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# Will climate severity ever lead to climate action? Implications for adaptation policy and practice

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climate, will, policy, practice, adaptation, implications, action, lead, ever, severity

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# Will climate severity ever lead to climate action? Implications for adaptation policy and practice

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The assumption that if climate change is a real and immediate threat the world will take action has been part of a 'wait and see' approach in countries such as the USA. Is this expectation right? What role have rising social impacts from extreme weather events had in shaping country-level mitigation action? What does this all mean for adaptation efforts? This presentation of a completed 2011 international study uses a novel quali-quantitative approach (Qualitative Comparative Analysis) to apply the logic of Boolean algebra to the task of combining large international databases (the disaster database EM-DAT, the BBC World Survey of climate belief, the Climate Change Performance Index for country-level climate action). It concludes that expectations that the world will somehow unite in global climate mitigation action in response to climate severity itself, before a catastrophic situation is reached, are not evidence-based. This finding has important implications for adaptation policy and practice, especially if recent work by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which some media have interpreted as conveying uncertainty over the role of global warming in extreme weather events, triggers a resurgence of 'wait and see' approaches. Showing with evidence, not simply telling, community stakeholders about the extent of likely future country and global-level mitigation policy failure may be more important for adaptation efforts than has been previously understood. Previous analyses have suggested that stakeholders who realise little can be expected from national and global policy elites may increase efforts, including for adaptation, at local and subnational levels. Accordingly, the results of this study could help create a much needed sense of urgency around not only global agreement for mitigation, but also adaptation efforts at the local community level.