



**EU-Peace Research Hub
Climate Science & Just Transition**



SEMINAR

**Climate change, emerging conflicts and population movements
February 18th 2025**

The difficult recognition of Climate Migration and Climate Justice

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CLIMATE MIGRATION

A. Linked to Climate Justice

B. A geo-political question



How a diverse conceptualization of Climate Change can contribute to the debate?

Do we need a new vision to underline in our social theories?

A. Climate Justice and Juridical Aspects

Climate hotspots, increasing immobility, diversification of migratory routes, paucity of adaptation strategies in front of the intensity of environmental changes in a geo-political context to be redefined.

Climate change is a global responsibility and, above all, richest countries' one – although one of its most emblematic effects, that is, the human mobility for environmental reasons is not recognized at national scale.



B.GEO-POLITICAL QUESTION

It occurs to understand the trajectories of the future territorial redistribution of population, in relation to the increasing habitat losses (growth and concentration of population in specific areas, fragile adaptive responses of territories, diversification of political borders).

We will have new geographies for different economies: in this sense, it is a geo-political question.

If these 2 assumptions are fundamental and correct, there are 2 arising questions:

A. Refugees and climate migrants. Definitive need for appropriate terms and underlying concepts. «Threshold and boundaries».

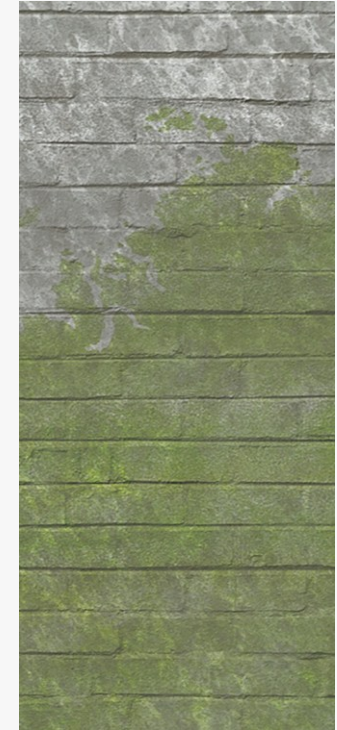
B. South-South, North-North, North-South. Habitat Loss and New Geographies. Review some concepts such as «vulnerability, territorial risk, adaptative actions.»



Bettini G, Nash SL, Gioli G. One step forward, two steps back? The fading contours of (in) justice in competing discourses on climate migration. *Geography Journal* 2017;184:348–58.

Timeline of slides

- **Analysis of main points of the two issues.**
- **A possible diverse reading of Climate Change to better define the two questions in social science.**
- **Open Considerations for the future.**



About the First Question (A)



A. Which narratives about Climate Migrants and Climate Refugees? (Klepp, 2017)

«Top-Down» look

- **Definitional need, also to find common action at the level of international standards**
- **Obstacles to quantifying movements, both internal to a territory and external to it**



«Bottom-Up» look

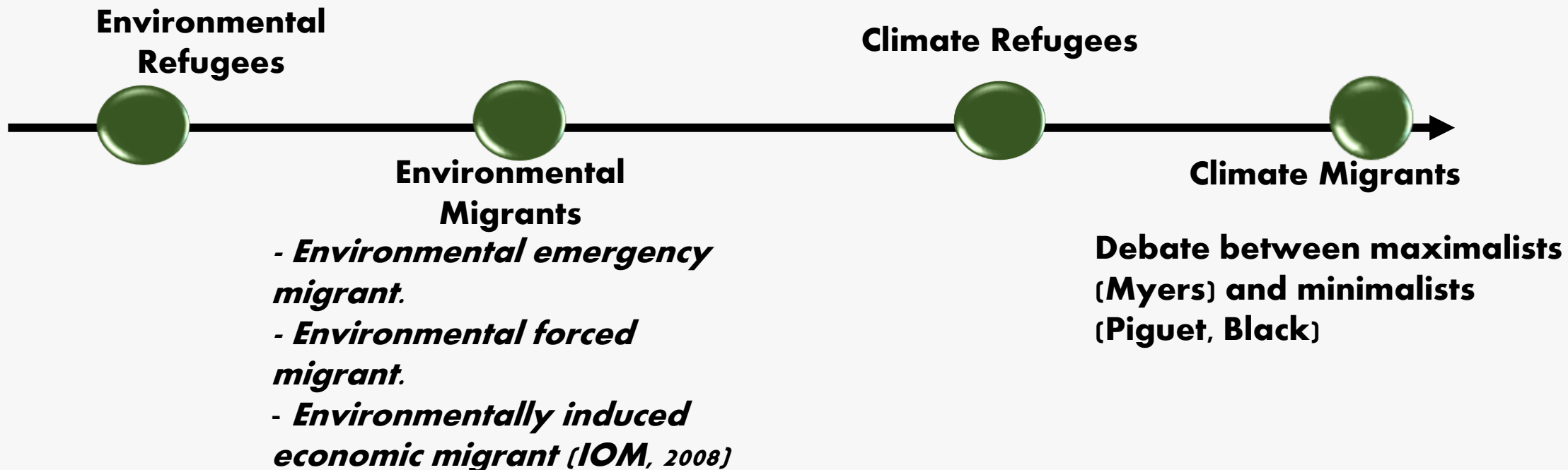
- **Difficulty for those involved in tracing back to a single mobility factor**
- **Difficulty predicting the outcomes of one's mobility**

**Voluntary / Short Distance/Temporariness
VERSUS
Forced/Long Distance/ Definitiveness**

The debate

- Migrations from predominantly natural disasters.
- Migrations from development projects resulting in changes to the surrounding environment.
- Migrations imposed by the progressive degradation of the environment (Essam El-Hinnawi, 1984)

Transfer or resettlement of communities from areas that are no longer habitable due to the environmental consequences generated by climate change" (Myers, 2002 and 2005)





Main International Initiatives

Nansen Initiative

Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative releases Guidelines



- Task Force on Displacements.
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Agenda for the Protection of Displaced Persons.

- Global Compact for a Safe Migration
- Global Compact for Refugees



Astri Suhrke's works move towards the gradual abandonment of the term "climate refugee" while placing an emphasis on how environmental crises can produce two different types of displacements.

Environmental refugees: those who are affected by forms of environmental degradation so acute as to lead to the total disruption of the economic balance of the community to which they belong. In these cases, the environmental factor is the cause of the destruction of livelihoods (a fire that deprives an indigenous population of its forest). In these situations the movement of the community would be assessed as obligatory and necessary for survival itself.

Environmental Migrants: in all cases in which such a marked form of constraint is missing, we speak of environmental migration.

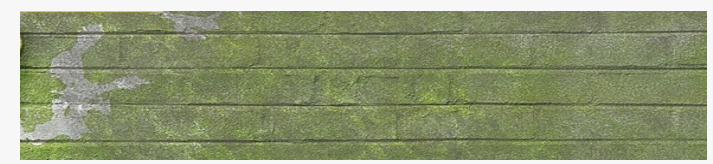
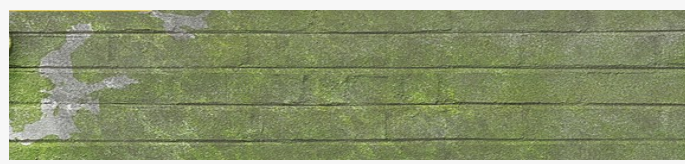


ESCAPE FROM VIOLENCE

CONFLICT AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS
IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

ARISTIDE R. ZOLBERG
ASTRI SUHRKE
SERGIO AGUAYO





Recently, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) identified three main forms of mobility associated with climate change.

Migration tout court, a term used in a broad sense to refer to people who move within or outside their country for a variety of reasons, including environmental ones.

Displacement, to be understood as forced movements due to environmental disasters.

Planned transfers concern communities that are moved to safer places due to the impossibility of remaining in territories irreversibly compromised by environmental events.



	Climate Refugees	Climate Migrants
Kind of Action	Mitigation	Adaptation
Look about Migration	Failure of international politics of mitigation	Migration as part of an adaptive process
Nature of Migration	Forced	Choice
Main Causes of Migration	Greenhouses gases	Vulnerabilities of Territories
Migration Impacts	Difficulties in welcoming and growing discomfort between migrants and residents	Opportunities for resilience and support for communities of origin through remittances
Institutional Answers	International Law	Regional, interregional and national government
State Answers	Welcoming of Migrants	Capacity-building in the communities of origin; resilience
Law answers	International Conventions	Internal Soft Law at a local scale
Main Discourse	Responsibility in North-South relations. Environmental and Climate Justice	Mobility as a rebalancing of the population between areas

Divergent narratives

About the Second Question (B)

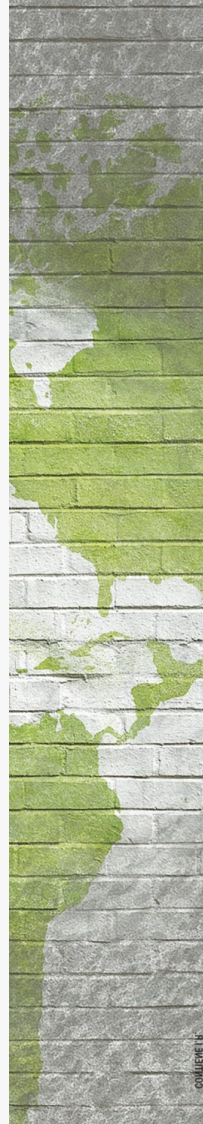


2. Geo-Political Issues in migratory paths

Forecasting studies on population growth and its density at a national level.

Studies on hypothetical scenarios of socio-economic change, having the quantity of population as an independent variable.

Studies on the mutability of natural capital and especially of agricultural yields.



