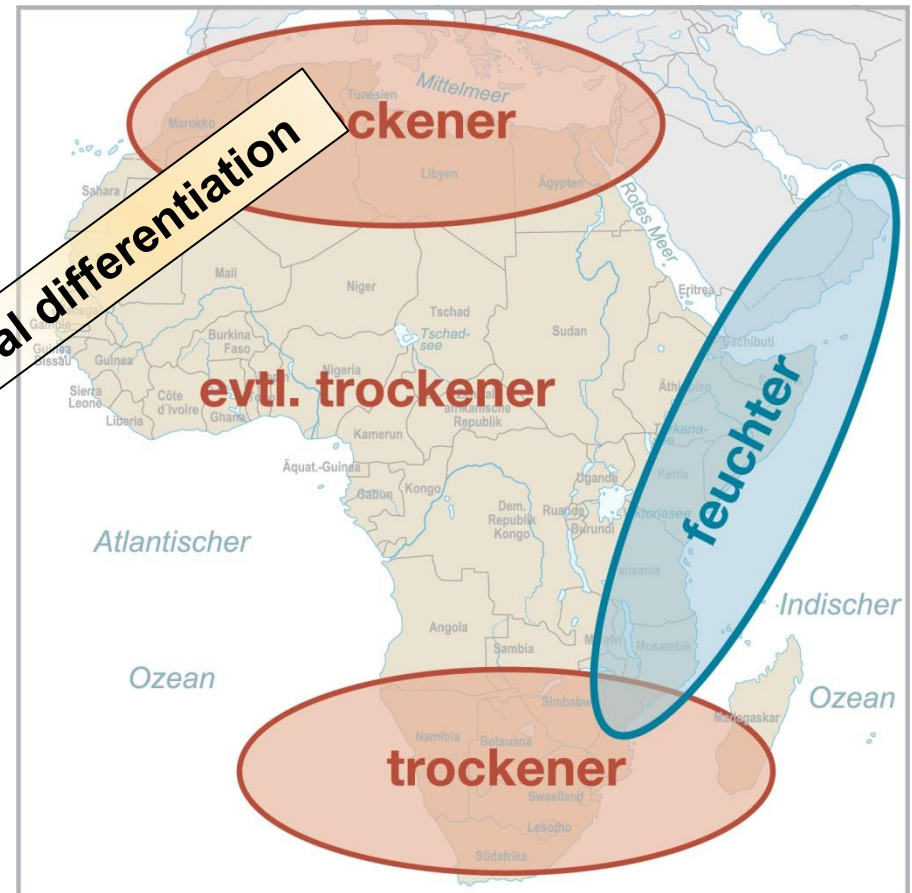
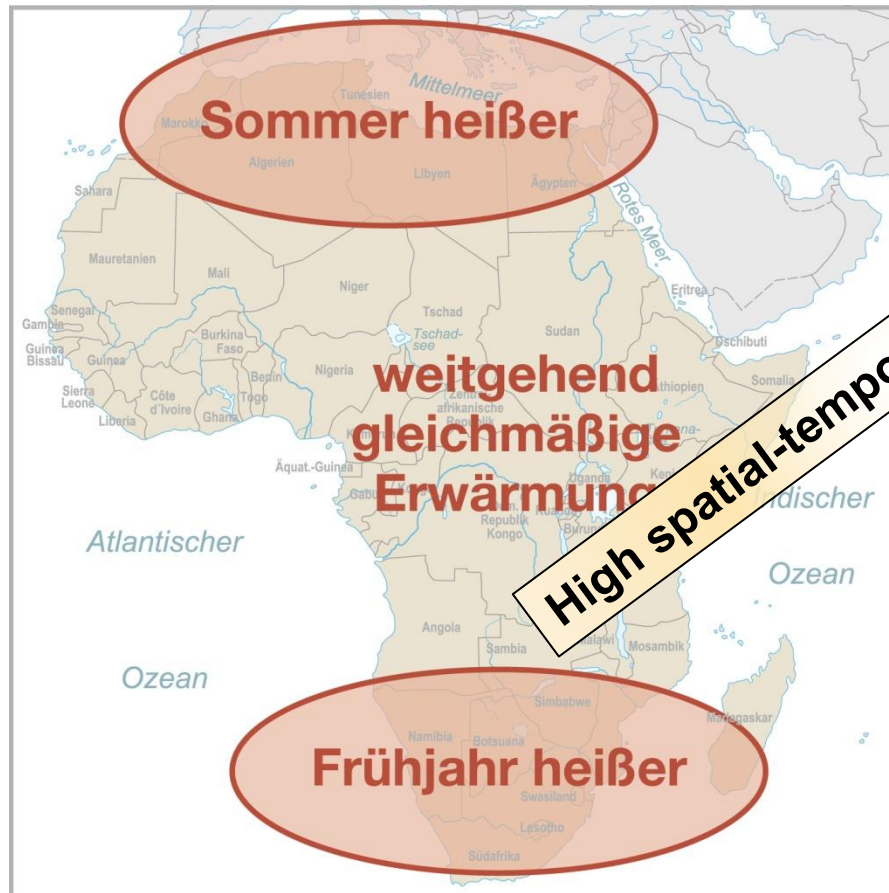




Trends of temperature and precipitation changes



Rainfall variability in Sahel 1900-2000





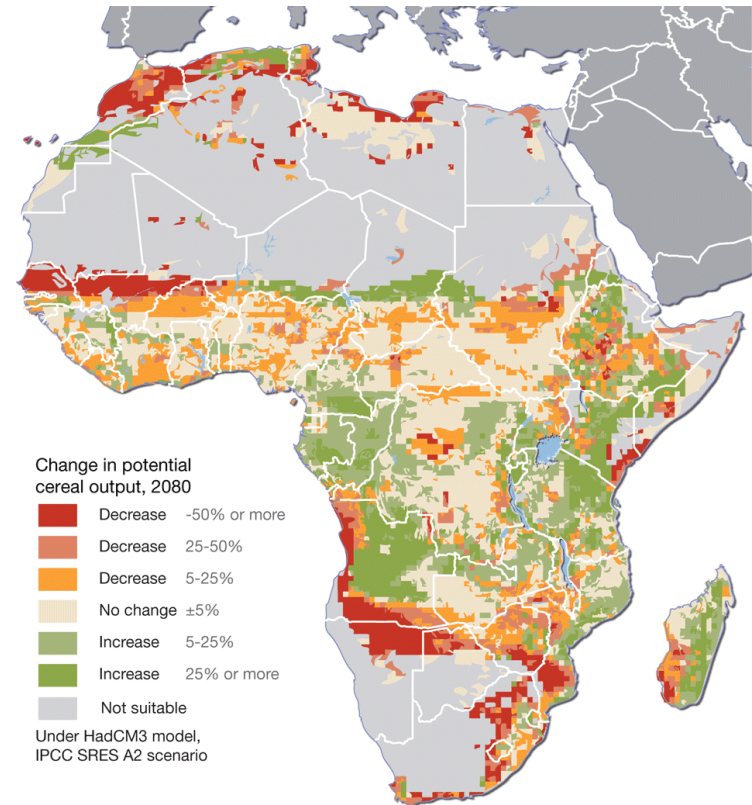
Anticipated impacts of climate change

High probability:

