



How the armed conflicts affect land systems: A remote sensing perspective

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伪

LENNON WALL

PRAGUE

30

30 YEARS OF
CZECH REPUBLIC
1989-2019

ALL YOU NEED IS
LOVE

ALL YOU NEED IS
AMOR

ALL YOU NEED IS
MIŁOŚĆ

ALL YOU NEED IS
LOVE

ALL YOU NEED IS
LÁSKA

ALL YOU NEED IS
자유

ALL YOU NEED IS
자유

ВСЕМ НУЖНА ЛЮБОВЬ

HELPFUL

FFART

STAND WITH
HONG KONG

ALL YOU



RPA PAPA JSA
SEALDO (K2 CNO)
RONDODASOSA
SARA
CANY
2012

LOVE



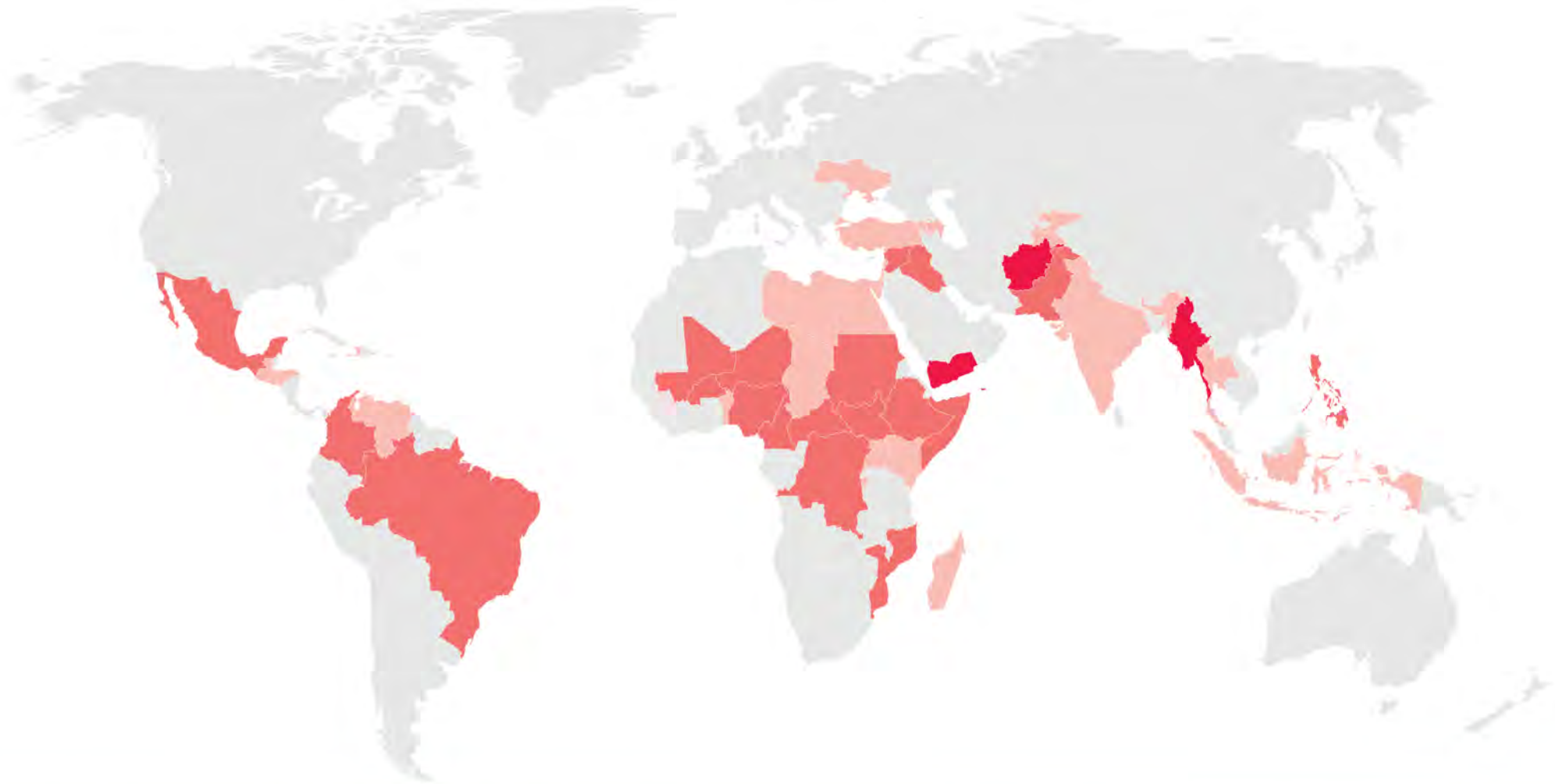
GIVE PEACE
A THING TO
DO

SEIN
LIEB



MIAN
POV

ARMED CONFLICTS IN 2021



■ Major armed conflicts with 10 000 or more conflict-related deaths in 2021.

■ High-intensity armed conflicts with 1000 to 9999 conflict-related deaths in 2021.

■ Low-intensity armed conflicts with 25 to 999 conflict-related deaths in 2021.

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Updated 6:20 p.m. ET Aug. 11, 2022



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Updated 7:37 AM EDT, Thu April 7, 2022



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Satellite images show Syria conflict leaves country in dark

CARA ANNA March 12, 2015

Remote Sensing in War's Aftermath

High-tech images made from satellites and airplanes are playing a bigger and bigger part in examining ancient cultures and environments. But that's obviously only part of what remote sensing can do. The same techniques—and in some cases the same researchers—are also playing a key role in analyzing the environmental changes that are making today's headlines.

Take the aftermath of the Gulf war. Farouk El-Baz, director of the Center for Remote Sensing at Boston University, where most of the research is in archeology, has been using an array of satellite instruments to monitor the staggering environmental problems caused by the war. Last week he returned from a month-long trip to six Gulf states where he found that even the high-tech images from Landsat, NOAA 10 and 11, and the European Metosat—precise as they are—hadn't conveyed the true horror of the situation: "I was prepared for the worst, but the damage far exceeds anything I could imagine," says the Egyptian-born geologist, who was invited to survey the region by the Third World Academy of Sciences.

In Kuwait, El-Baz says he was appalled to find that the huge cloud spreading from hundreds of oil fires contains far more crude oil than he had expected. "The one thing that stands out like crazy is the fact that the oil is jetted out of the wellheads in an aerosol form and streams of droplets are carried on the wind," says El-Baz. "It's really an oil fog. You'll be standing there for 15 minutes and you'll find crude oil on your shirt." When he saw it dripping from date palm leaves, he predicted



Aerosol spray. Dark clouds from fires in Kuwait, shown in a Landsat satellite image, may contain large amounts of oil mist in addition to soot and gas.

that the oily cloud will have a destructive impact on agricultural plants—perhaps as far away as India, where the particulates and "oil rain" have already been detected in the Himalayas.

What worries El-Baz most, however, is where that black cloud is moving. The seasonal "shemal" winds that blow from the north starting at the end of May will blast that cloud southwest toward the relatively populous areas of Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. El-Baz has entered into a research agreement with the University of the United Arab Emirates to monitor the impact of the cloud; he plans to use satellite images to compare the environmental changes in the area before and after the war.

El-Baz isn't alone in his work. A team of 30 atmospheric scientists coordinated by the NSF left for the Gulf last week. That group is also studying the cloud, using remote-sensing instruments and direct sampling methods aboard two aircraft. They are concerned that the cloud will disturb weather patterns in the region, interfering with the summer monsoon and normal seasonal rainfall, says Richard Greenfield, a meteorologist who is coordinator of the mission for the National Science Foundation.

The satellite images are also offering El-Baz a way to observe and analyze the oil slicks in the Gulf that have been moving relentlessly toward the Saudi coast—and that's where concerns about the past and present come together. Although the oil slick hasn't clogged the desalinization plants at Jubail, Saudi Arabia, the Saudis may now have a new environmental problem. They stored the thick oily water in huge pools dug into the sand, where they could become a threat to groundwater supplies.

And the same oil slick—in the form of oil lapping onto beaches in the region—is threatening the last traces of the pre-Islamic Dilman civilization that flourished in the northern Gulf region. Although little is known about them, their burial mounds, with potsherds and other artifacts, have been found throughout the Gulf coast. But now they will be difficult to excavate because their stratigraphy has been damaged by oil and by trenches dug by soldiers.

The combined damage to land and sea, past and present, leads El-Baz to one depressing conclusion: "All in all, this is the mother of all environmental disasters."

■ A.G.