- **Studies on the growing increase of the urban population over the rural one in vulnerable territories**



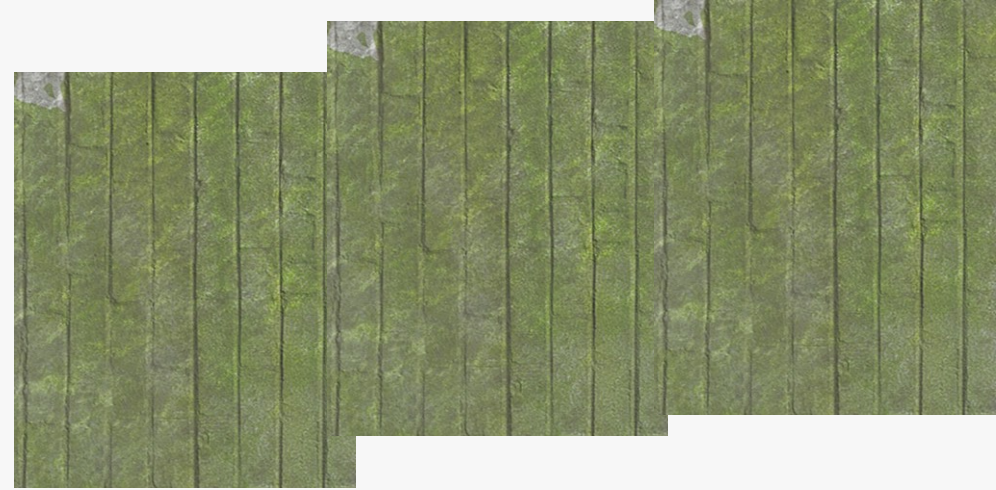
- **Instead: Scarcity of studies on the global redistribution of the population, following the loss of habitability into ecosystems. Climate migration within one's own continent and neighboring states (Farbotko, 2022).**

How are generally retrieved the lacking info?

From the literature on climate vulnerability and migration (Bankoff 2001, Black 2001, Laczko and Aghazarm, 2009, Grecequet et al. (2012), Vigil 2018), we have some territorial subgroups of researches about the following sources:

- a. Forecasts on climate change for macro-regions.**
- b. Danger/Vulnerability/Exposure to risk. Response Capacity to Direct and Indirect Risk.**
- c. Impact of conflicts in vulnerable territories.**
- d. Quantitative impact of migratory mobility due to disasters and that due to conflicts.**

GDCR report: forecast models considering losses due to damage caused by extreme weather conditions. The areas with the greatest potential damage are in northern Germany, northern Italy and northern France. Or between cities: Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony) in Germany, near the city of Hanover, followed by Vlaanderen (Flanders) in Belgium (not far from Antwerp and Bruges).



a

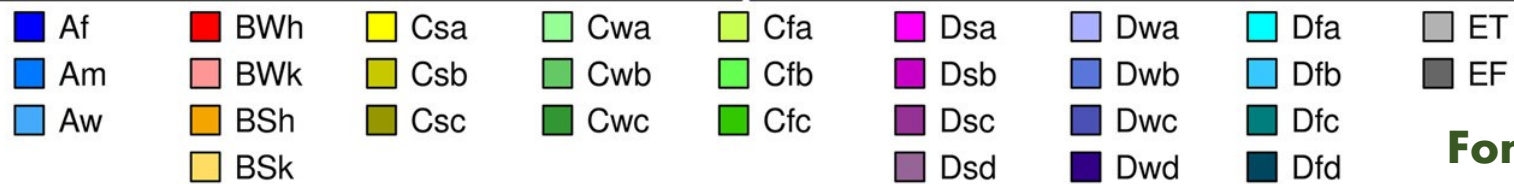
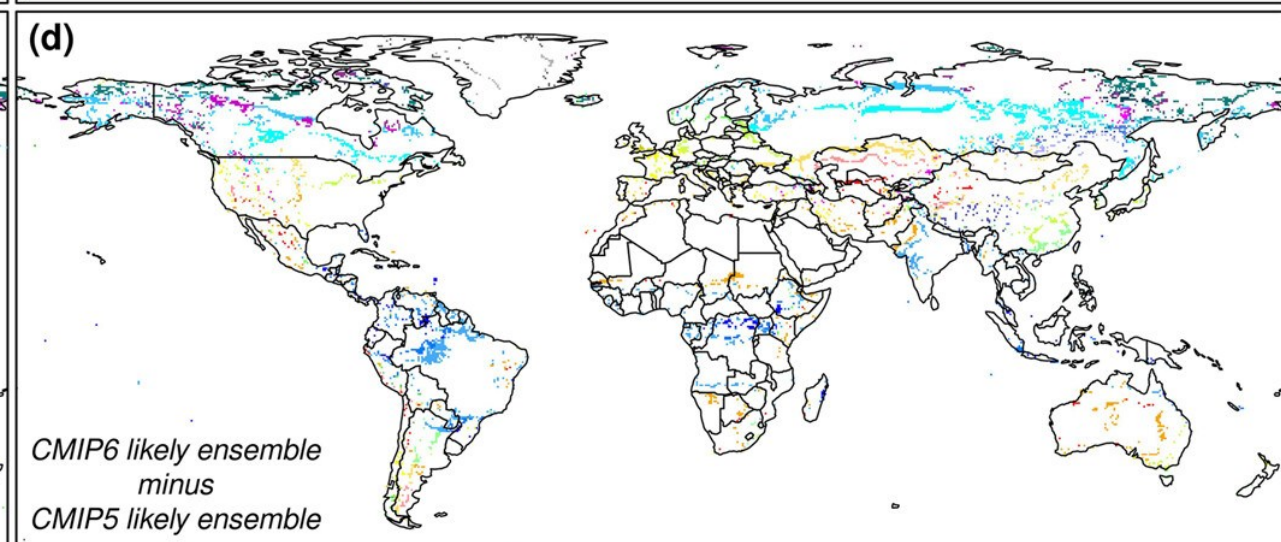
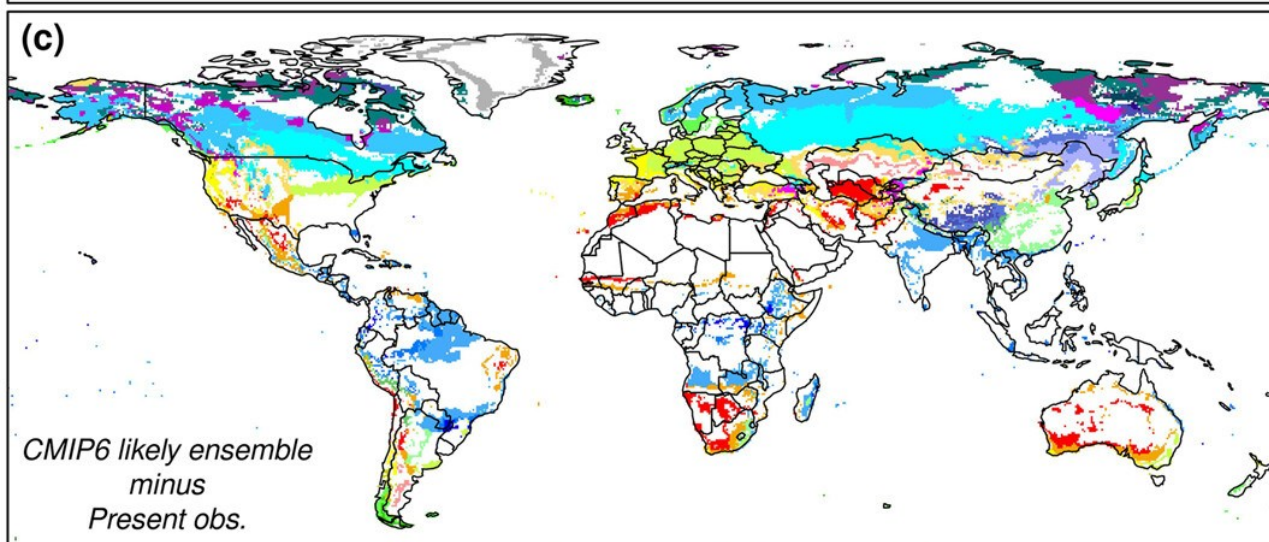
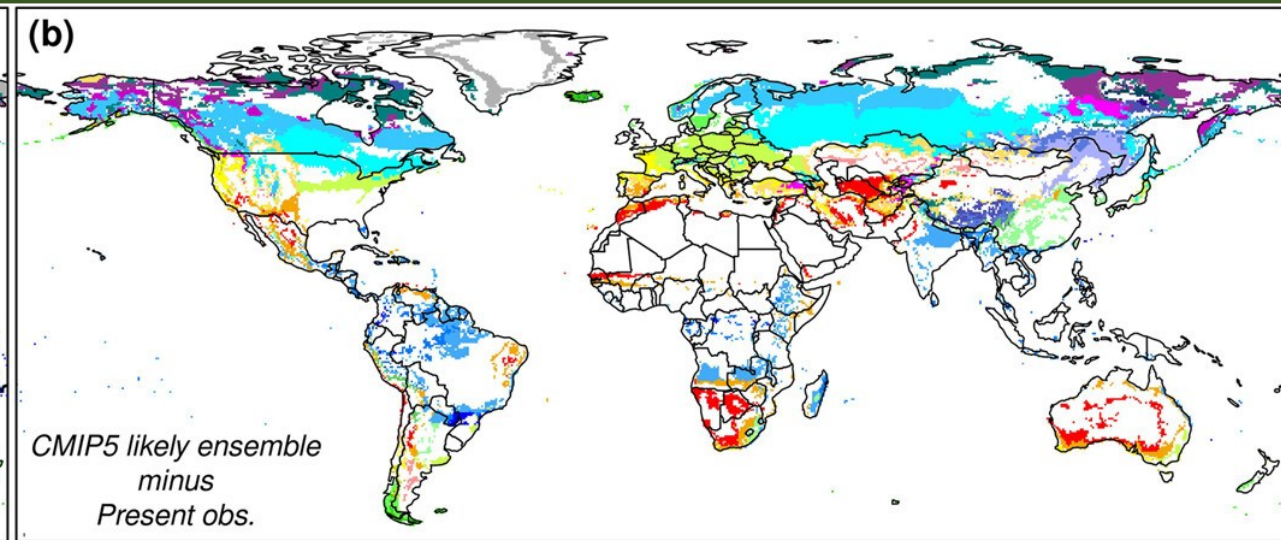
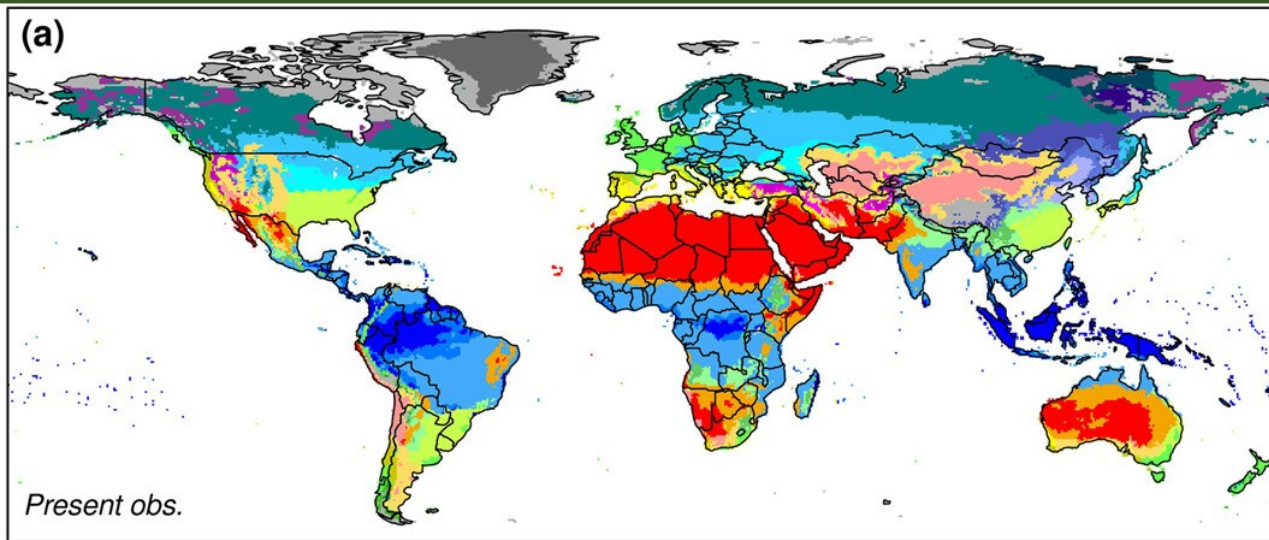
Earth's Future has calculated the impact of global warming on the classification of emerged lands according to the Köppen-Geiger system. The globe is divided into five different climatic zones depending on the vegetation present, starting from three criteria: temperatures, rainfall and seasons.