- Loss of biodiversity
- Less food production
- Increase of extreme events & sea level rise
- More tropical diseases
- Increasing water scarcity
- Increasing disaster risk

Uncertainty about:

- Dynamic non-linear changes
- regional differentiation
- Interactions between societies and environment



Changes of cereal production until 2080
(IPCC 2007)

„Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents to climate variability and change because of multiple stresses and low adaptive capacity.“ (IPPC 2007)

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Securitisation

Copenhagen School:

Ole Wæver, Barry Buzan, Aradau, Van Munster, Jägerskog

Securitisation

- creating urgency & setting political priorities
- identification of existential threats that justify emergency-politics outside of normal governance framework
- depoliticization

- climate change - a security issue?

(Oels 2013: Rendering climate change governable by risk)



Securitisation of climate change discourses

(1) Climate change as “catalyst for conflict”

- climate change → droughts
→ rising food prices
→ political destabilisation (Arab Spring)
→ terrorism (El Qaeda)
- *“Tribes are killing each other over water today. Think of what happens if you have massive dislocation, or the drying up of the waters of the Nile (...). The intelligence community takes it seriously, and it’s translated into action.”*

John Kerry, US-Secretary of State,
Interview New York Times 13.5.2014

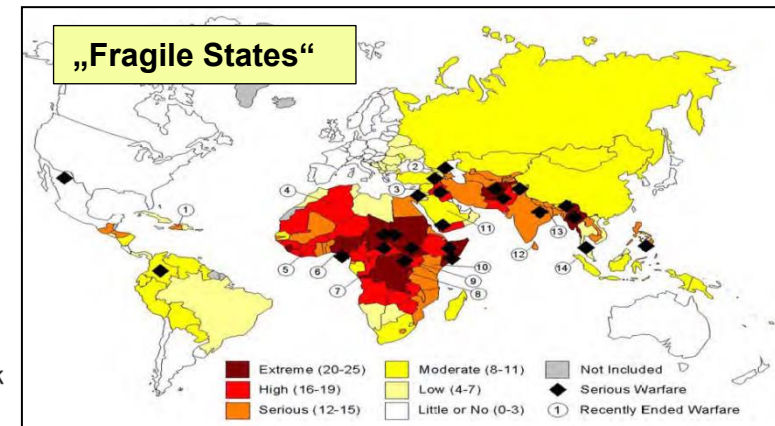
The New York Times



CNA Military
Advisory Board



John Kerry, US-Secret. of State



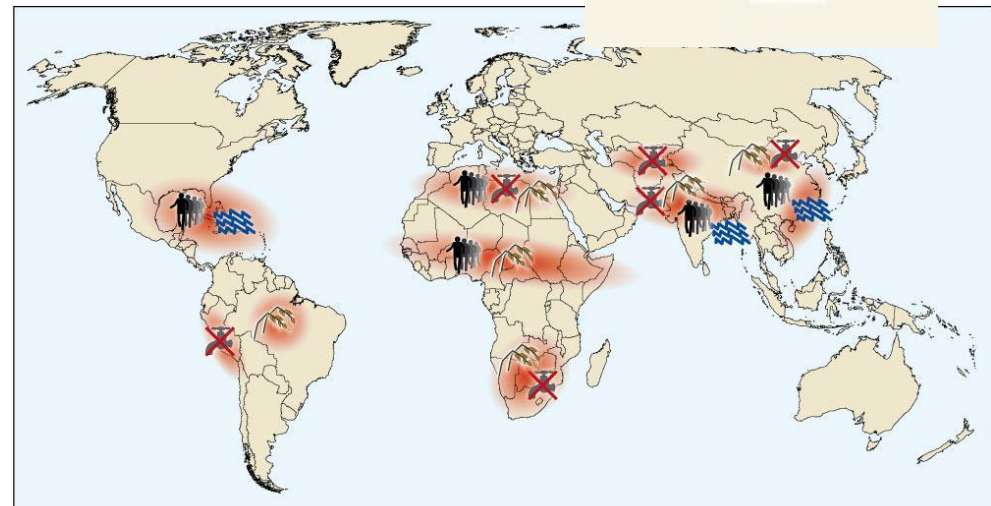


Securitisation of climate change discourse

(2): climate change as cause for „climate refugees“

High estimated figures, unclear definitions:

- „climate refugees“ in 2050:
150 Mill. (UNHCR 2013),
330 Mill. (UNDP 2013)
- Darfur as first „climate war“
(Ban Ki-Moon 2007)
- Environmentally-induced
displacement, „hotspots in Africa“
→ climate change as a security
threat
(WBGU 2007)