Gibbons, 1991

MRBM FIELD LAUNCH SITE

SAN CRISTOBAL NO 1

14 OCTOBER 1962

ERECTOR/LAUNCHER EQUIPMENT

ERECTOR/LAUNCHER EQUIPMENT

8 MISSILE TRAILERS

EQUIPMENT

TENT AREAS

CONSTRUCTION

Credit: Wiki



CORONA Capsule
Credit: Air Force

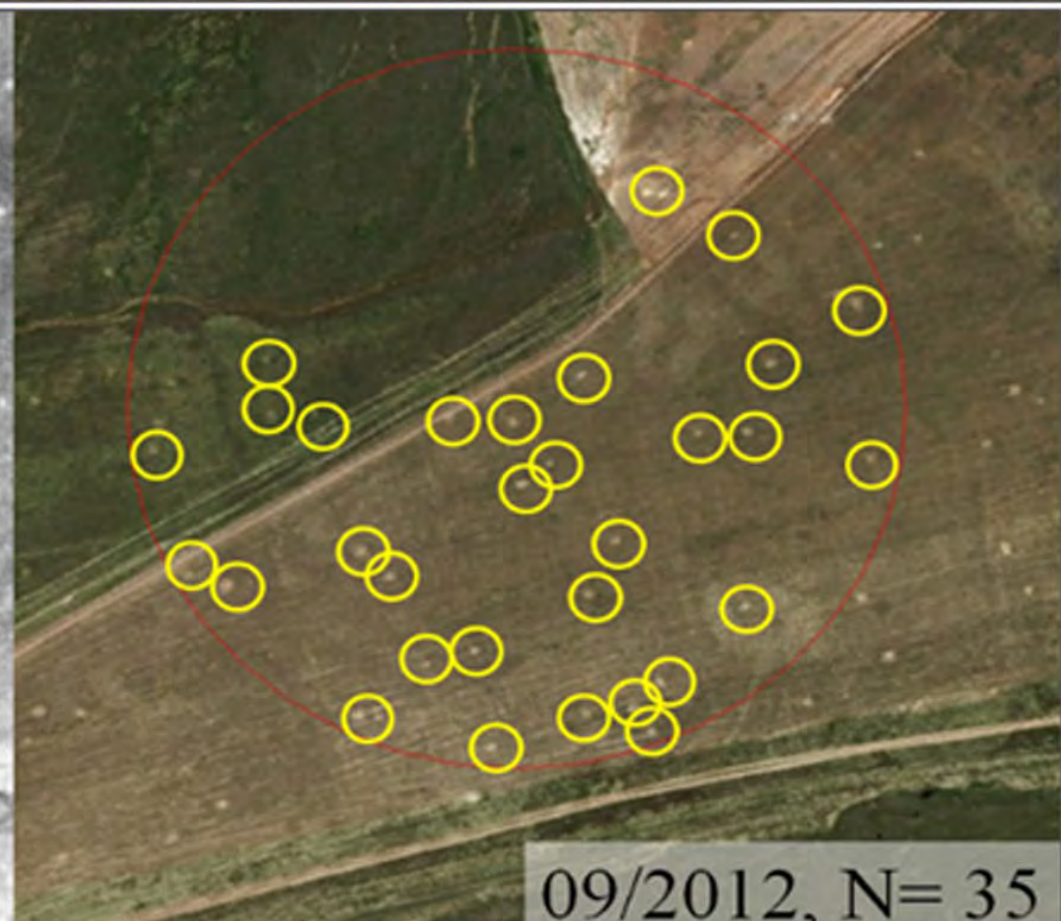
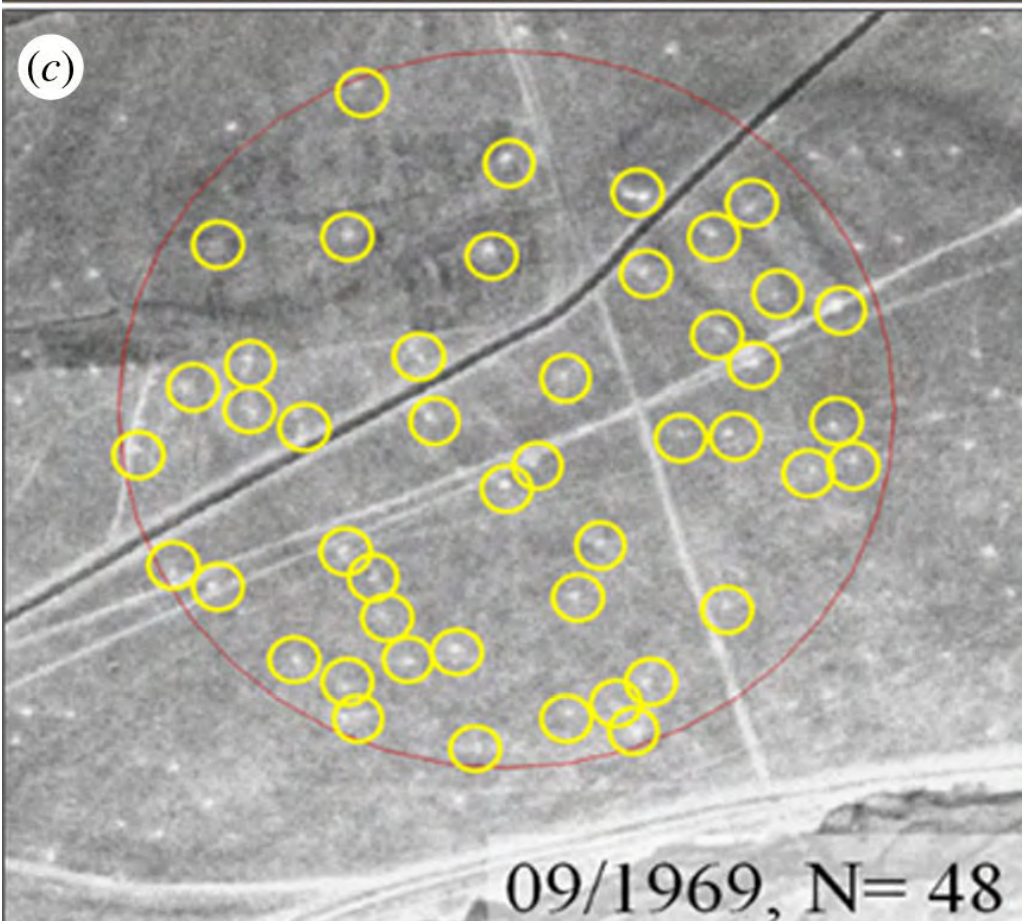


(b)



Munteanu et al., 2020

(c)

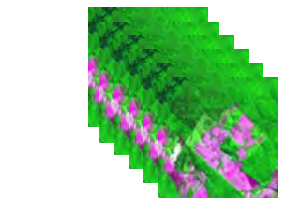


Values of RS in armed conflicts studies

- Collect information repeatedly over large areas
- Provide evidence in courts of law
- Prepare for soon-to-occur attacks
- Support humanitarian aids
- Post-conflict land use planning

Outline

- Remote sensing monitoring in conflicted areas
 - Urban, Settlement, Forest, Agriculture
- Case studies: Armed conflicts and land use change
 - Post-Soviet wars in the Caucasus (1991-)
 - The Syrian Civil War (2011-)
- Summary & Outlook
- Hands-on: Google Earth Engine practice on cropland abandonment mapping