In the Köppen-Geiger classification, Italy is almost entirely in group C, which identifies temperate climates, with two large subtypes, humid summer and dry summer. However, only some parts of the Alps fall into category D as cold climates with dry winters.

The research, in the journal "Geophysical Research Letters of the American Geophysical Union", took some parameters into consideration:

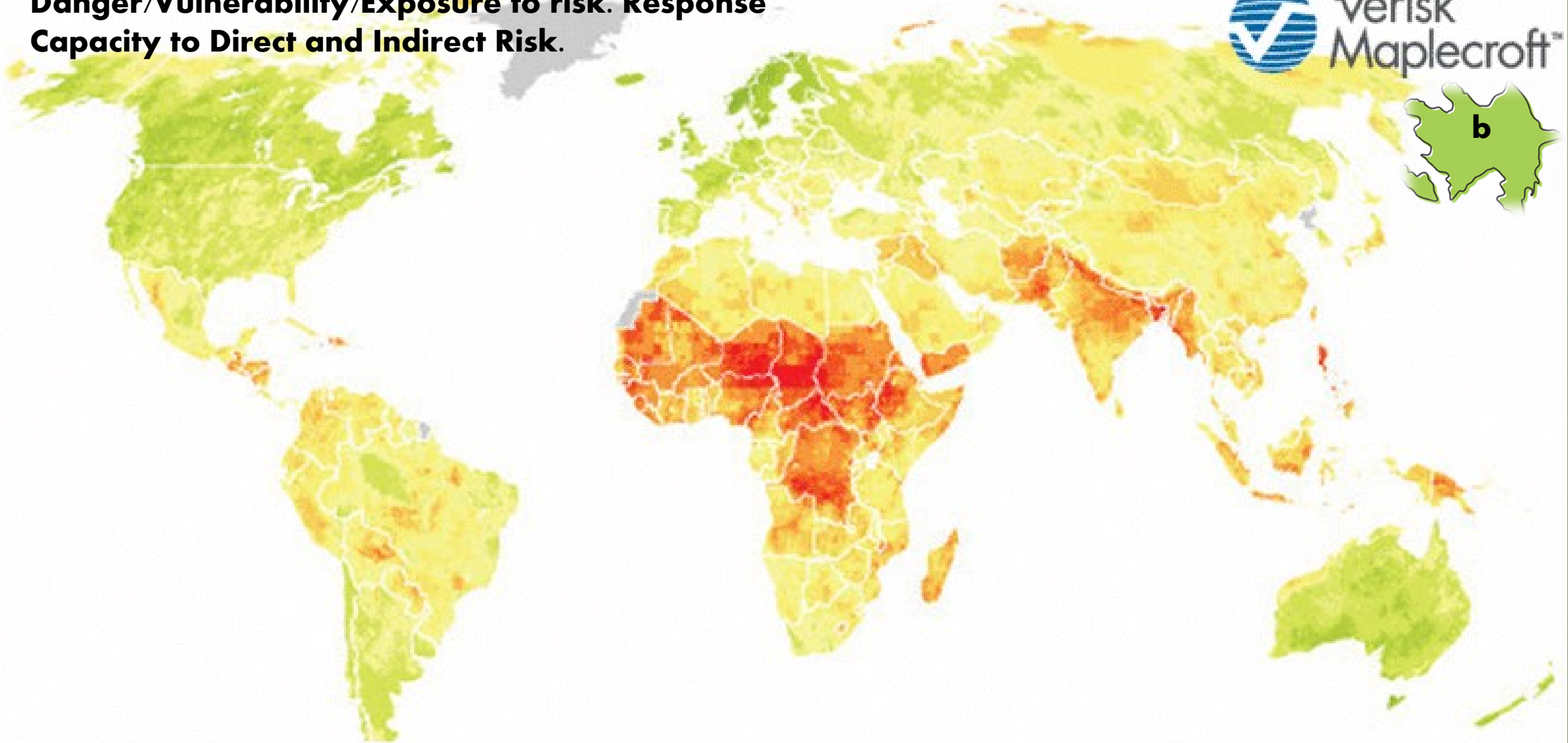
- medium temperature
- precipitation
- inter-annual variability of average temperature and precipitation
- frequency of seasons with average temperature and precipitation higher than the maximum in the previous thirty years
- frequency of seasons with average precipitation lower than the average seasonal minimum in the previous thirty years.





Fonte: Earth's Future, 2023

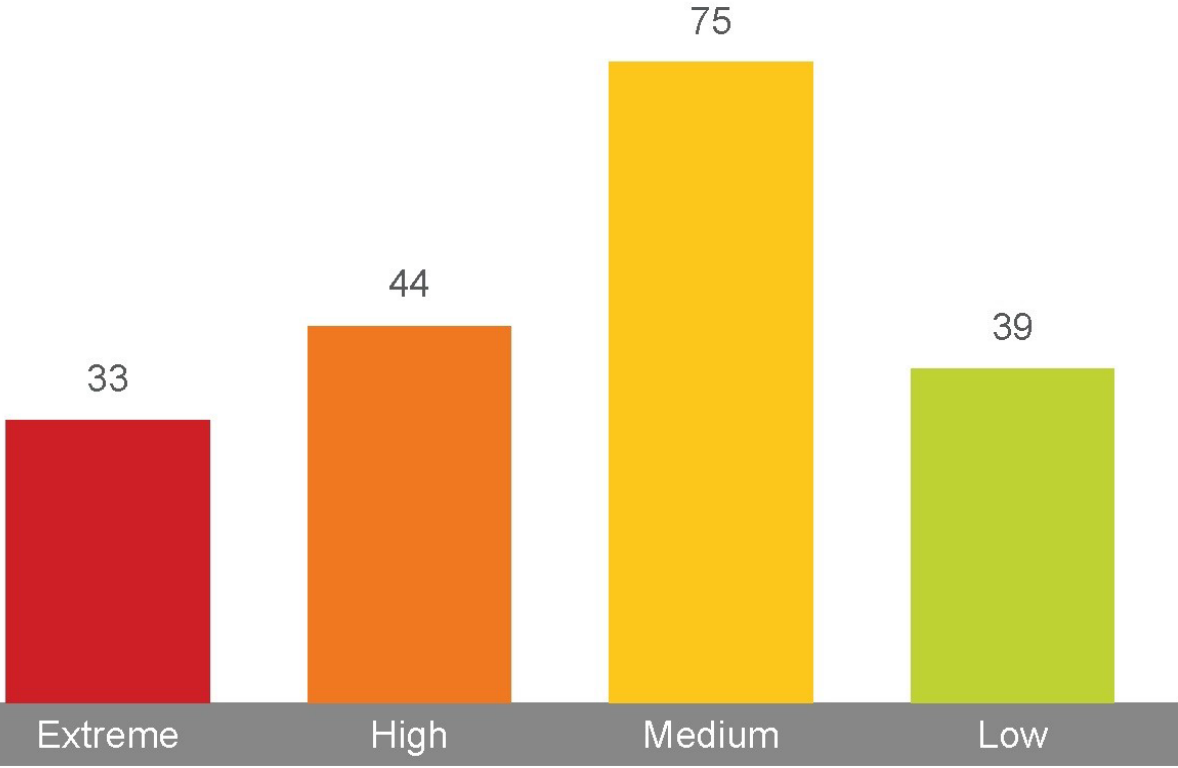
Danger/Vulnerability/Exposure to risk. Response Capacity to Direct and Indirect Risk.