Konfliktkonstellationen in ausgewählten Brennpunkten



Klimabedingte Degradation
von Süßwasserressourcen



Klimabedingter Rückgang
der Nahrungsmittelproduktion

Brennpunkt



Klimabedingte Zunahme von
Sturm- und Flutkatastrophen

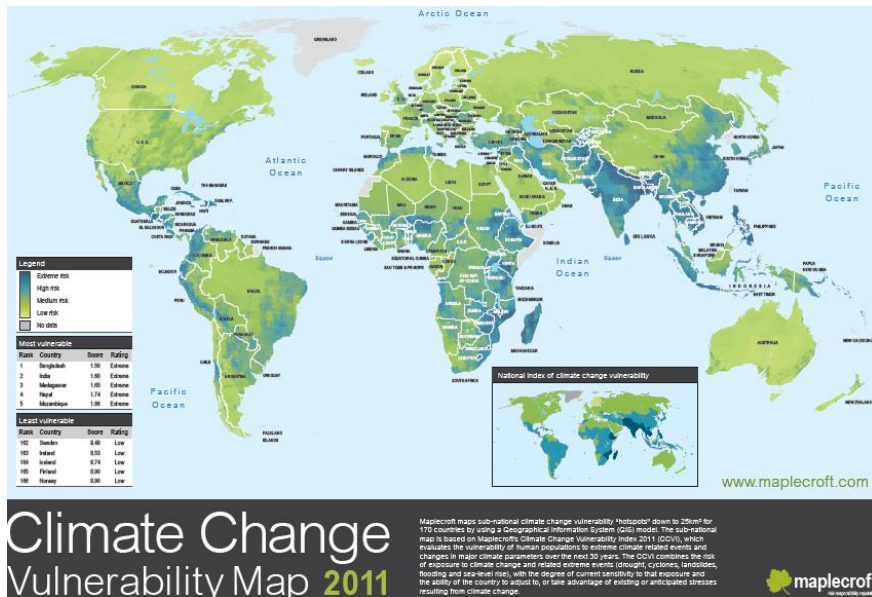


Umweltbedingte
Migration

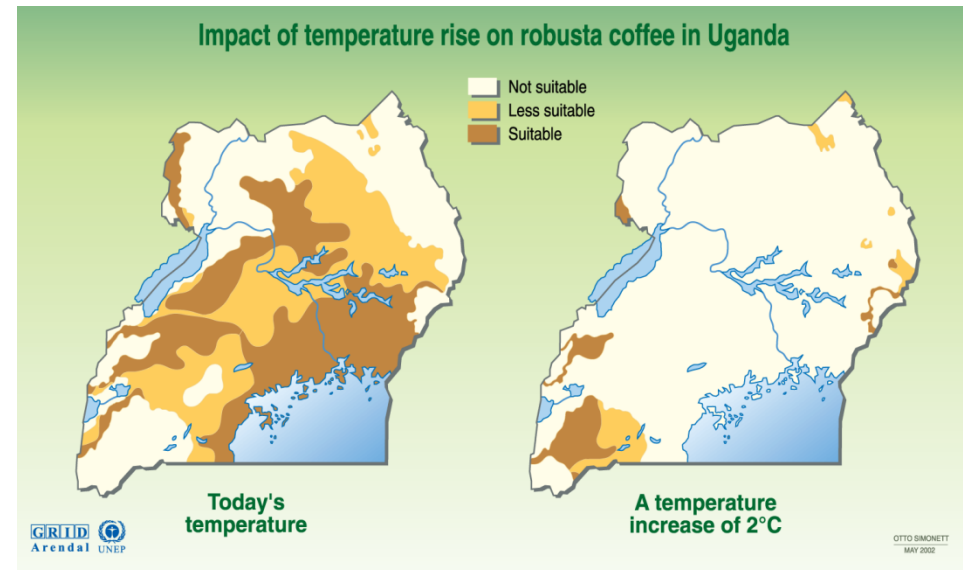


Securitisation of climate change discourse

(3): manufacturing visual evidence by mapping



Problem: scale!



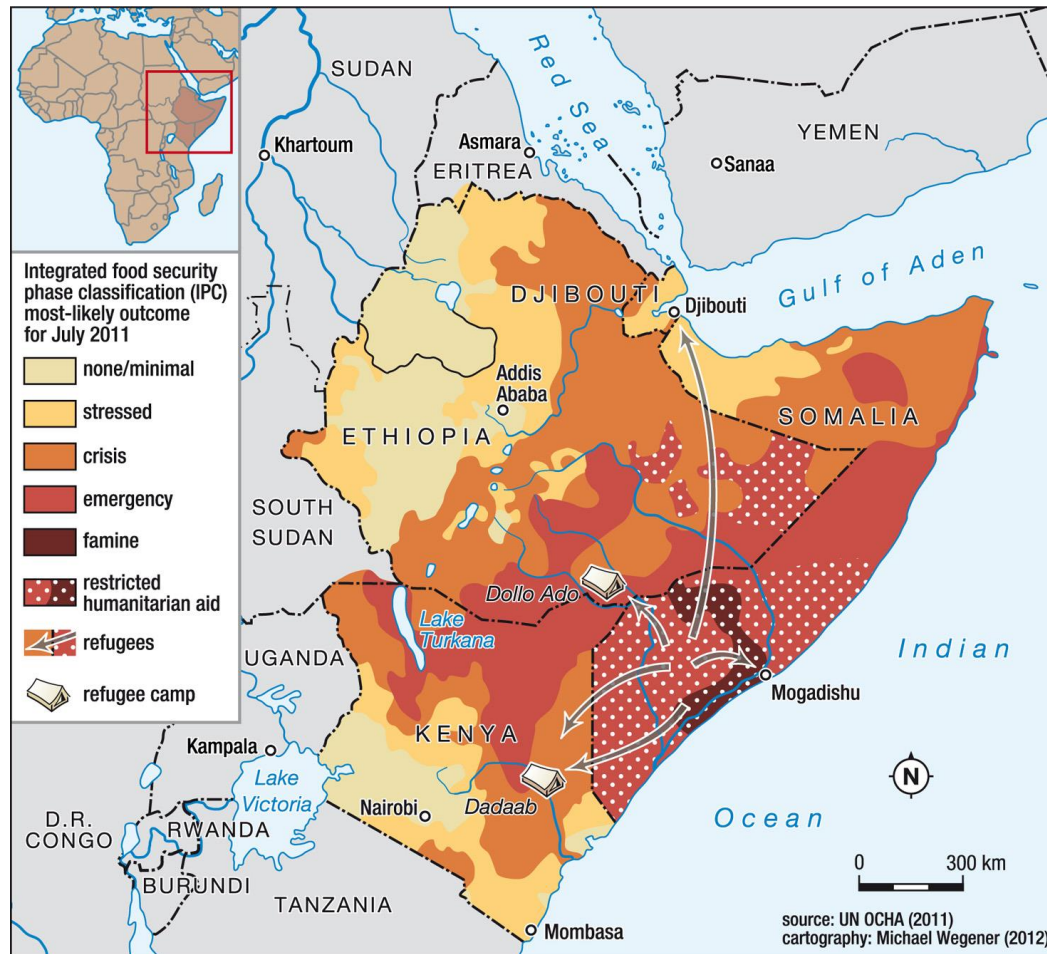
Source: Otto Simonett, Potential impacts of global warming, GRID-Geneva, case studies on climatic change. Geneva, 1989.