High temporal
resolution
1-day



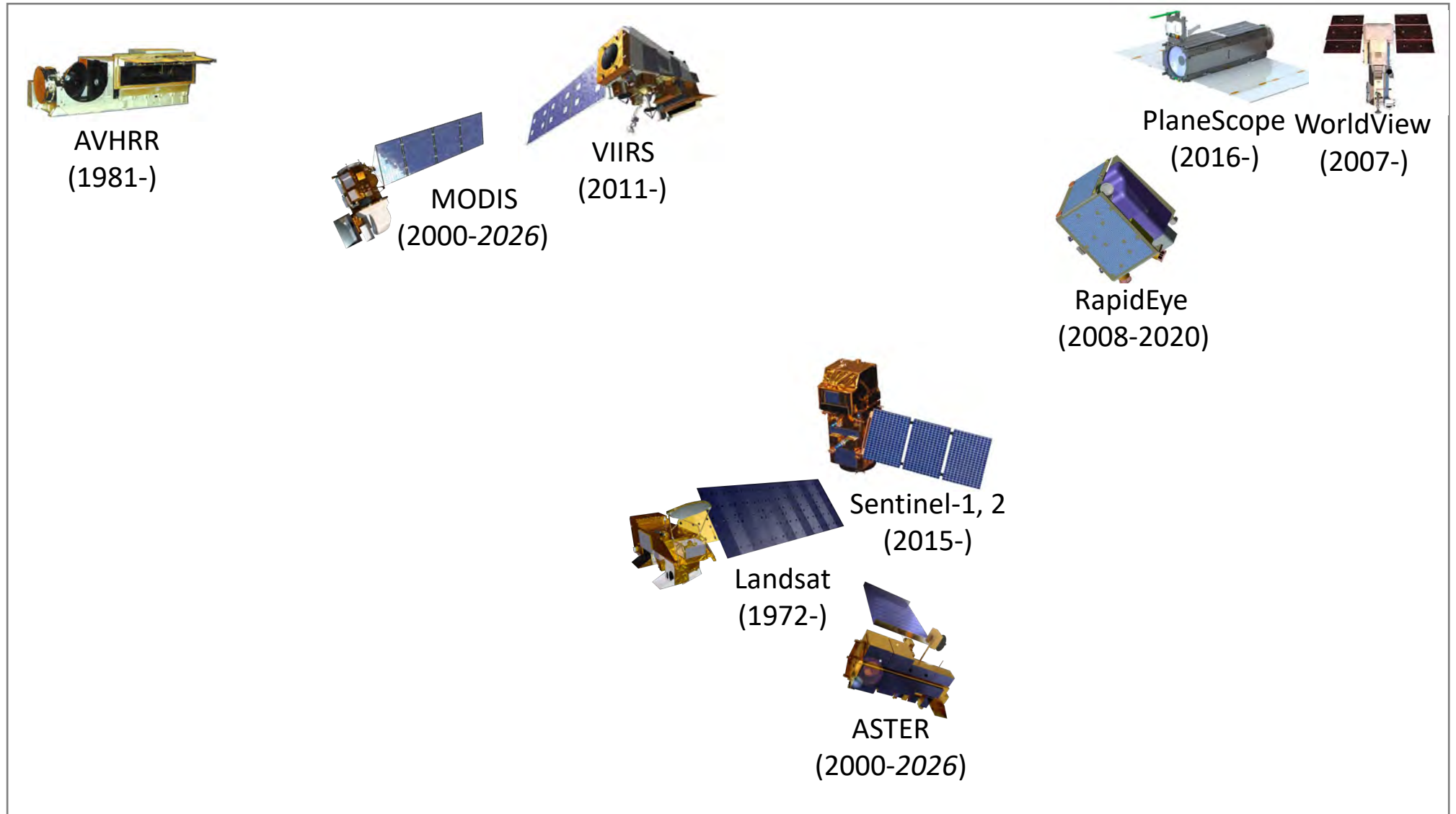
Low temporal
resolution
16-day

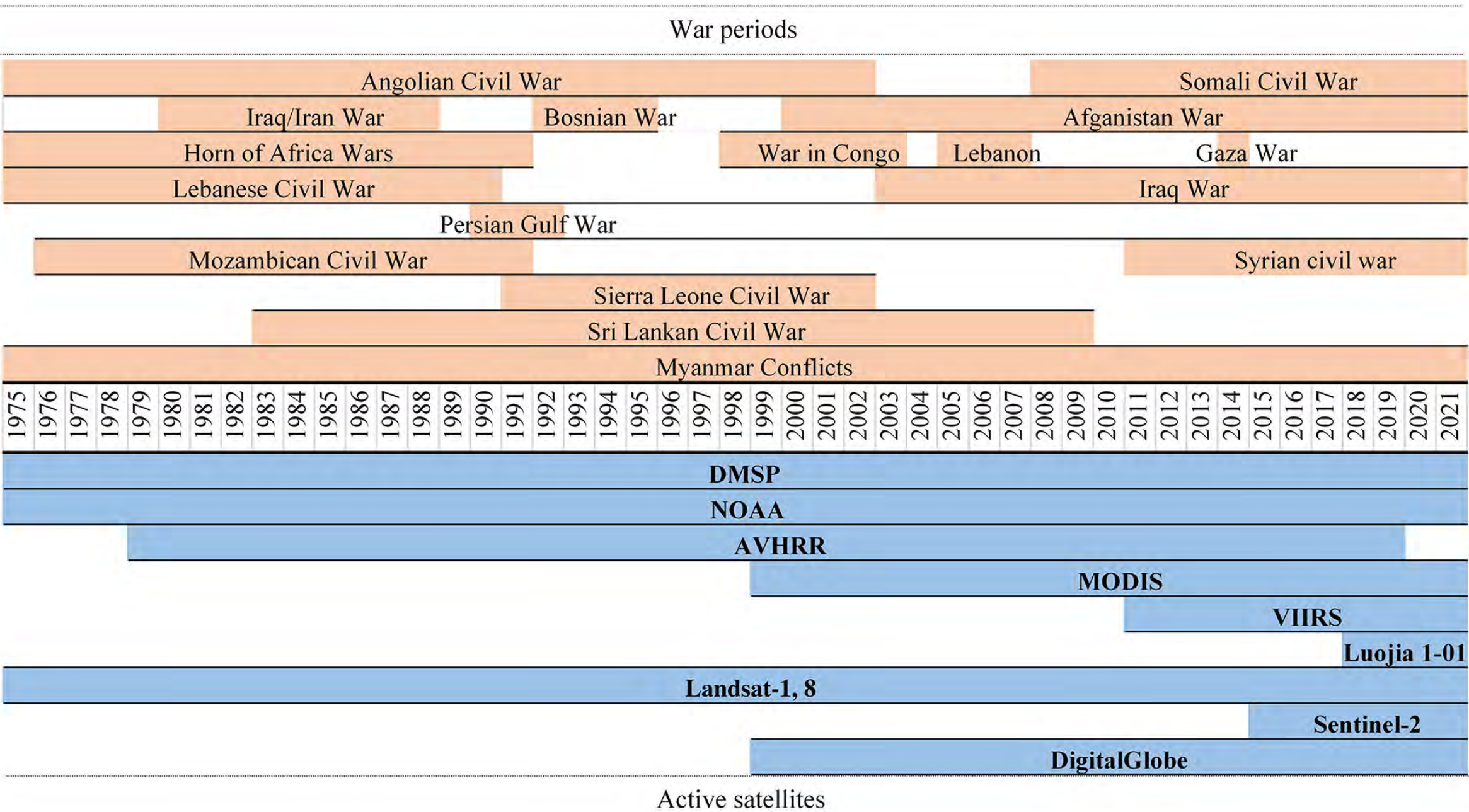


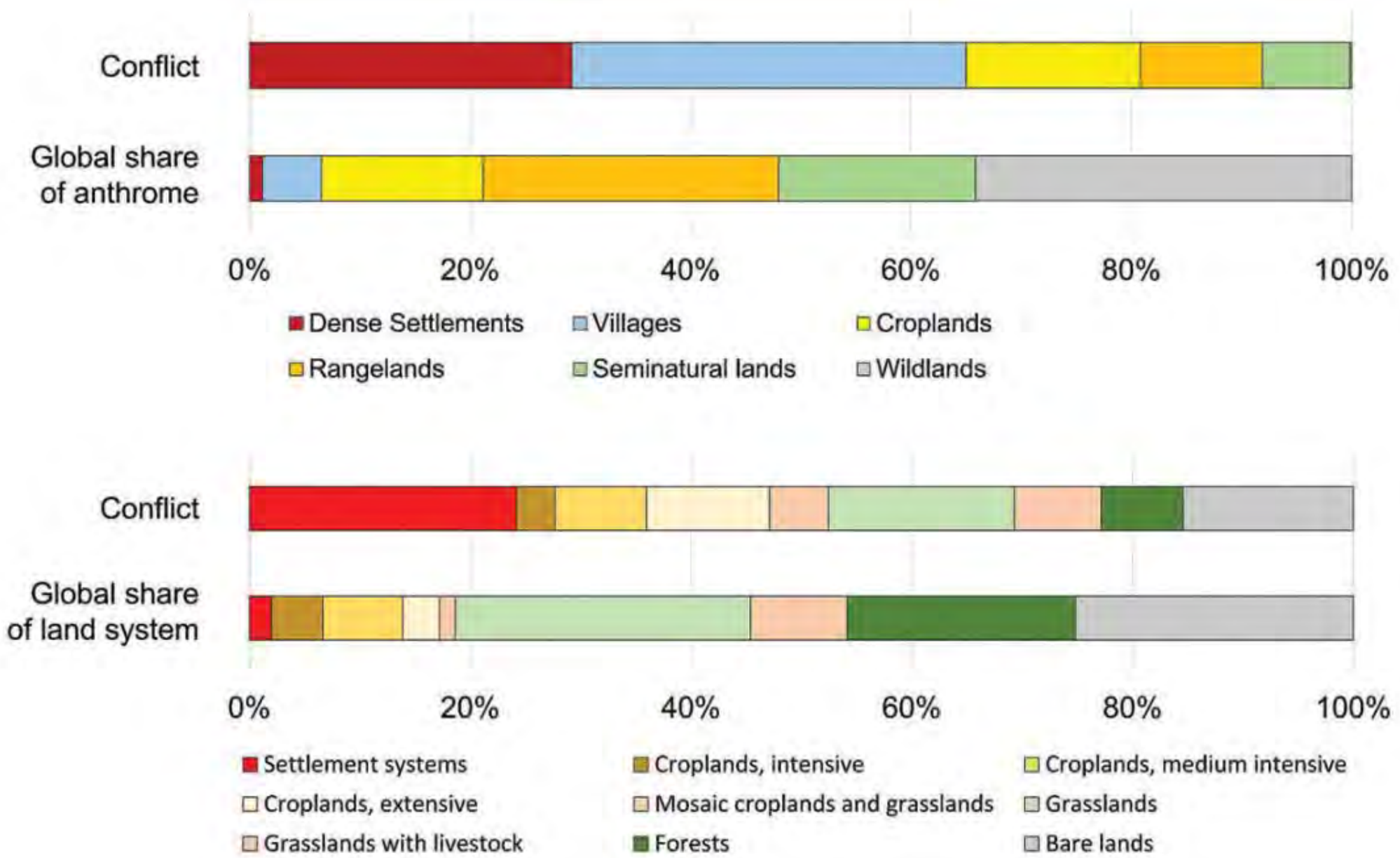
Low spatial resolution
8-km



High spatial resolution
<1m







Urban



Settlement



Forest



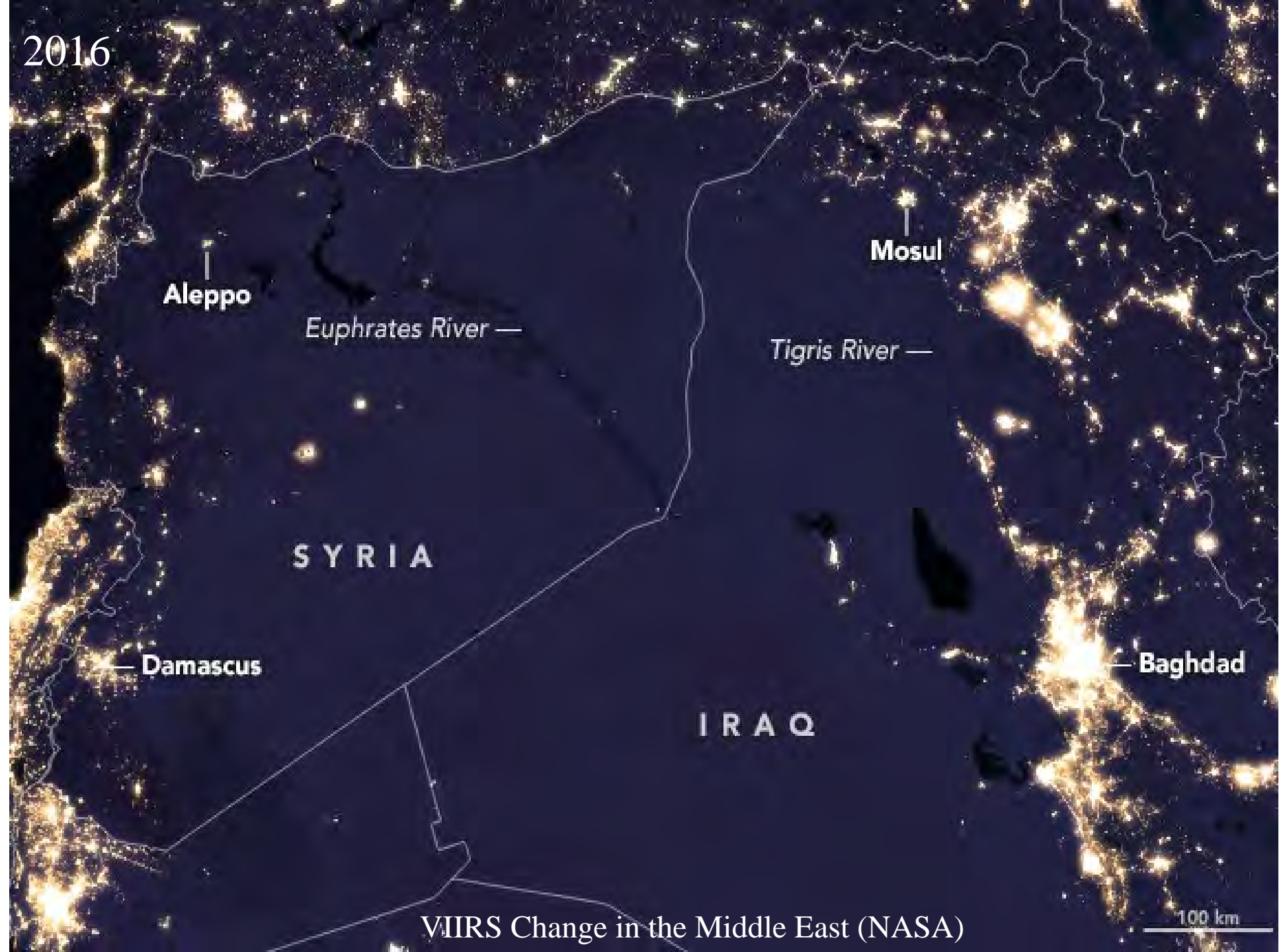
Agriculture



Urban damage



2016



VIIRS Change in the Middle East (NASA)