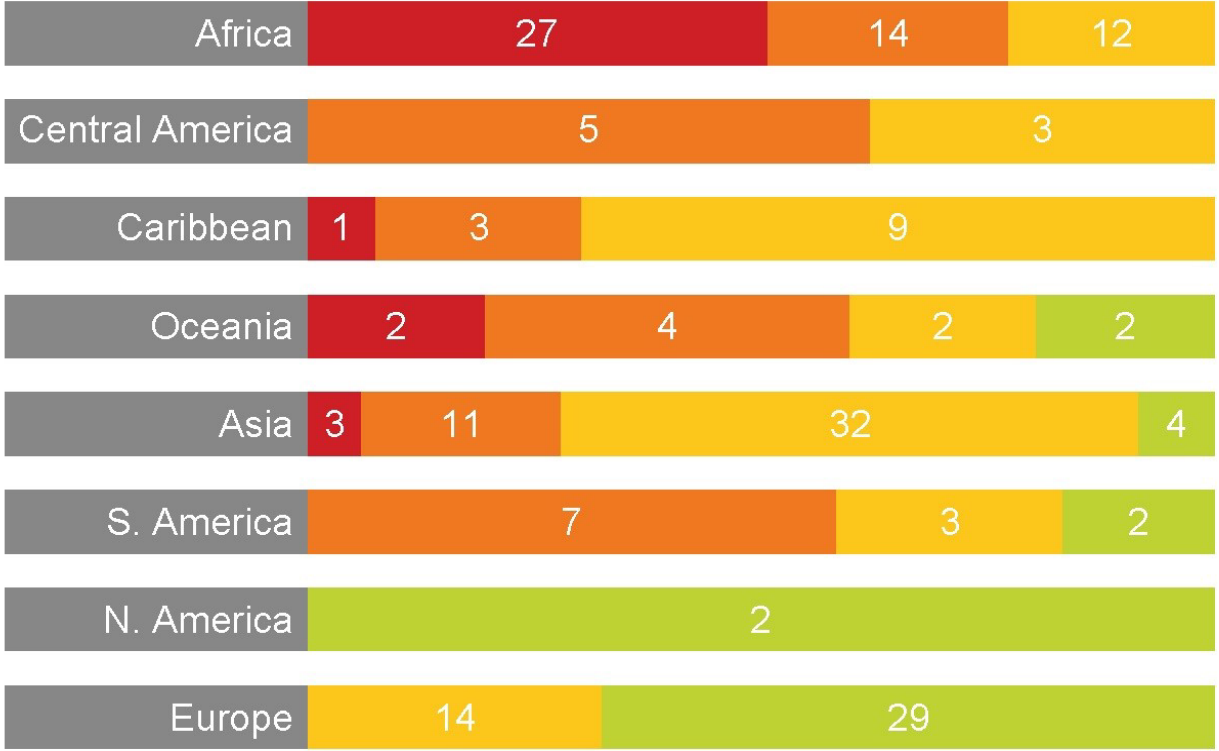
Source: Verist Maplecroft, 2019 20

Distribution of risk for 191 countries

Risk Category



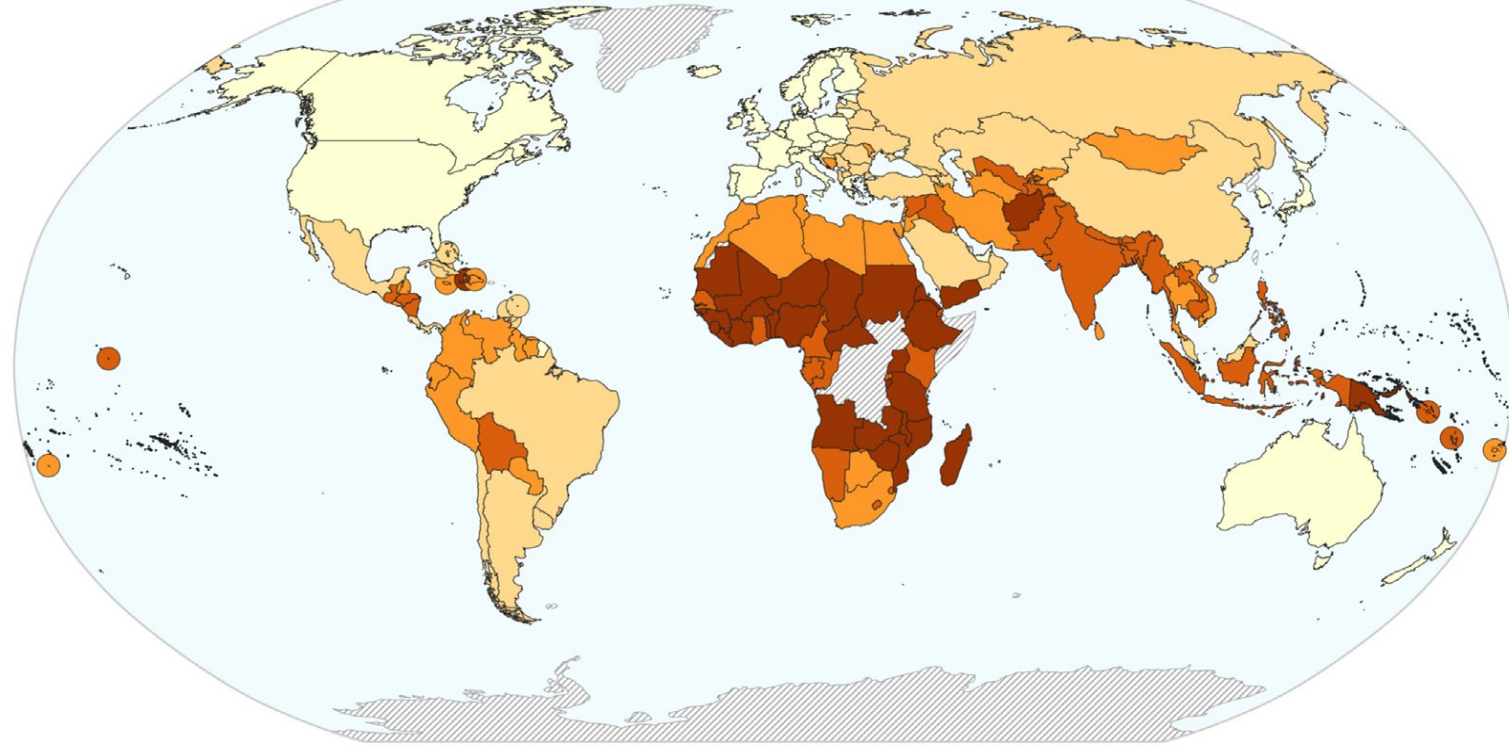
Regional Breakdown



**Source: Verist
Maplecroft, 2019**

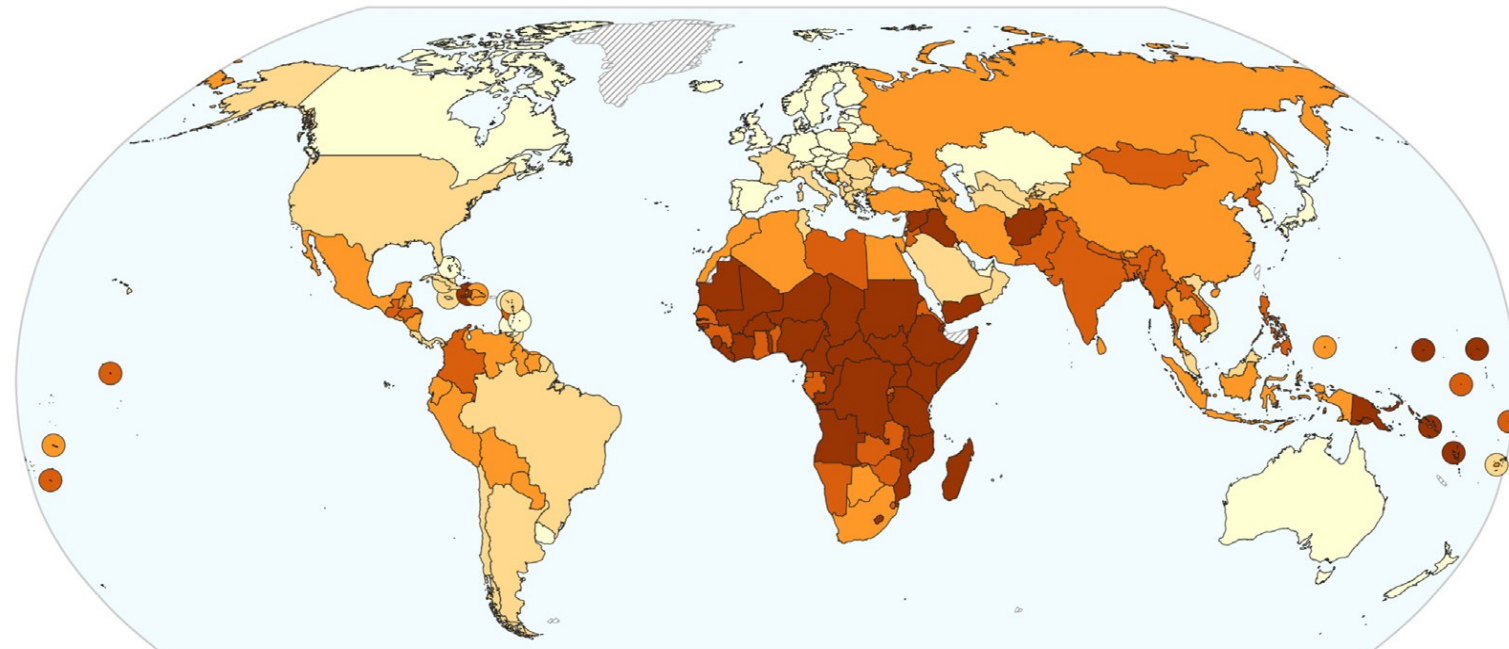