Problem: Extrapolation of current conditions into the future



Securitisation of climate change discourse

(4): legitimising intervention



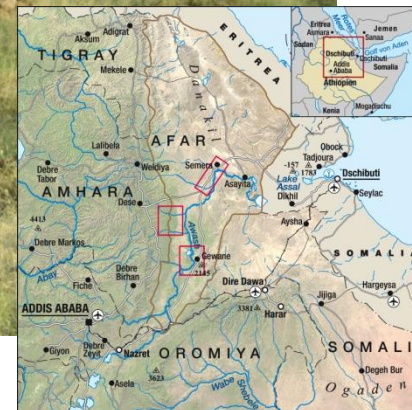
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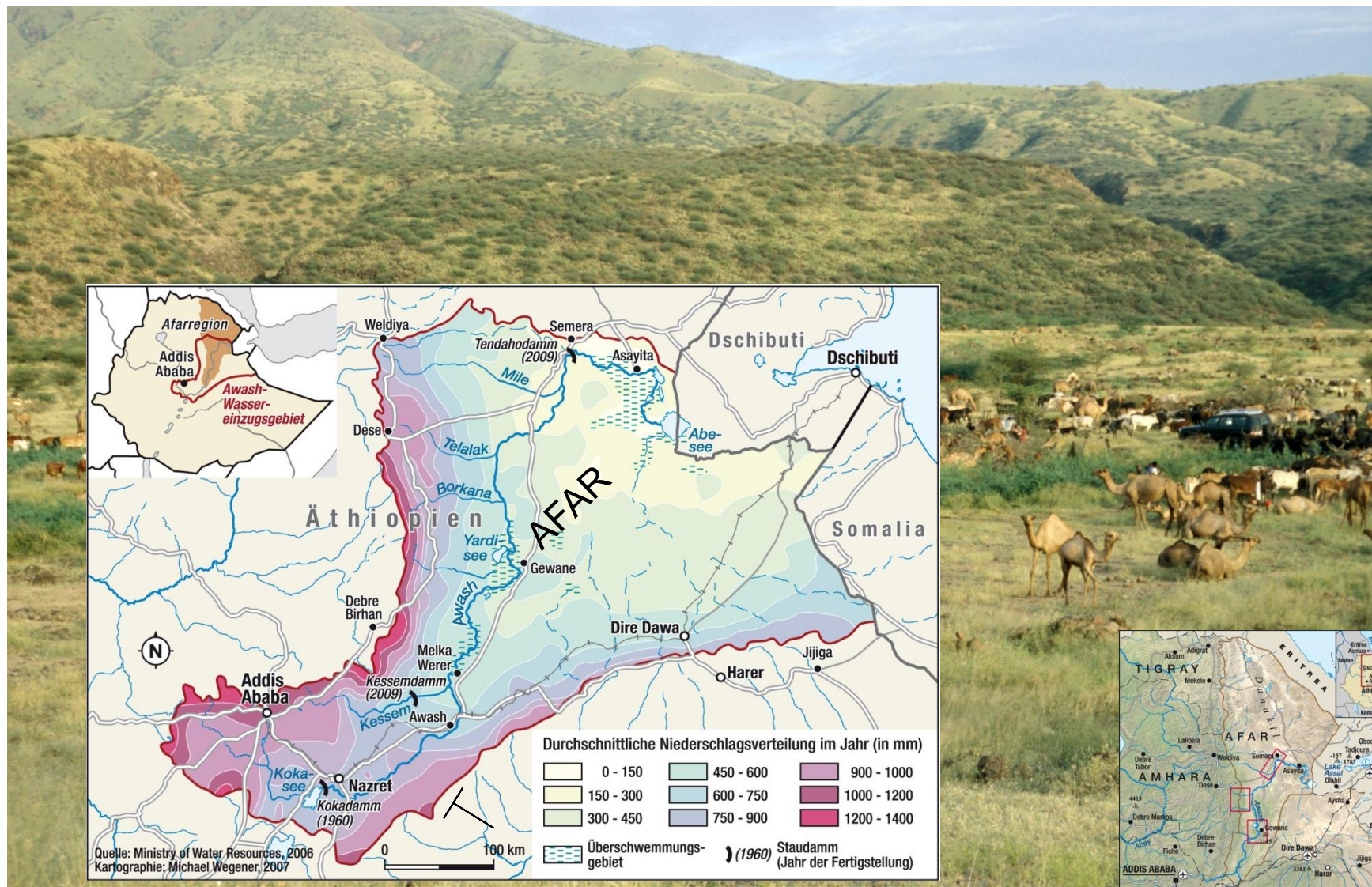