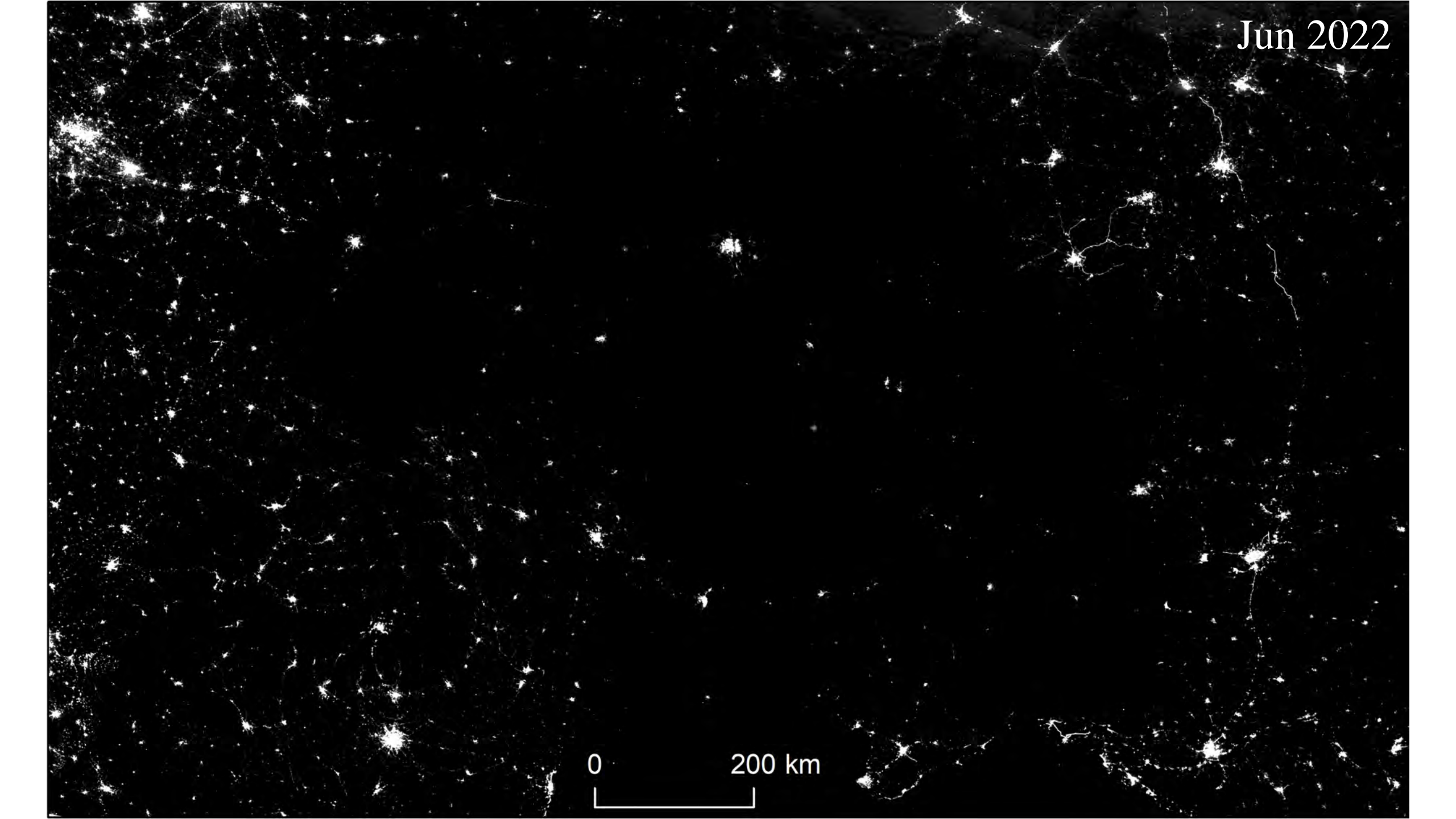
Feb 2022

0 200 km

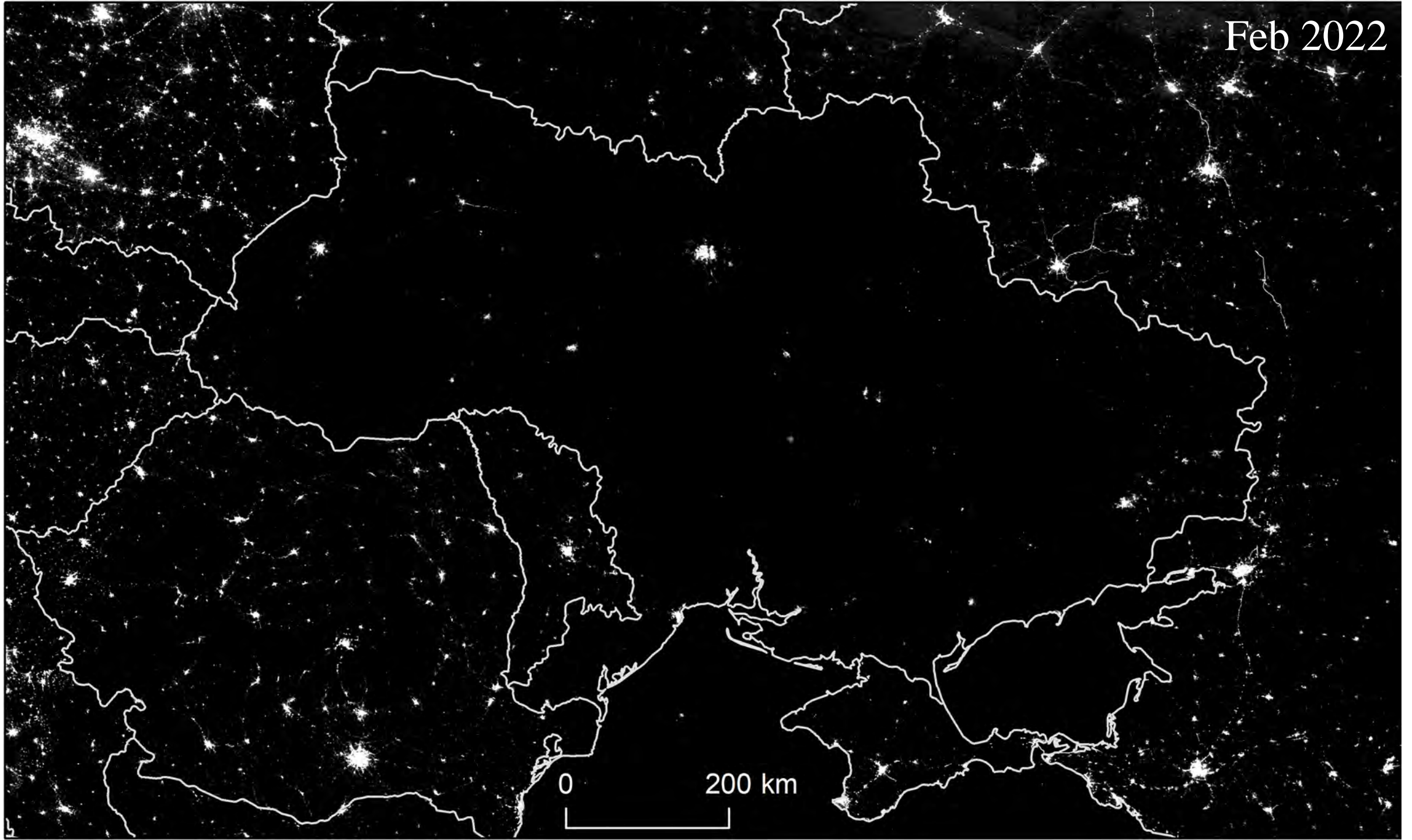
This is a black and white astronomical image, likely a deep-field exposure showing a dense field of stars and a complex network of faint, glowing filaments. The stars appear as bright, multi-pointed sources of light against the dark background. The filaments are thin, irregular lines of light that crisscross the frame, some appearing more prominent than others. In the bottom center, there is a scale bar consisting of a horizontal line with vertical ticks at each end, labeled '0' and '200 km'. In the top right corner, the text 'Feb 2022' is displayed in a white, serif font.

Jun 2022