A: WorldRiskIndex

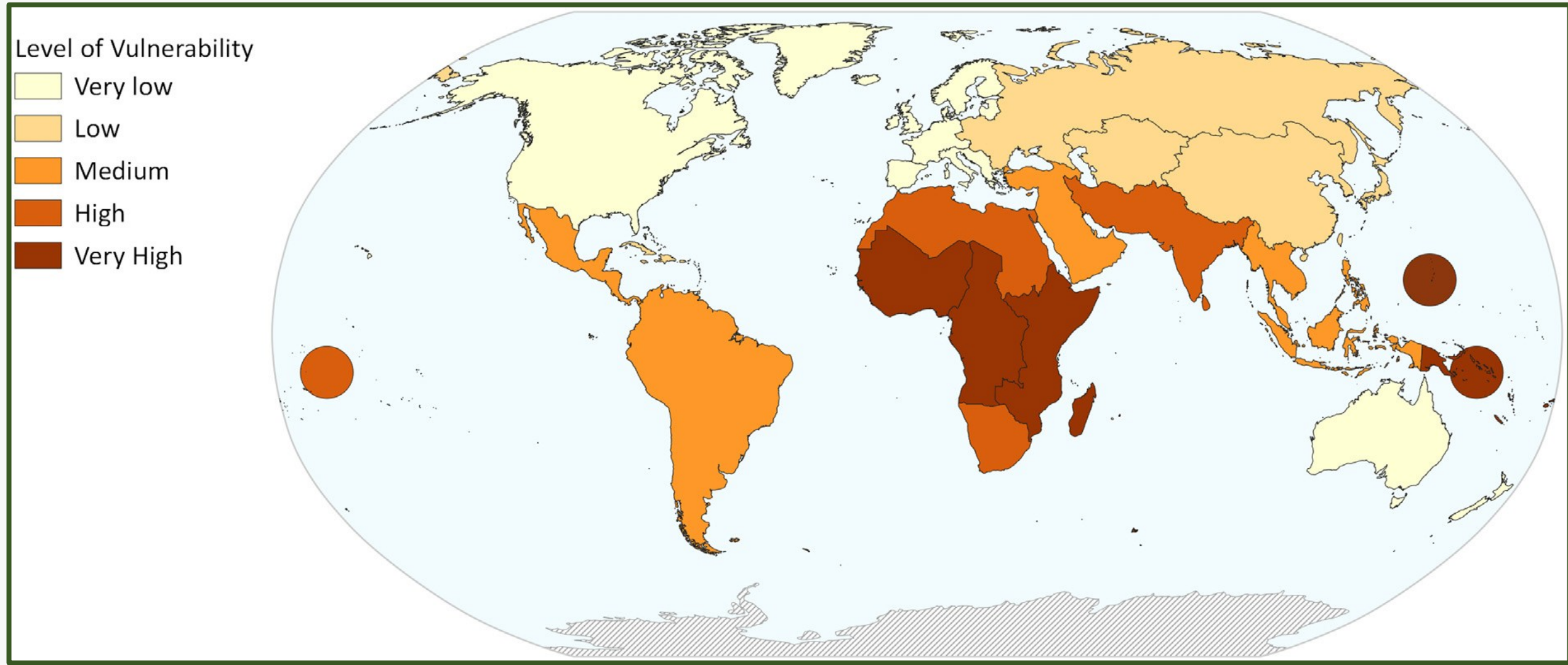
Level of vulnerability



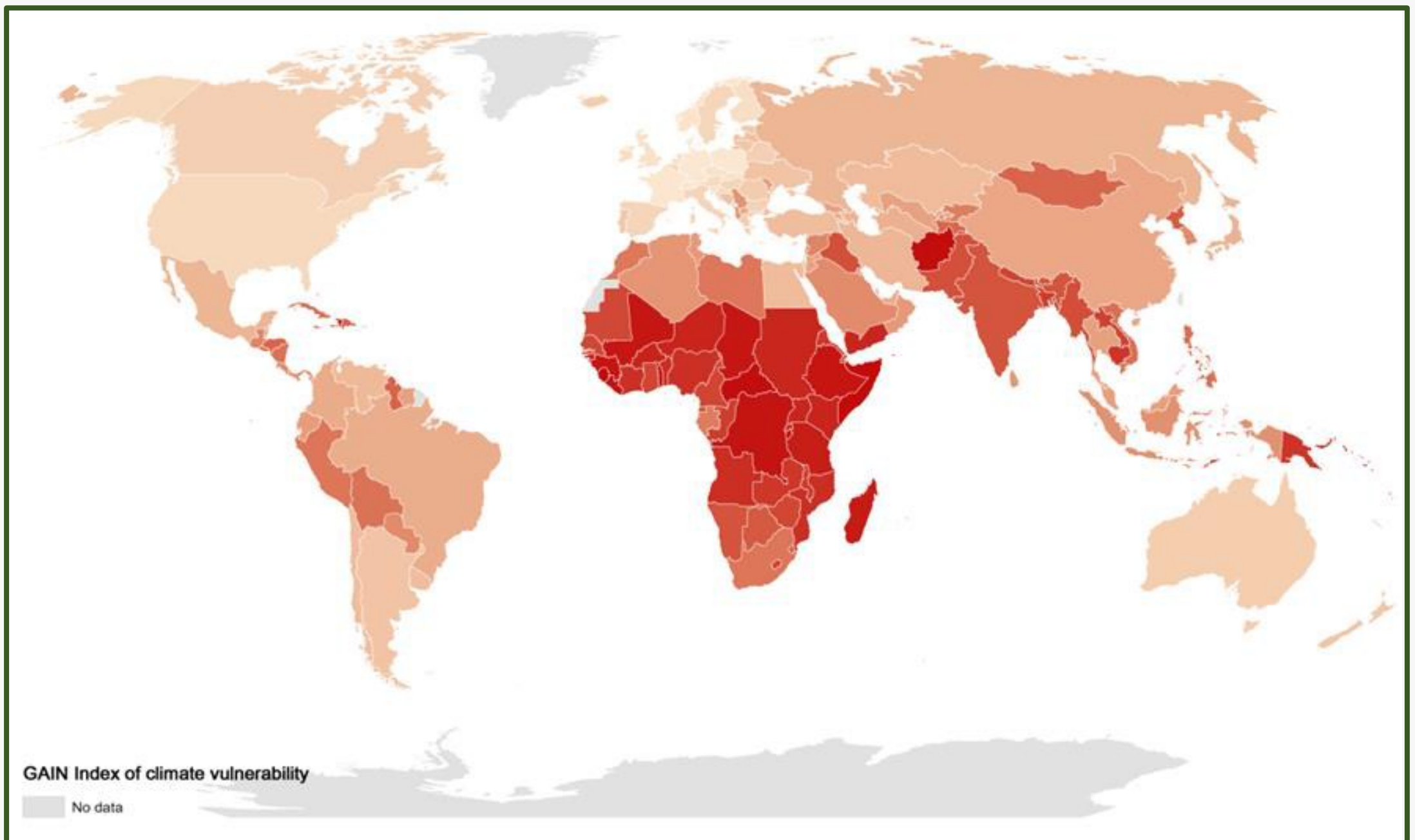
B: INFORM

Level of vulnerability

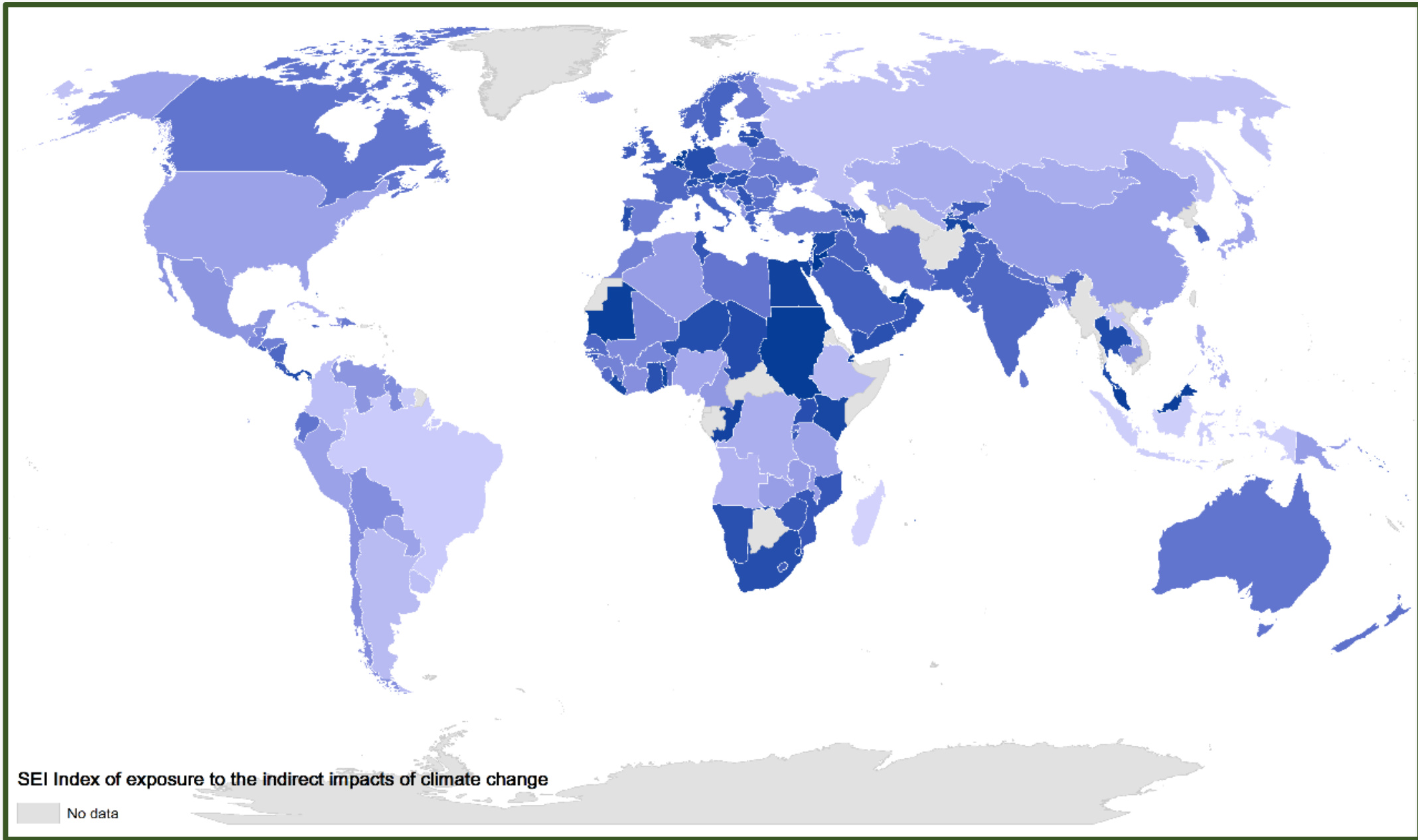




Source: Transnational Climate Impacts Index, 2022