Case study: Adaptation and future-making among the Afar/Ethiopia

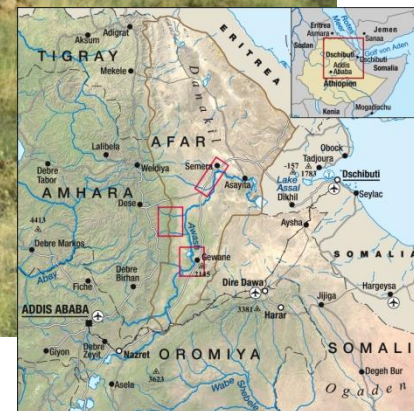




Case study: Adaptation and future-making among the Afar/Ethiopia

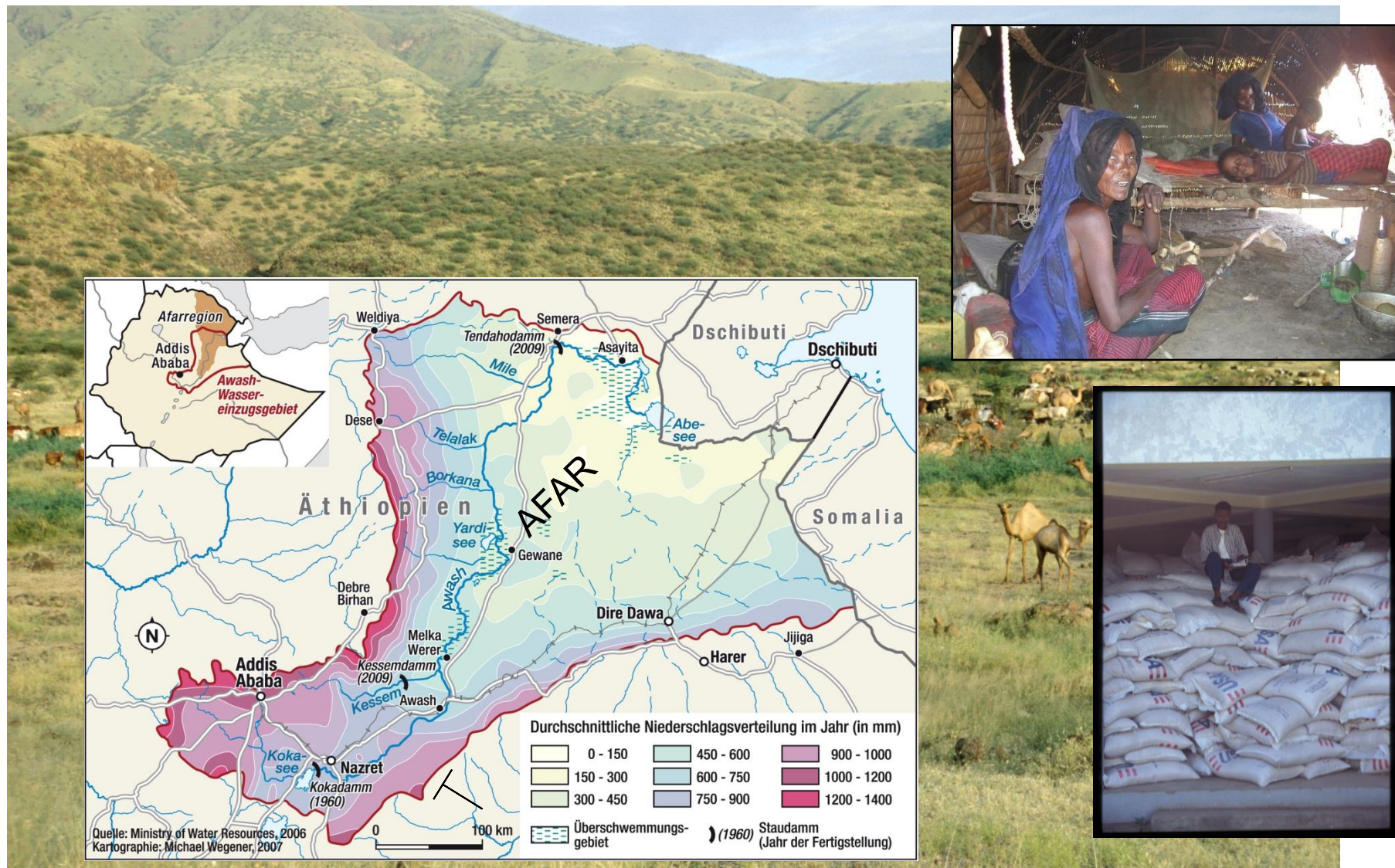


Precipitation





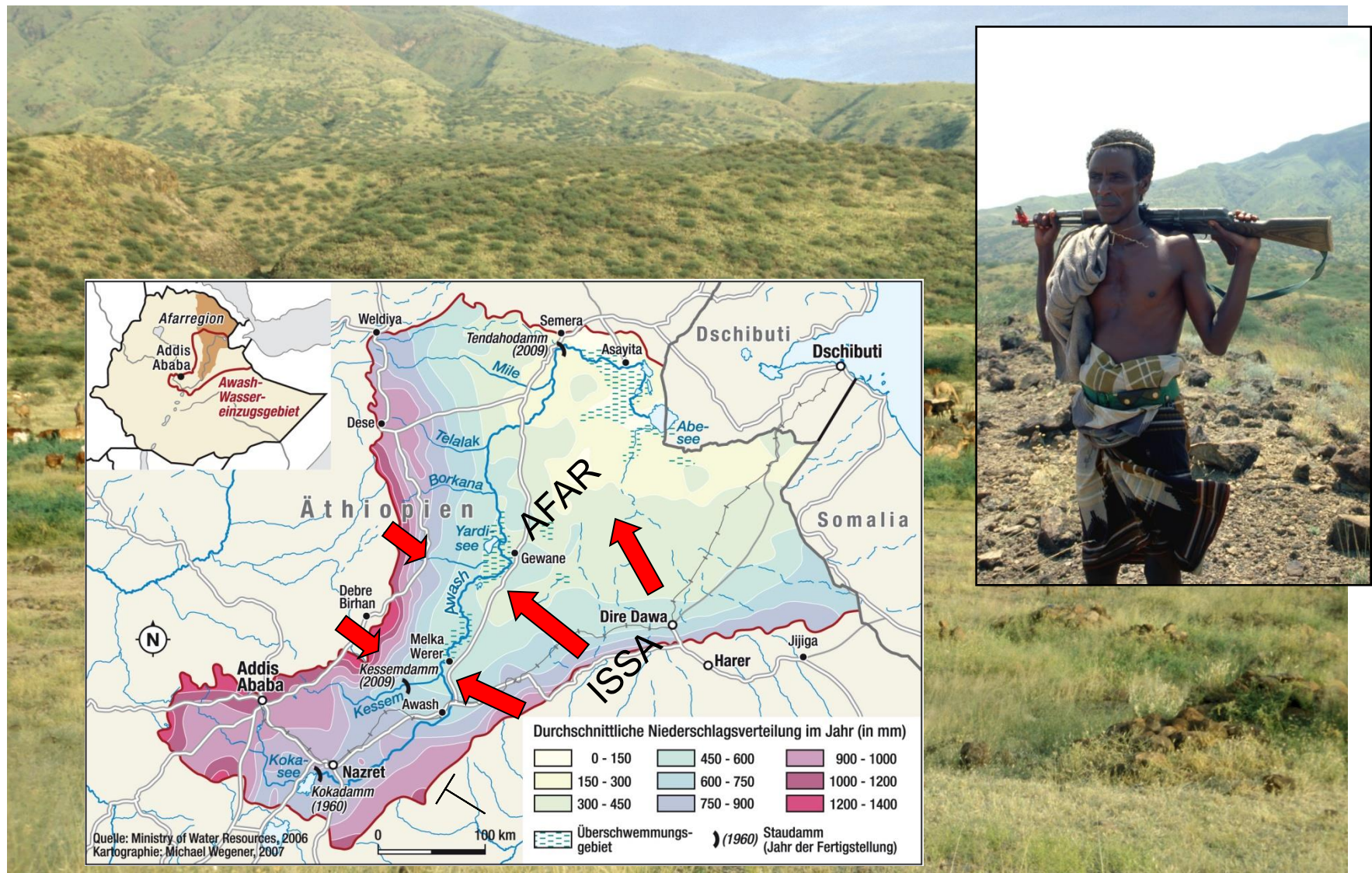
Recurrent droughts, famine and food



Precipitation

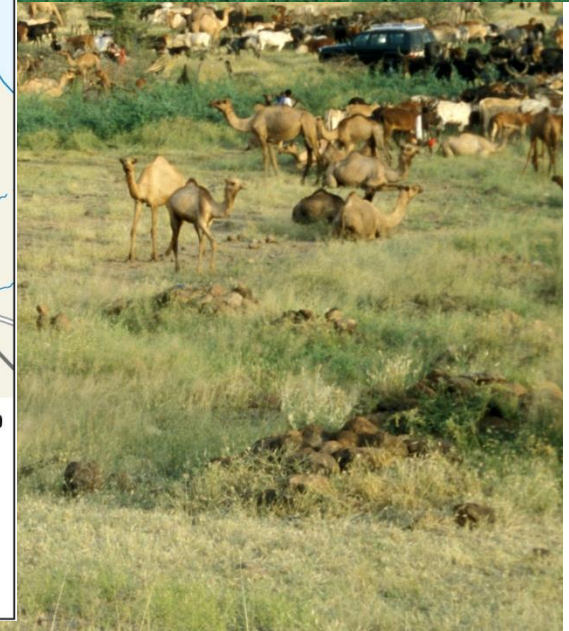


Land losses and conflicts with neighbouring groups



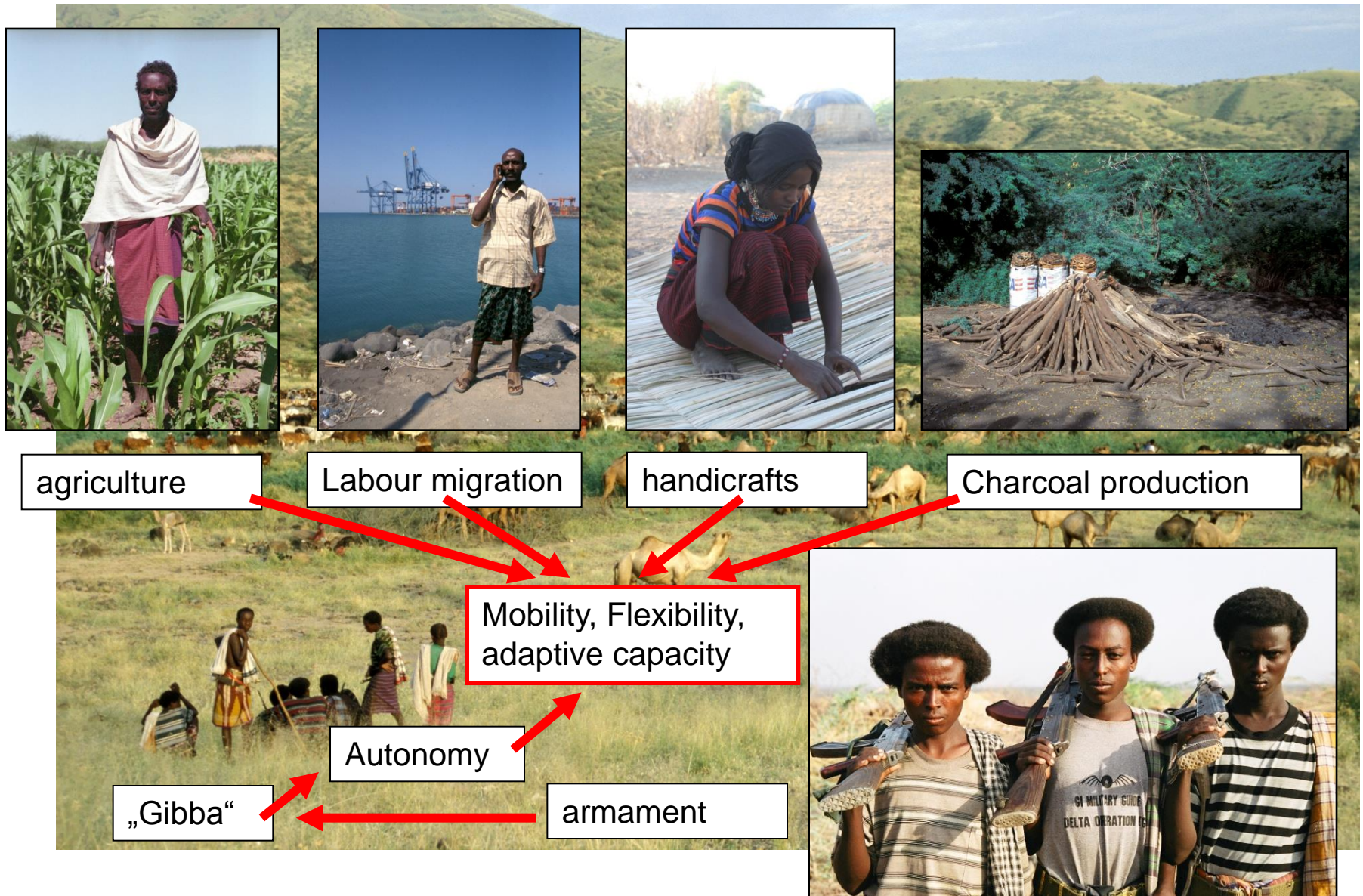


Land losses because of irrigated farming





Diversified practices of adaptation





Different framings of climate change discourse (Hulme 2009)

- Battleground between different scientific perspectives
- Controversy about the commodification of the atmosphere
- Inspiration for civil society movements and new global networks
- Threat to ethnic, social, national integrity

„Climate change is not simply a ‚fact‘ or a ‚problem´ waiting for a ‚solution´. It is an environmental, cultural and political phenomenon which is reshaping the way we think about ourselves, our societies and humanity´s place on earth.“

(*) Mike Hulme 2009: *Why We Disagree About Climate Change. Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity*, Cambridge: University Press: XXVIII

Discourse on Nature ← / → Culture



Relevance of Culture for understanding climate change

Dichotomy of climate ideologies

- Western concept → desire for control of Nature
- Mastery of Nature over humans (E. Huntington, J. Diamond) → environmental determinism

Climate as a social construction

- related with human experiences, perceptions, values
- Normative/ethical dimension