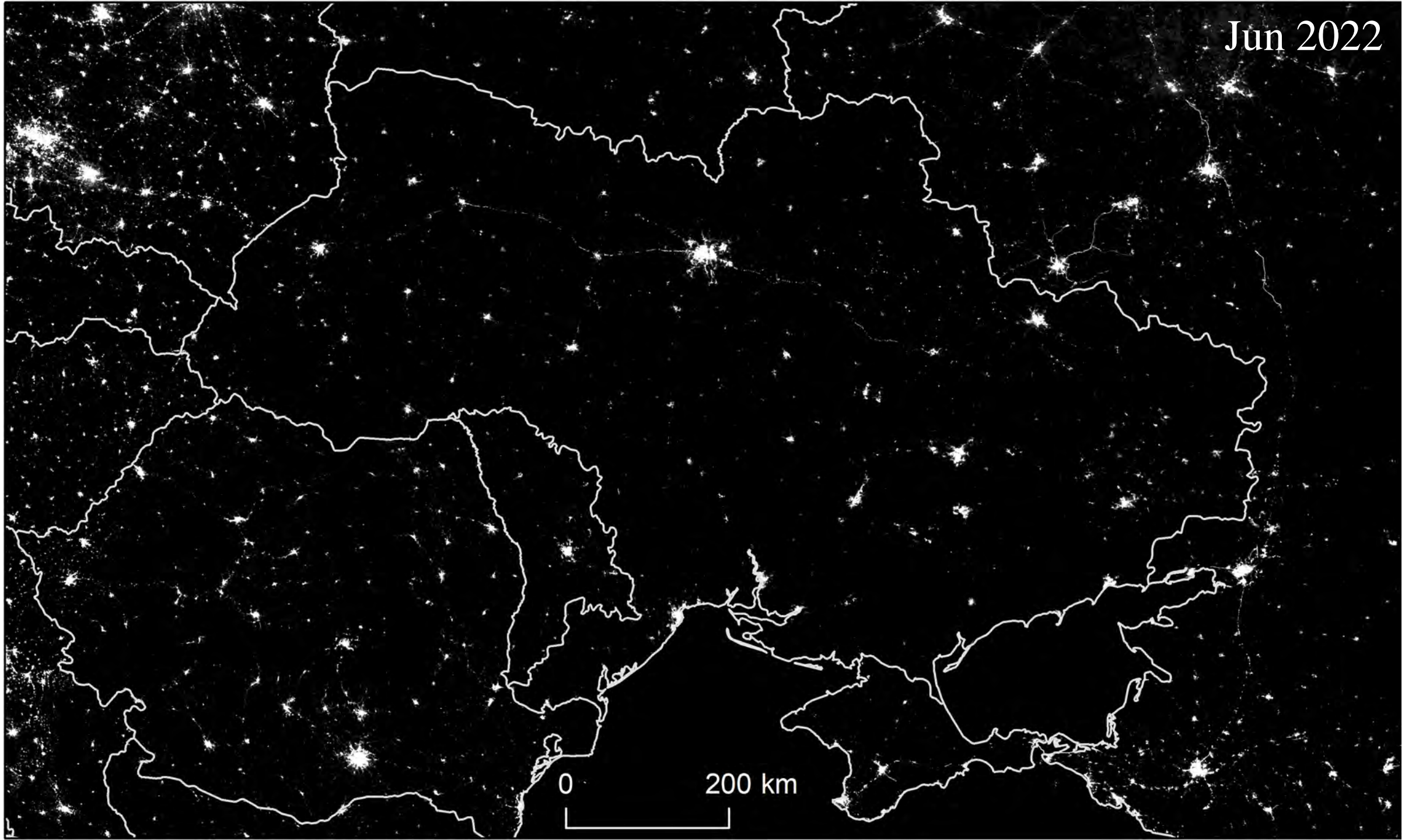
0 200 km

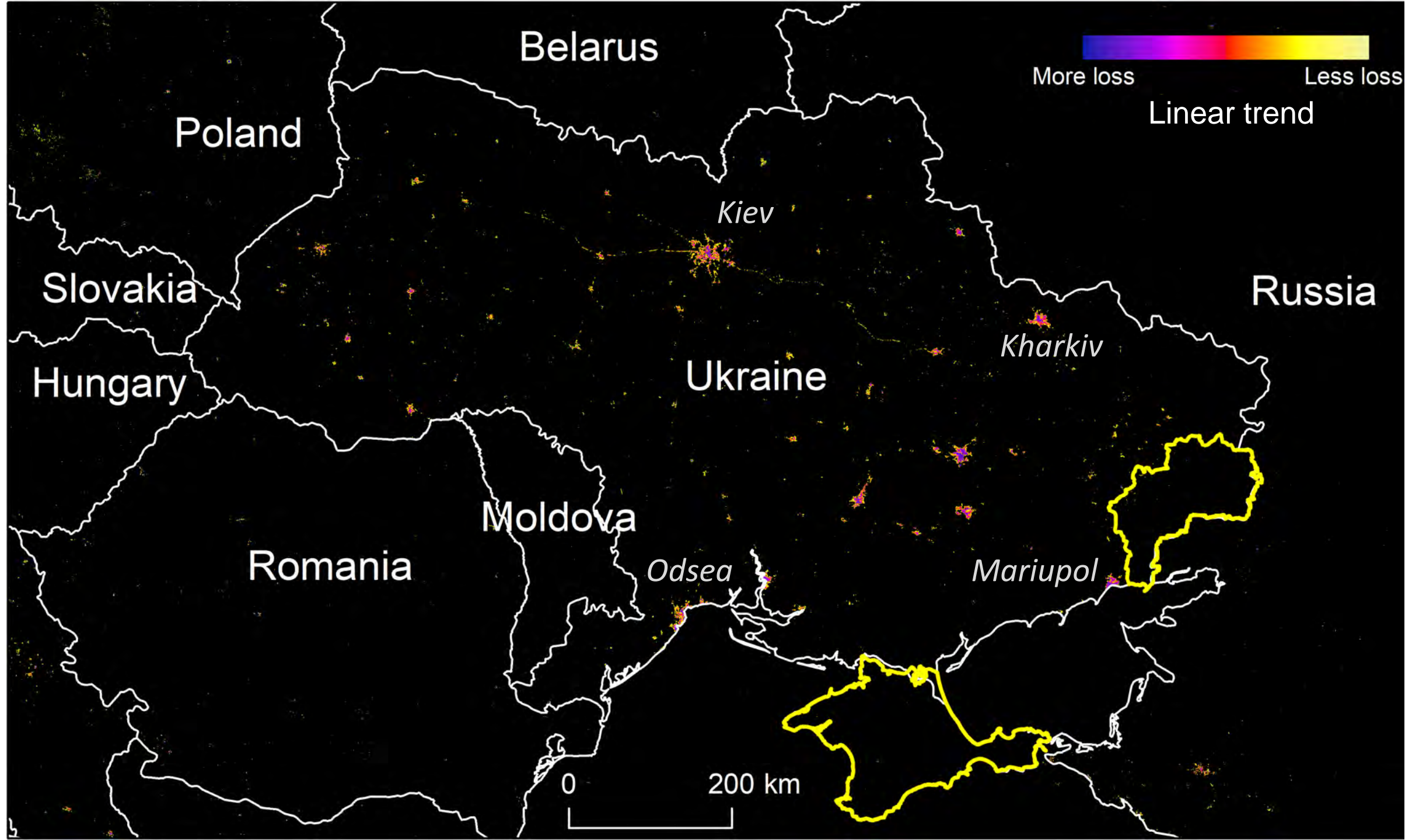
This is a black and white astronomical image, likely a deep-field exposure showing a dense field of stars and a complex network of glowing filaments. The stars appear as bright, multi-pointed sources of light against the dark background. The filaments are thin, branching structures that connect various star clusters or individual stars, creating a web-like pattern across the image. In the bottom center, there is a scale bar consisting of a horizontal line with vertical ticks at each end, labeled '0' and '200 km'. In the top right corner, the text 'Jun 2022' is displayed in a white, serif font.