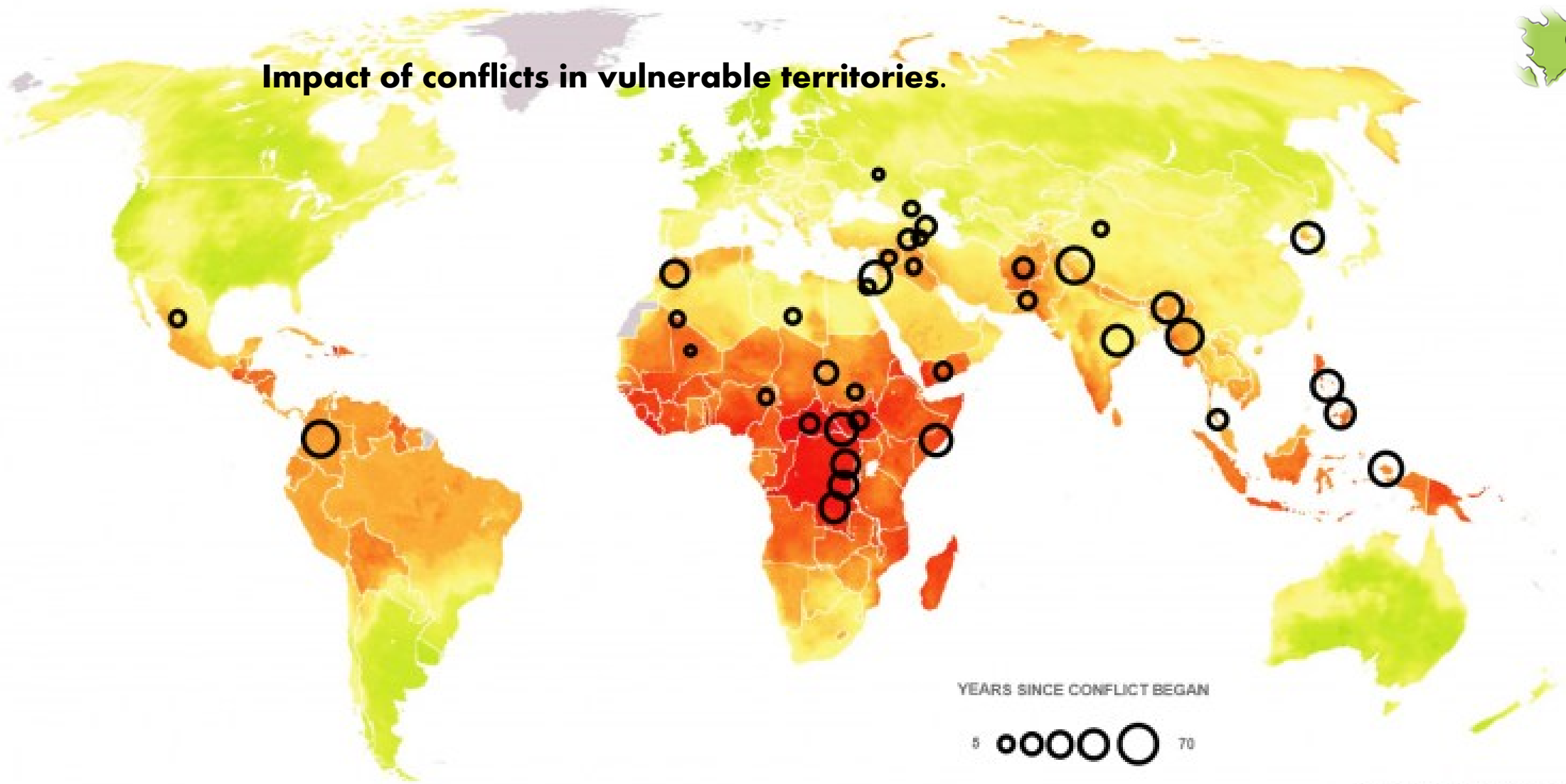


Index of vulnerability from direct climate impacts, Source: ND-GAIN Country Index, 2022



Index of vulnerability to Indirect impacts, Source: Transnational Climate Impacts Index, 2022

Impact of conflicts in vulnerable territories.