- Enlightenment project, Western civilization → Separation of Nature and Culture (Bruno Latour)

Climate change as an issue of '*post-normal science*' (*):

(*) Funtowicz, S.O. and Ravetz, J.R. (1993): Science for a post-normal age. *Futures* 25, 739-755.

→uncertainty, disputed values, urgency of decisions

→unprecedented situation → challenge for modernity

→**Relevance of local knowledge & culture** for adaptation

WHOSE CULTURE COUNTS?



What is the meaning of adaptation? For whom?

External perspective:

climate change science

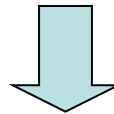
*„any adjustment in natural or human systems in **response to actual or expected climatic stimuli** or their effects which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities“* (IPPC 2007)

Internal perspective:

local populations

- Adaptation is an active creation and transformation of the environment
- Based on perception, knowledge and learning
- Embedded in social-economic contexts and local culture

adaptation as a global model and „travelling idea“



How does the global „travelling idea“ become local?



The concept of „travelling ideas“ (Rottenburg 1996)

„politico-cultural translation of globally circulating ideas (...) into local political arenas“ (Rottenburg 1996: 196)

Elements of „travelling“:

- „Translation“ → giving meaning to foreign ideas, fitting them into local contexts (cultural syncretisms, hybridization)
- Imitation, mimesis → appropriation of the new and unknown
- Appropriation → making foreign ideas ones owns
 - Examples: privatization, sustainability, development

Research focus:

- Role of translators
- Process of translation, modification of ideas, change of significations