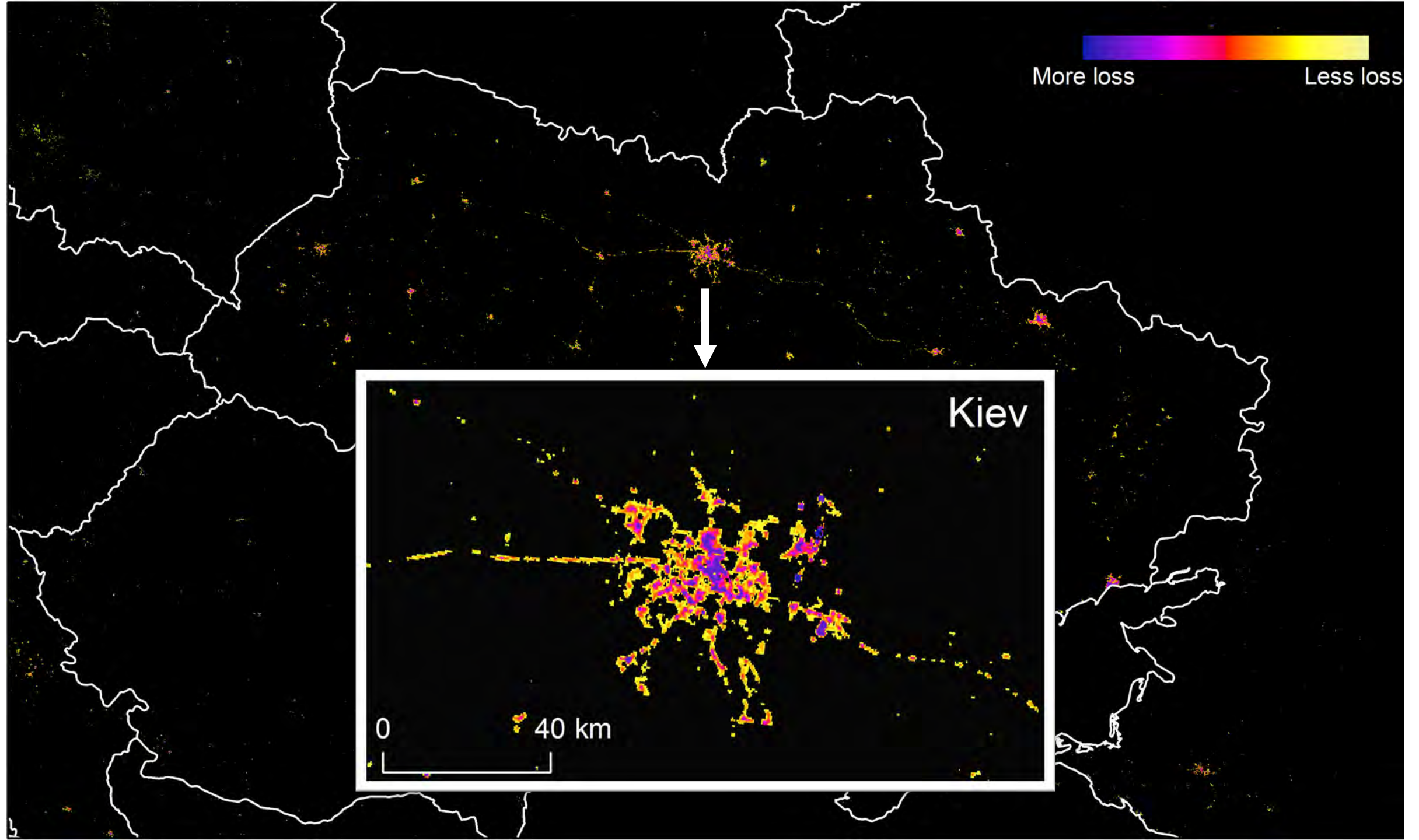
Feb 2022



Jun 2022







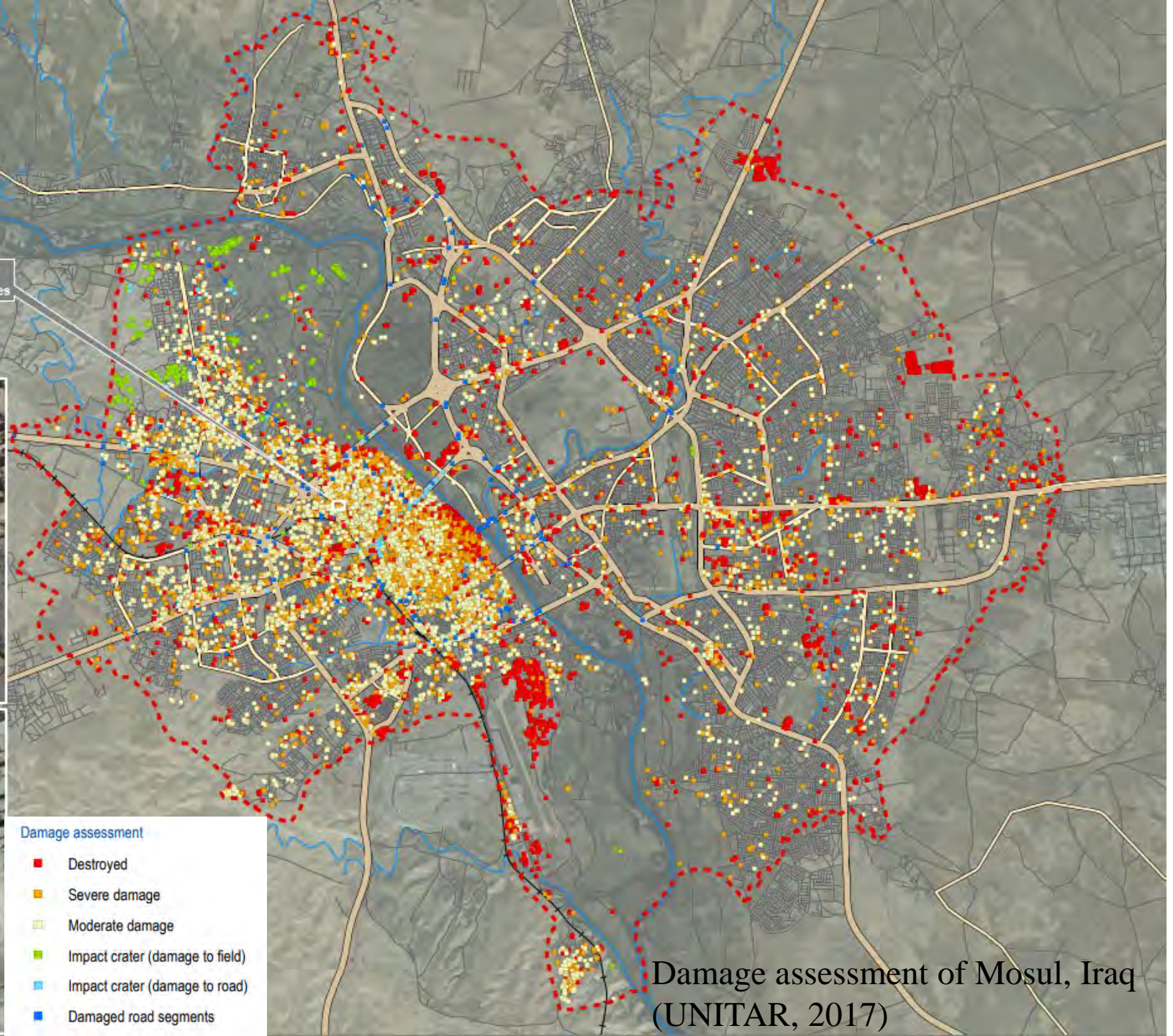


See inset for close-up view of damaged & destroyed structures

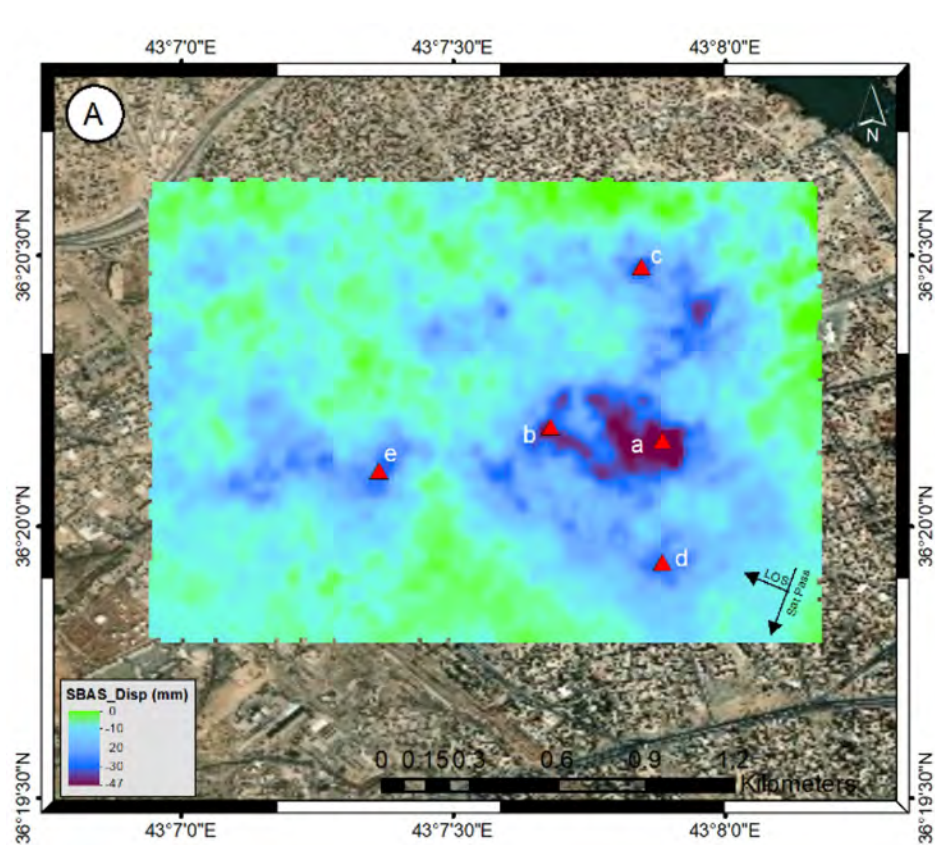