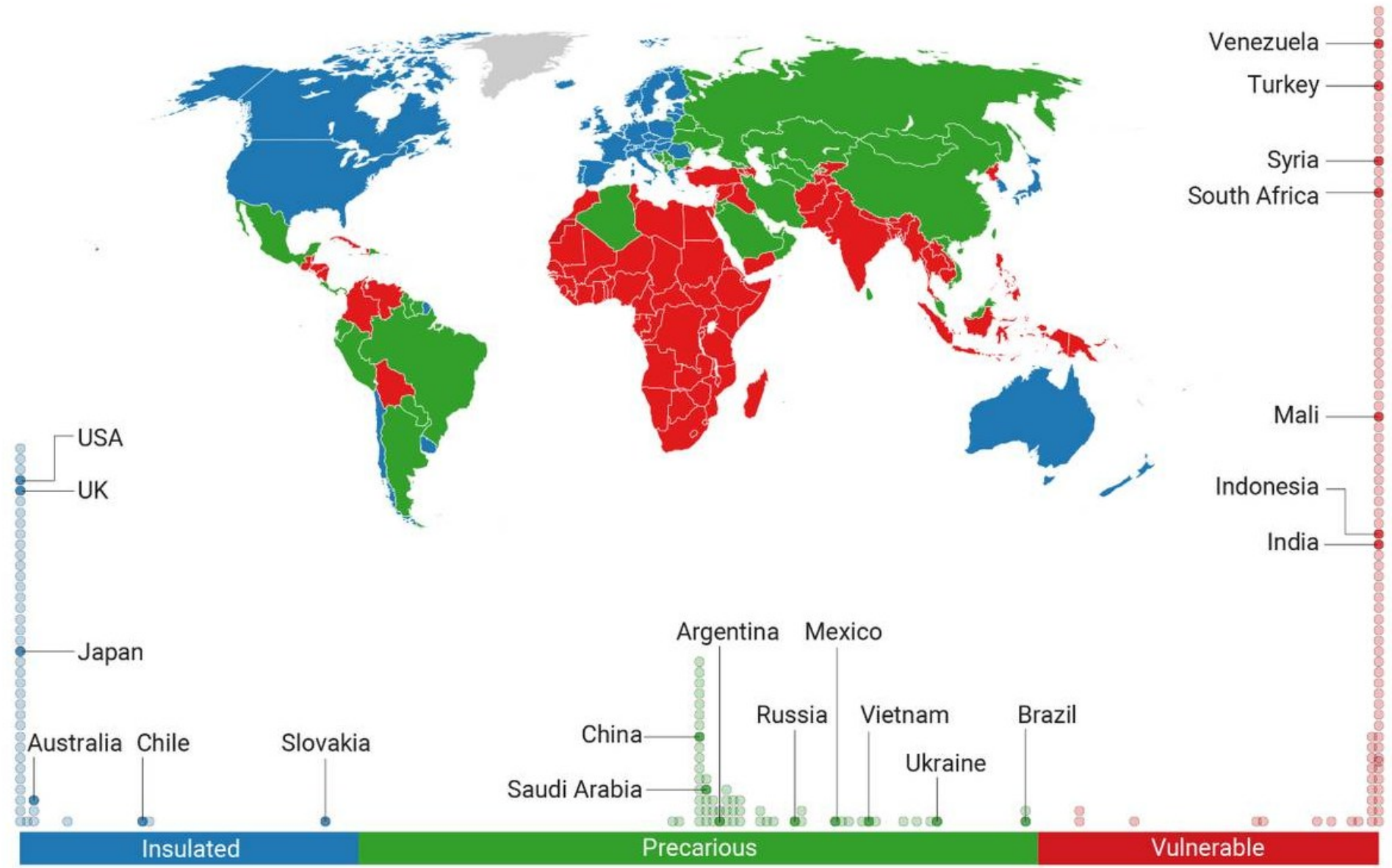


© Verisk Maplecroft 2016

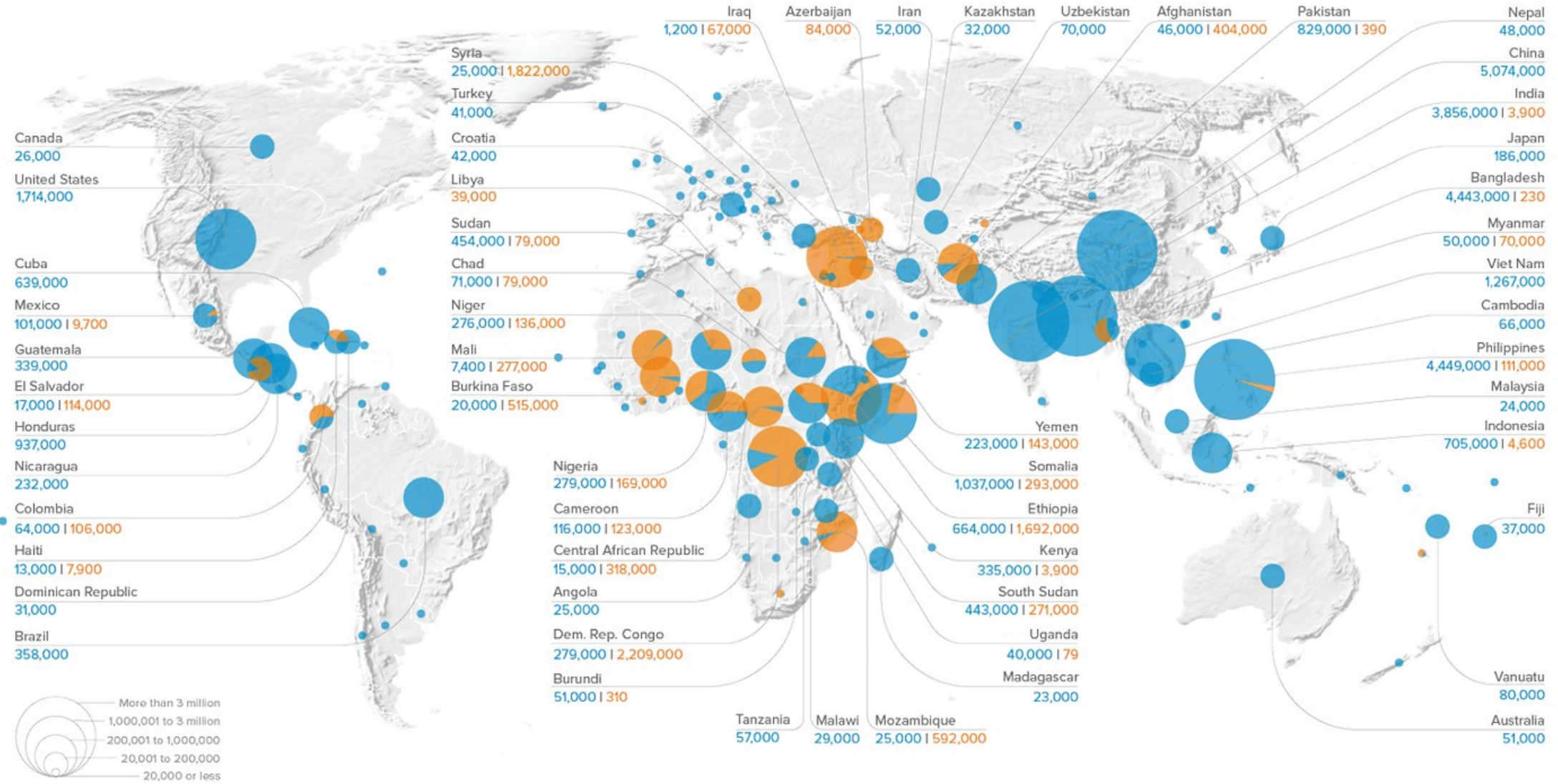
Climate Vulnerability and Ongoing Conflict

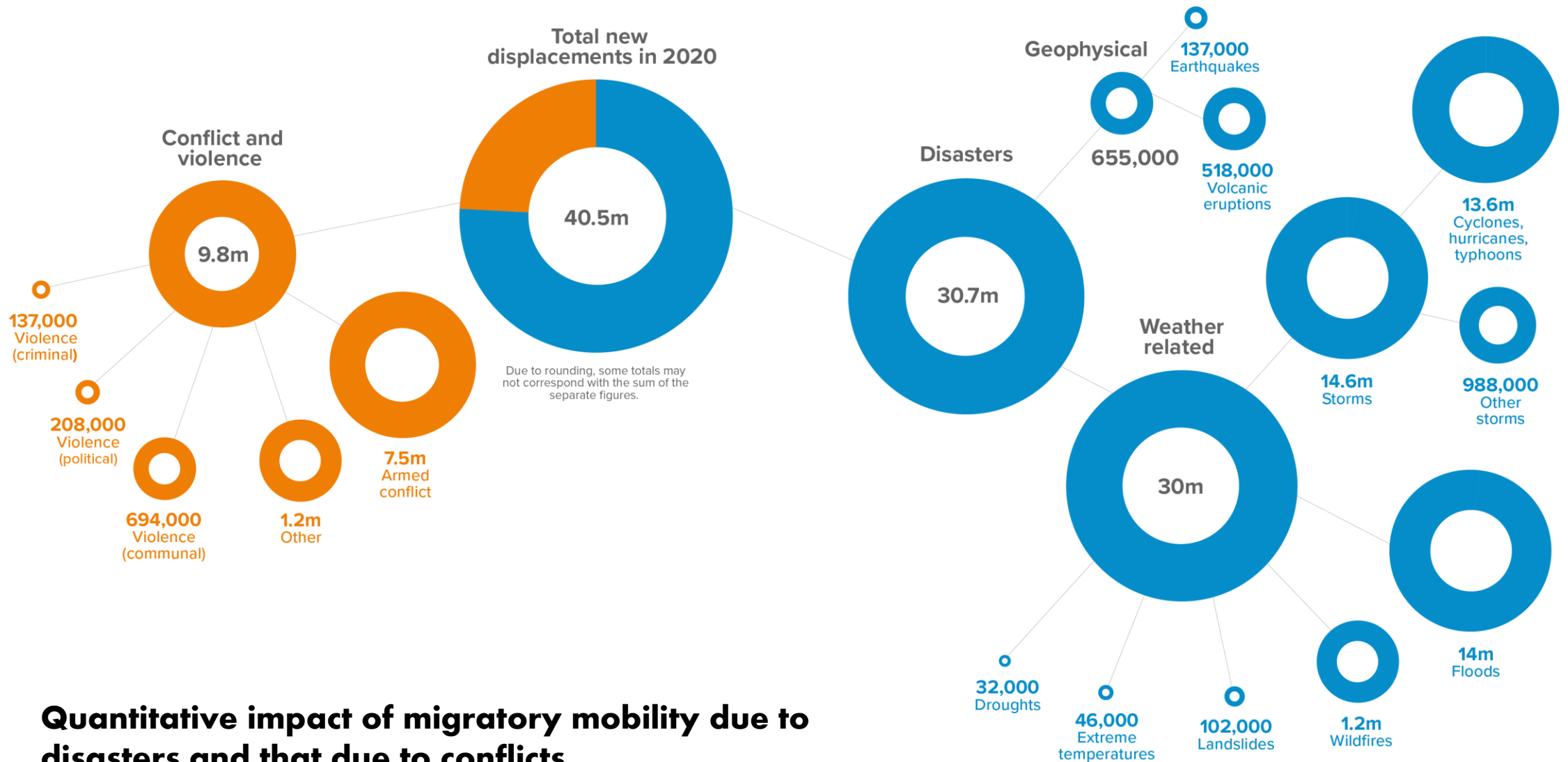


A world divided between 'insulated', 'precarious', and 'vulnerable' nations



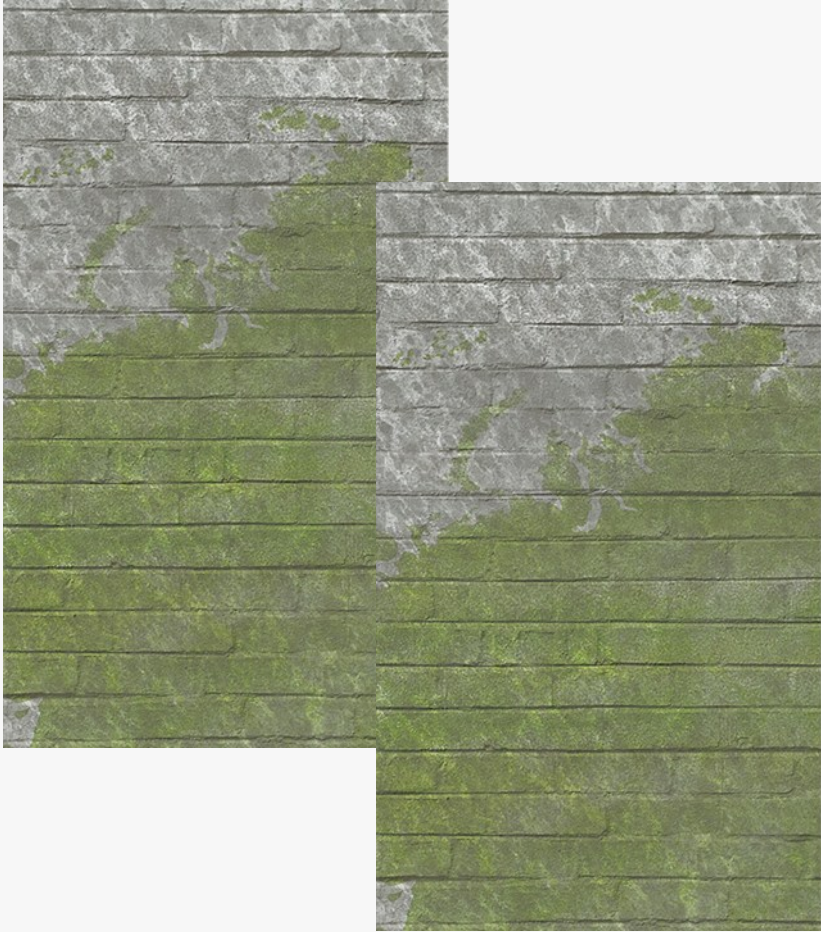
New displacements by conflict and disasters in 2020





Quantitative impact of migratory mobility due to disasters and that due to conflicts.