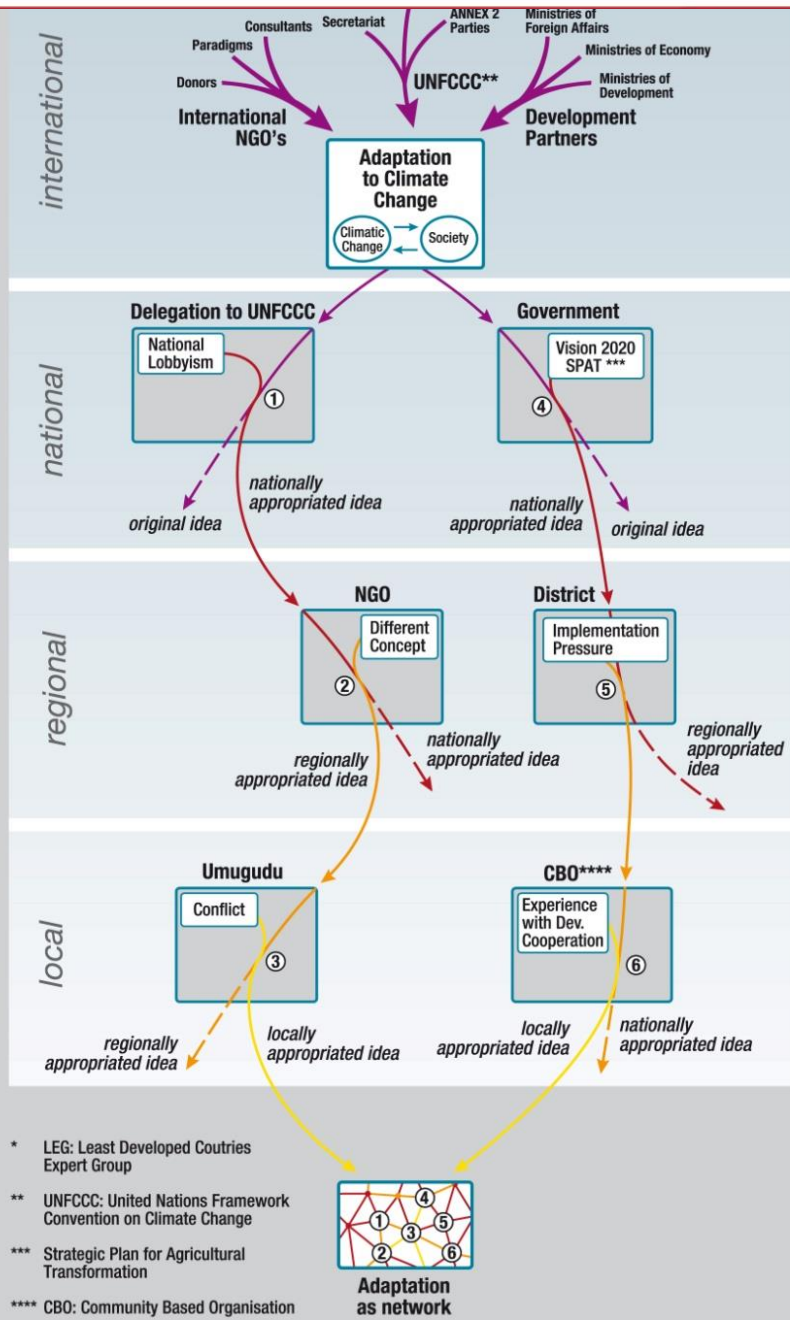
Rottenburg, Richard (1996): When Organization Travels. On Intercultural Translation. In: Translating organizational change, edited by Czarniawska, Barbara and Guje Sevón. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, pp191-240

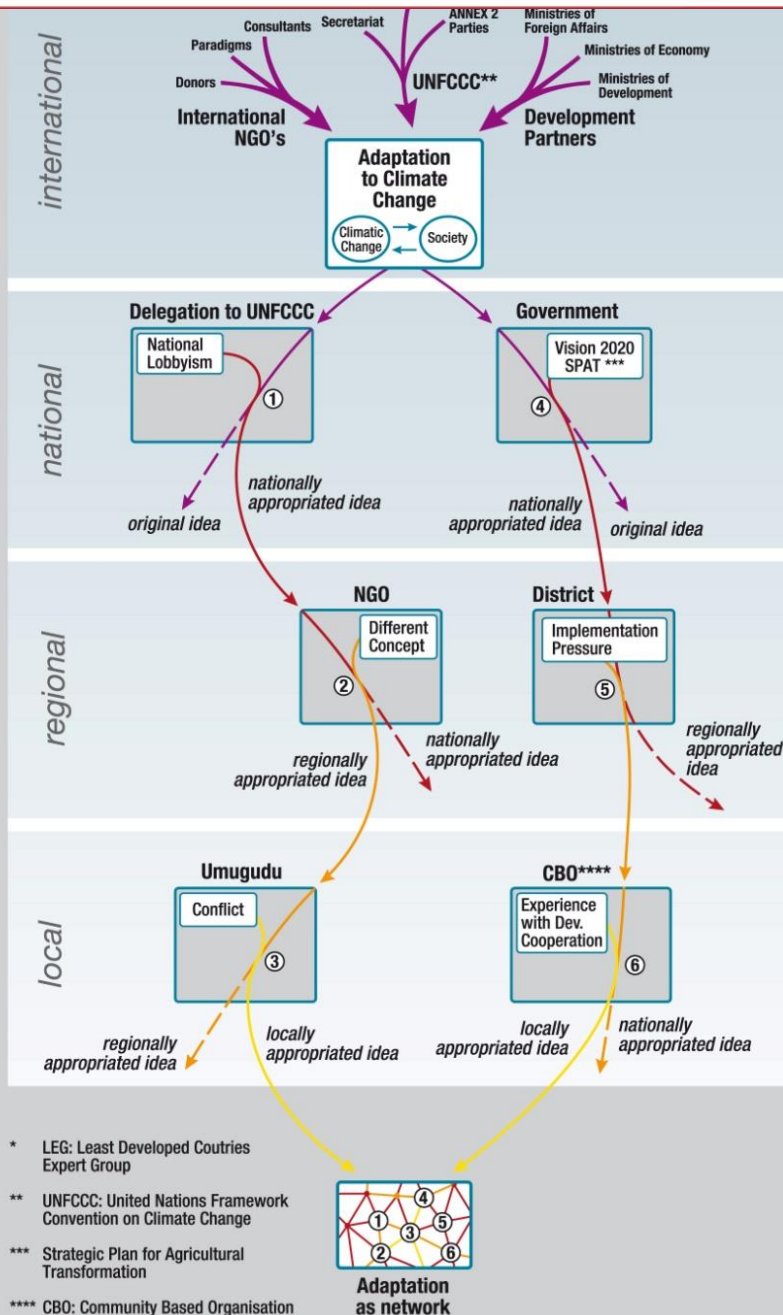


How does the global „idea“ of adaptation to climate change „travel“ to projects and people in Africa?



Changing climates, future natures, and the manufacturing of risksapes in Africa





Expected growth of available funds → Power struggles in newly established international arenas over resources and influence

New institutions as response to global incentives
 → adaptation mainstreaming in development,
 → political instrumentalization of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA)