INSET: 18 February 2017



INSET: 4 August 2017



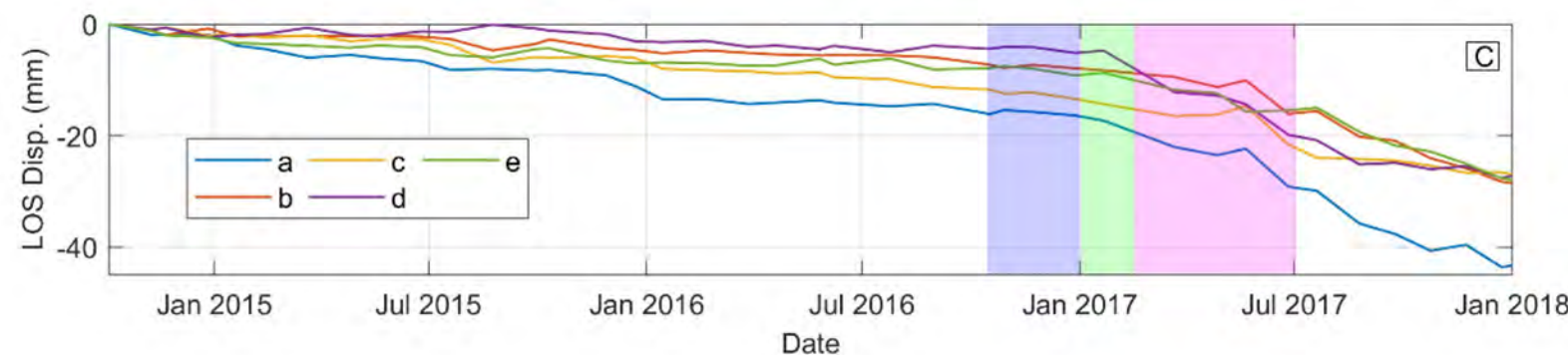
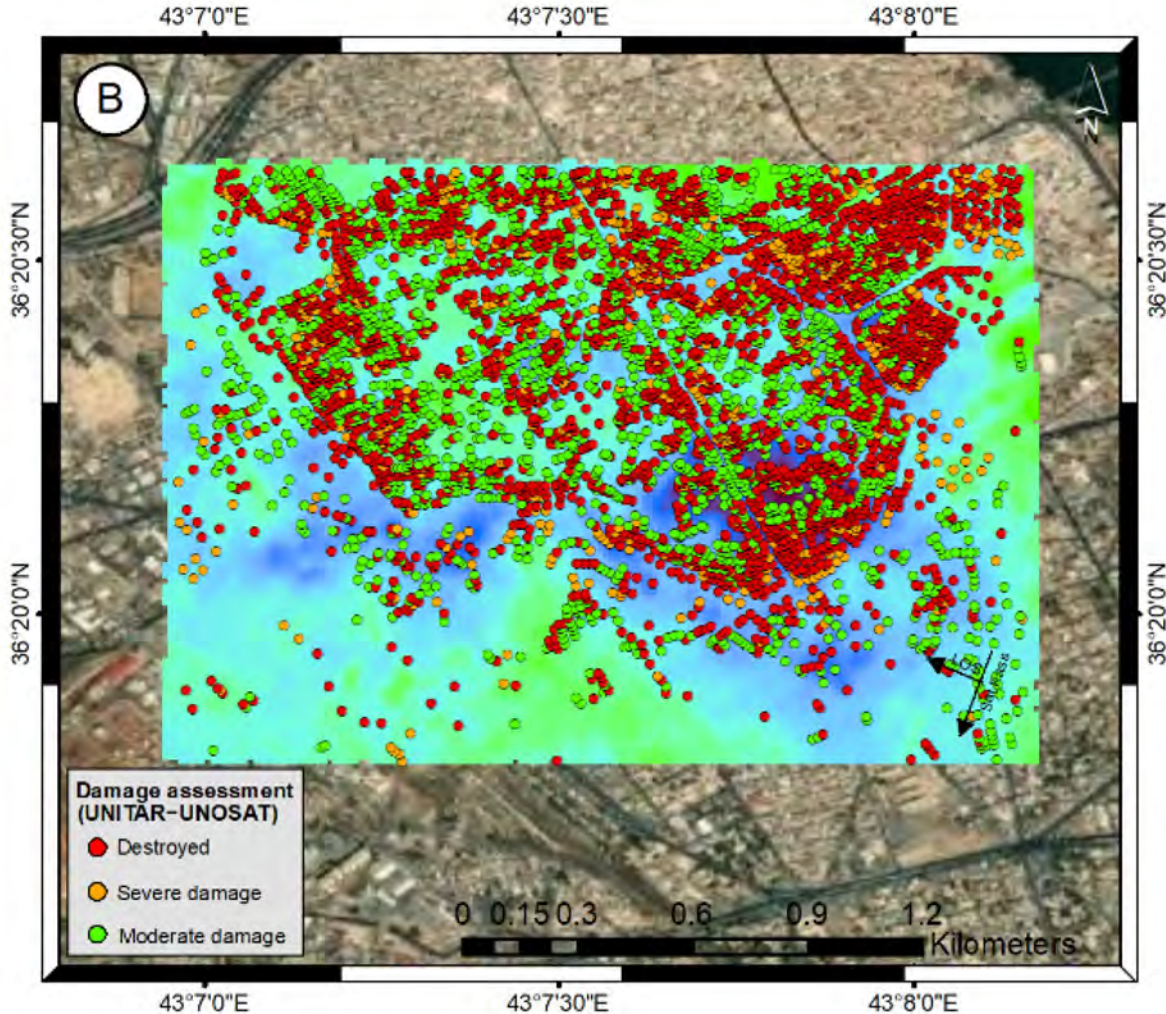
Damage assessment of Mosul, Iraq
(UNITAR, 2017)