Suggestion for a diverse reading?



**- Diverse Relationship between Environment and Climate.
Climate change as a universal synthetic indicator in understanding habitat loss.**



- Loss of Habitat versus Vulnerability and Adaptation

Climate change as a world synthetic indicator in understanding habitat loss

Earth's
Ecosystem

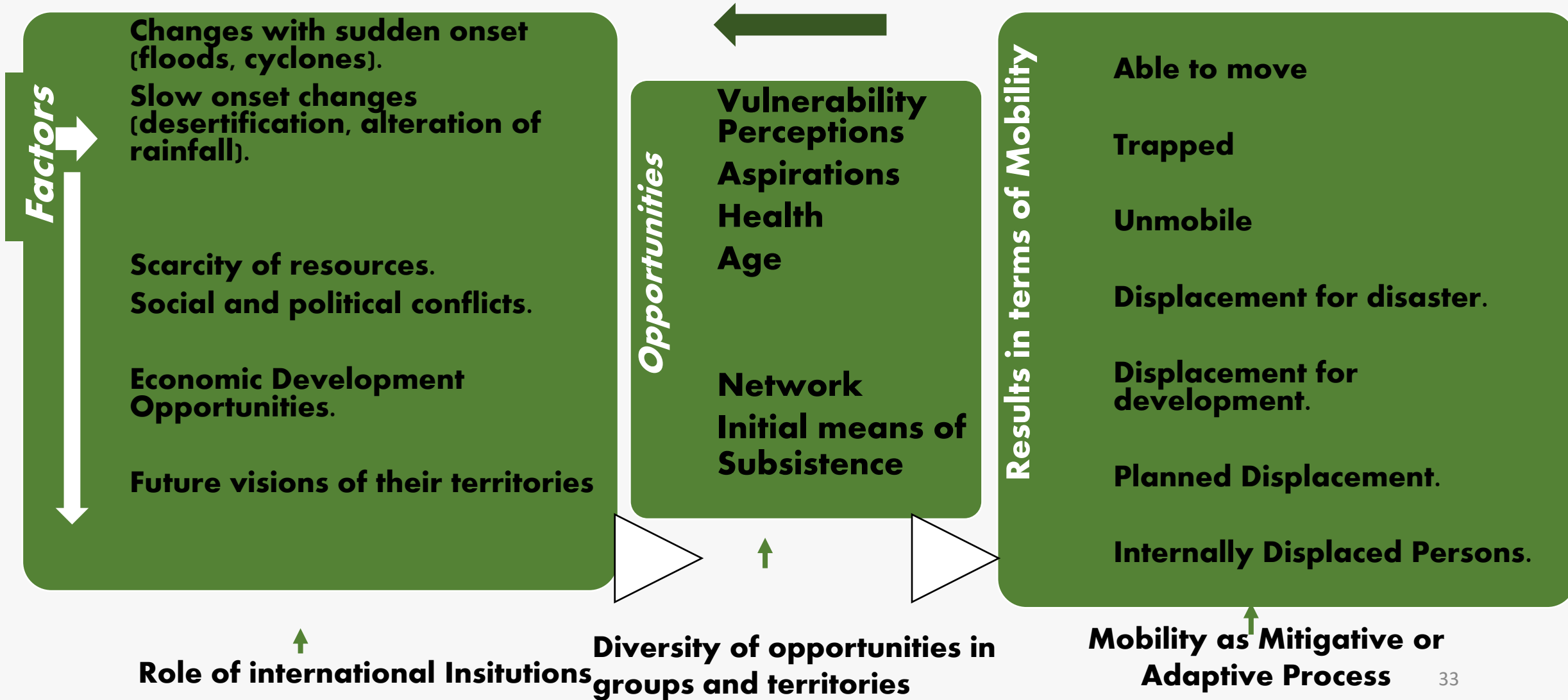


Climate change as a long-term historical concept: synthetic indicator of a universal type that refers to diversified environmental changes in ecosystems

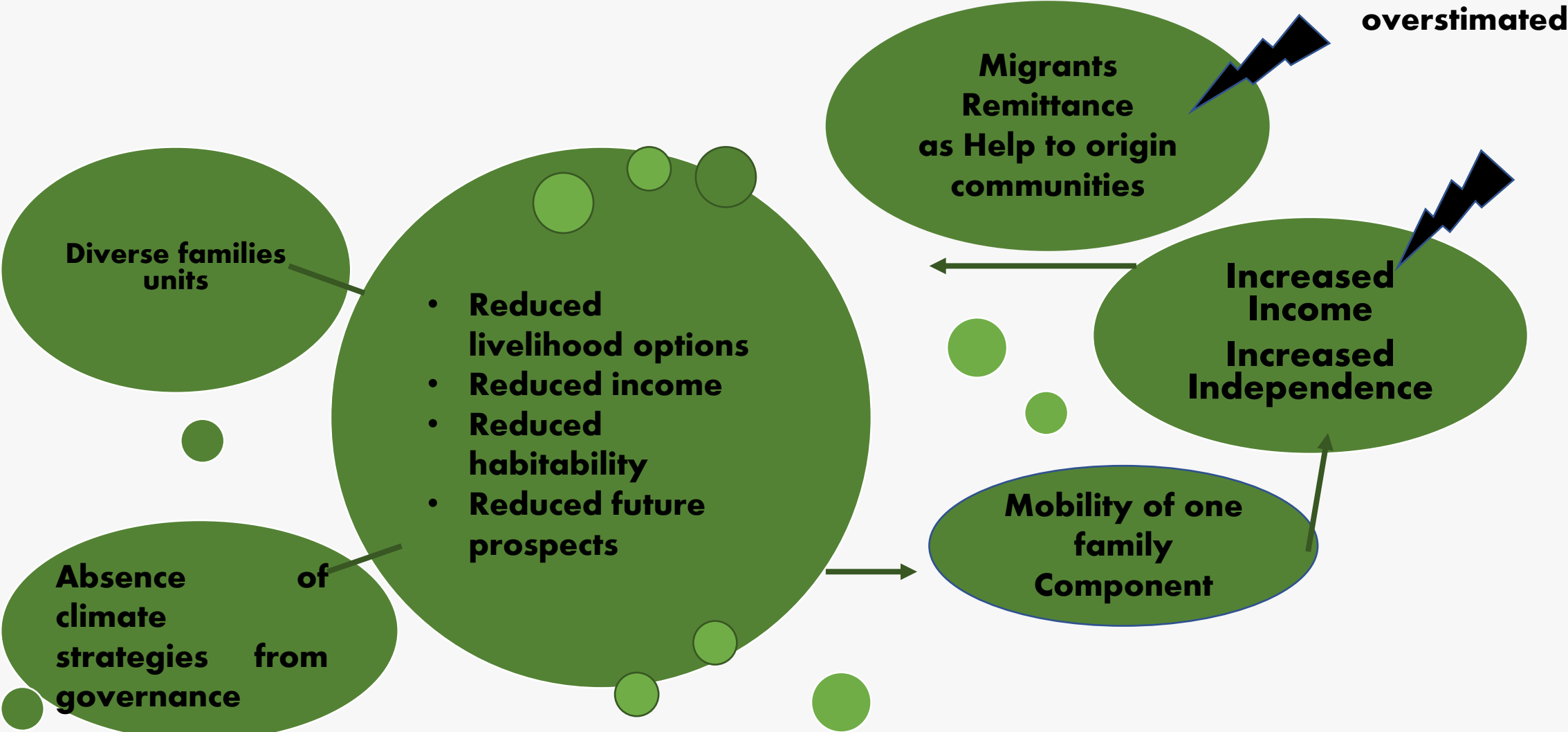
By this diverse reading, it is possible to read differently:

- **the diversified effects from social groups can distance us from the genealogy of the problem (loss of habitat);**
- **the adaptive capacity of fragile territories should not be over-stimated**

a. Effects (Different chances of mobility/immobility) versus Causes (Losses of Habitats)



B. Adaptative Approach



Costa D, Martin P. Temporary labor migration programs: Governance, migrant worker rights, and recommendations for the U.N. Global Compact for Migration. Economic Policy Institute, Washington, DC. <https://epi.org/152373>

Debunk:

Adaptive aspects of mobility, neglecting the erosive ones such as:

- **Underestimation of the fragility of the areas of destination, not just of departure**
- **Overestimation of the impact of remittances.**
- **«Climatic» immobility: Underestimation of forms of forced immobility.**



Biermann e Boas, 2010

Focus:

Climate justice in international politics:

- **Ambiguity of developmentalist and economic sustainability policies.**
- **Institutional constraints on adaptation strategies.**
- **Cooperation with a coordinated and integrated approach to policies.**
- **Increase in inequalities between different social groups**

The impact of climate change on population redistribution in the immediate future

- **Loss of habitability** (Sassen 2016; Mbembe 2016)
- **Circular Territoriality** (Tarrius, 2001)
- **Plantationocene** (Haraway 2015)
- **Racial Capitalism** (Xing Tong and Hao Zuo 2019)
- **Militarized Global Apartheid** (Bestemann 2022)
- **Global Climate Wall** (Miller 2021).
- **Border epistemologies** (Mezzadra, 2007; Albert et al. 2001; Walters, 2004; Neilson, 2010; Andreas and Biersteker, 2003)