Adjustment of NGOs to incentives of donors and adaptation mainstreaming

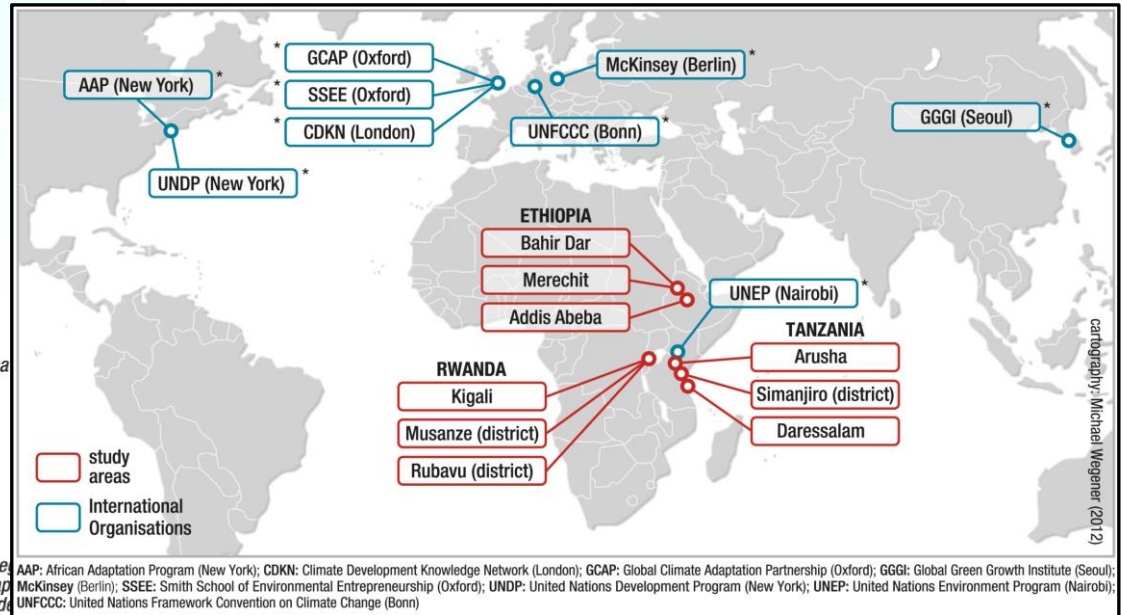
Local communities respond to adaptation programs

Adaptation as negotiation between actors in multi-scalar networks.

Adaptive practices only partly embedded in local culture, reflect incentives to adopt the travelling idea.



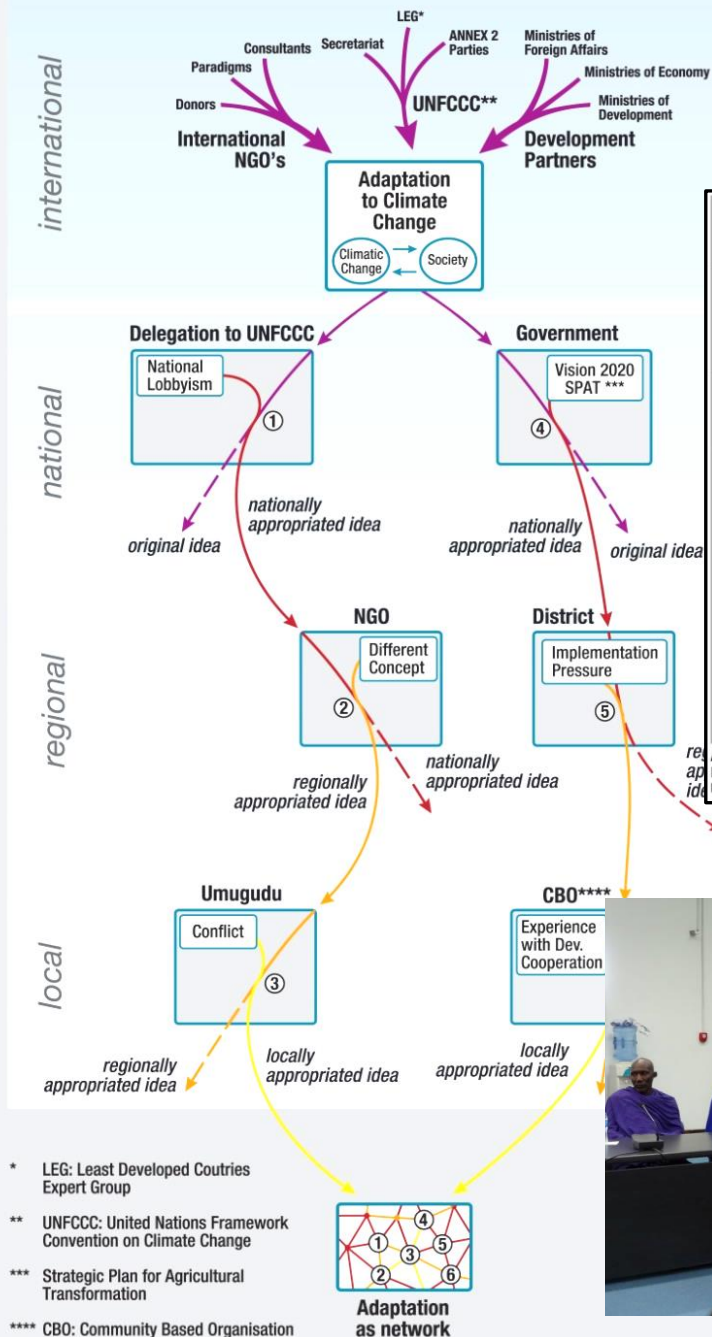
Methods: Multi-sited ethnography, Following the thing/the actors



Focus on translation and translators

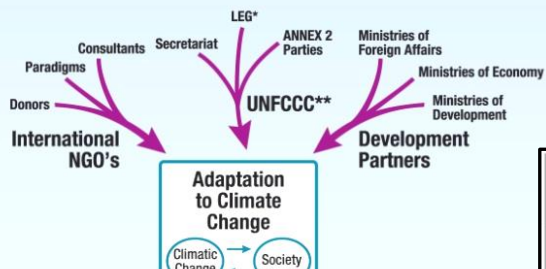


Picture: C.G.





international



national

Delegation to UN

National Lobbyism

original idea

regional

app

local

Umugugu

Conflict

regionally appropriated idea

Translators of the travelling idea:

- How do they make use of the idea?
- How do they fit it into their riskscape?



Picture: S.d.W.

* LEG: Least Developed Countries Expert Group
** UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
*** Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation
**** CBO: Community Based Organisations



Adaptation as a travelling idea

The case of Ethiopia

Modernisation strategy
presented as „adaptation“

„Adaptation“ argument used to
legitimize sedentarisation policy



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Adaptation as a travelling idea

- Adaptative processes at different scalar levels reflect primarily the *idea* of adaptation and its incentive structures, but not climate as such
- Translators integrate the new „wording“ of climate change into established narratives

Consequences of translation processes

- **“Re-labeling”**: building on older discourses about the environment and development issues
- **“Hijacking ACC”**: instrumentalization of an apolitical concept of adaptation
- **“Creative bricolage”**: activities as assemblies in which various discourses are skillfully tied together, and old projects get a new ACC ‘coat’ or ‘code’.



Consequences of securitising climate change discourses

- **„Naturalization“ of the social :**
reducing complex social-ecological relationships to their scientifically addressable aspects
- **Missing contextualization:**
Blindness for other than ecological factors, which may also be relevant for climate change impact and possible societal reactions
- **Depoliticisation:**
insufficient consideration of actors, interests, power and agency

**Globally driven discourses of fear →
reducing space for local agency**