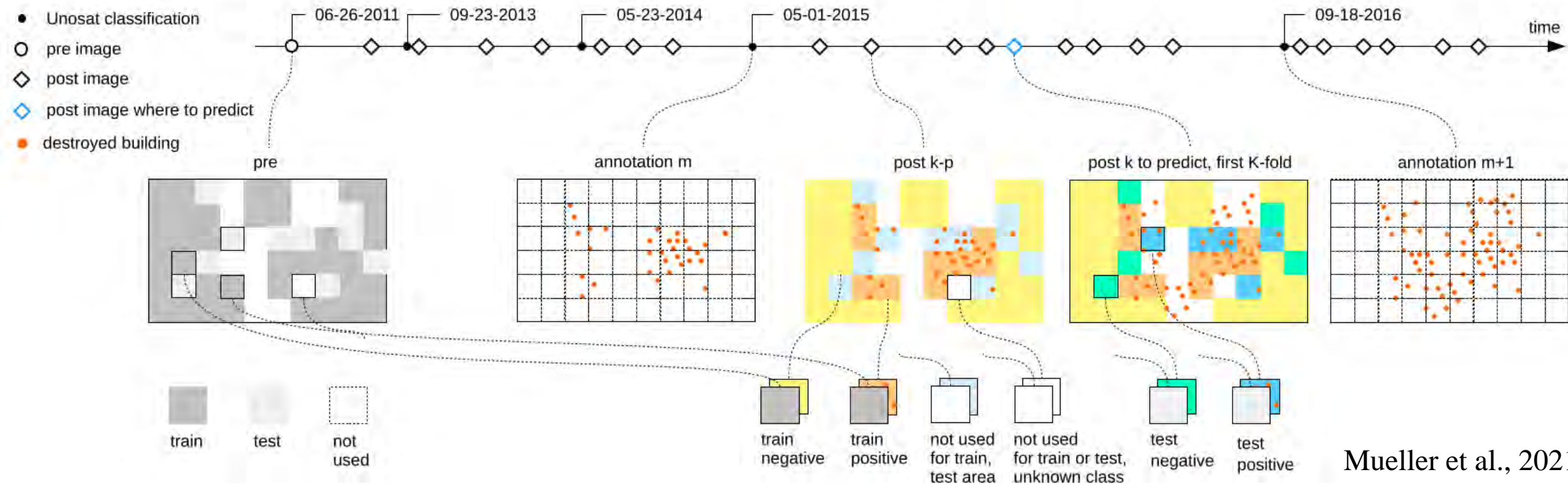


(A) Trends in Small Baseline Subset (SBAS)-displacement with five selected sites.

(B) The damaged buildings detected by the UNITAR-UNOSAT classified as the destroyed buildings (red points).

(C) SBAS-displacement time series







Bright dwellings



Blue dwellings



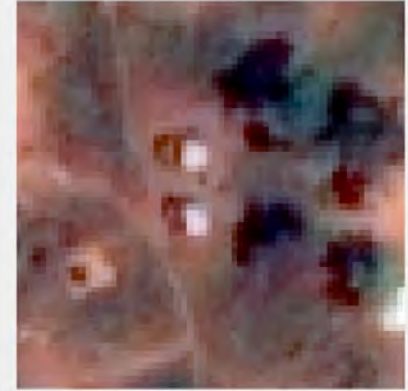
Dark / brown dwellings



Large structures



Small structures



Tiede et al., 2017



Doro, South Sudan



Dalakaleri, Nigeria



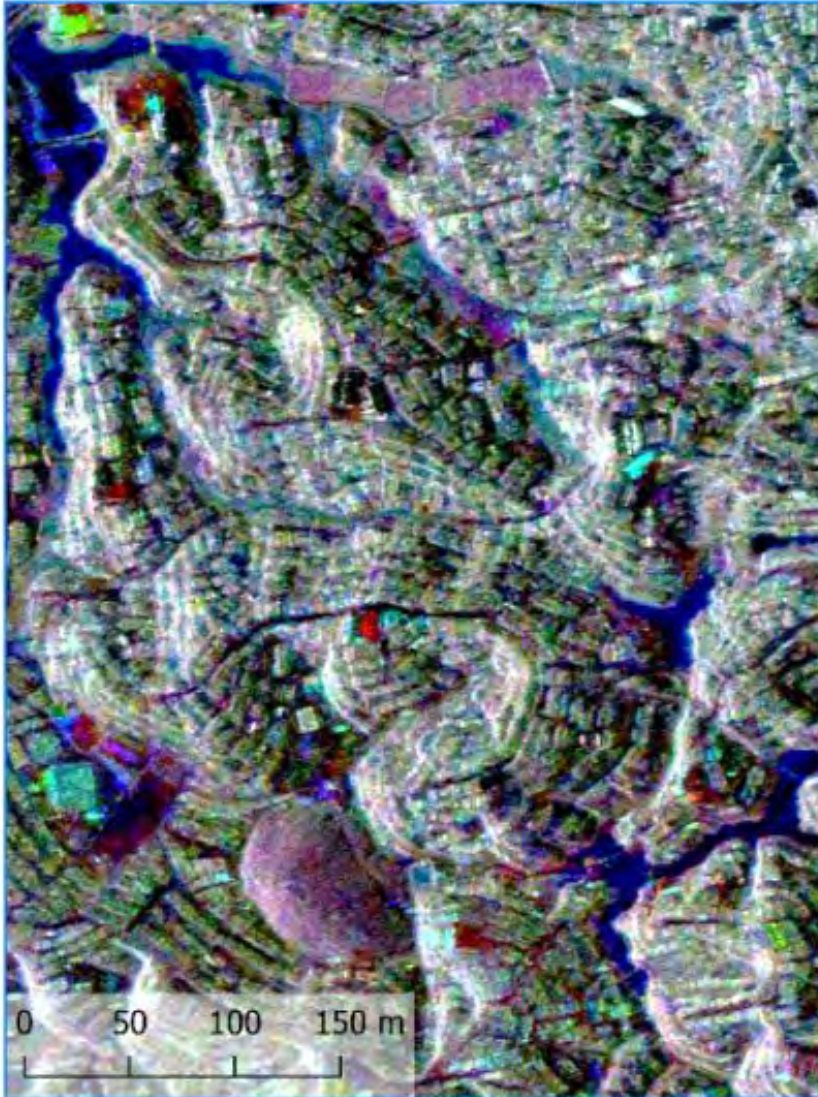
Juba, South Sudan

Quinn et al., 2018

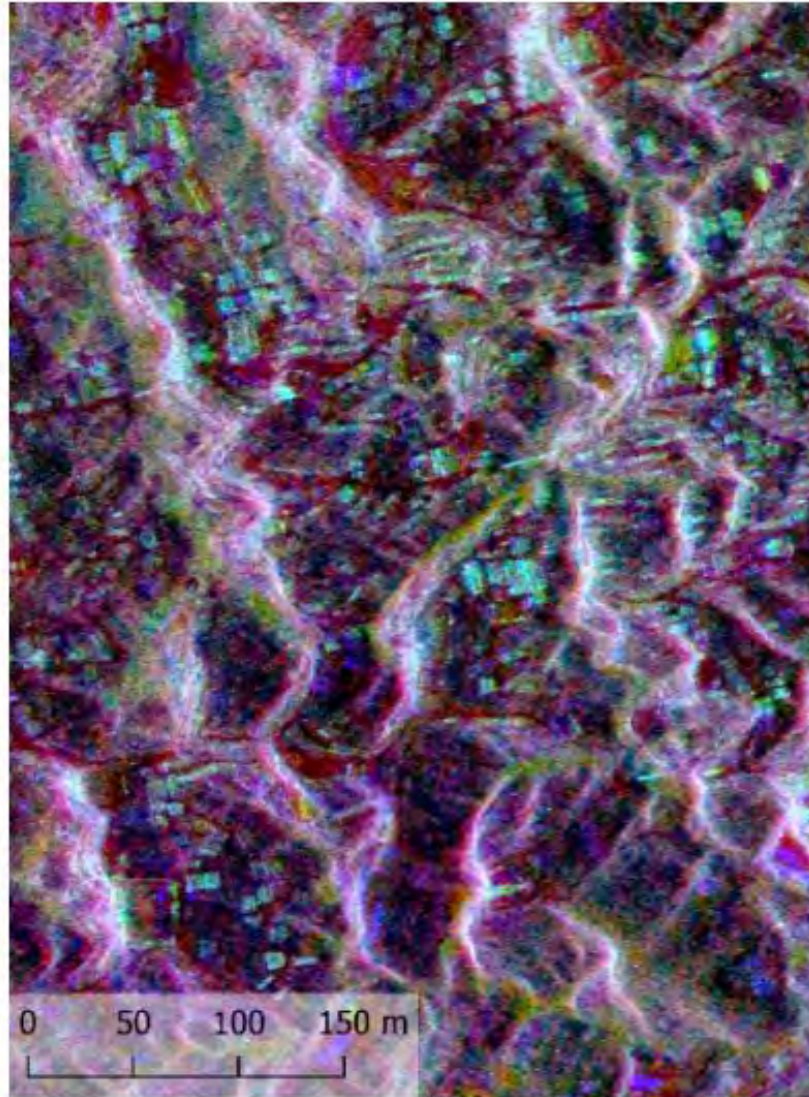


Structure detections in Doro refugee settlement, South Sudan (Quinn et al., 2018)

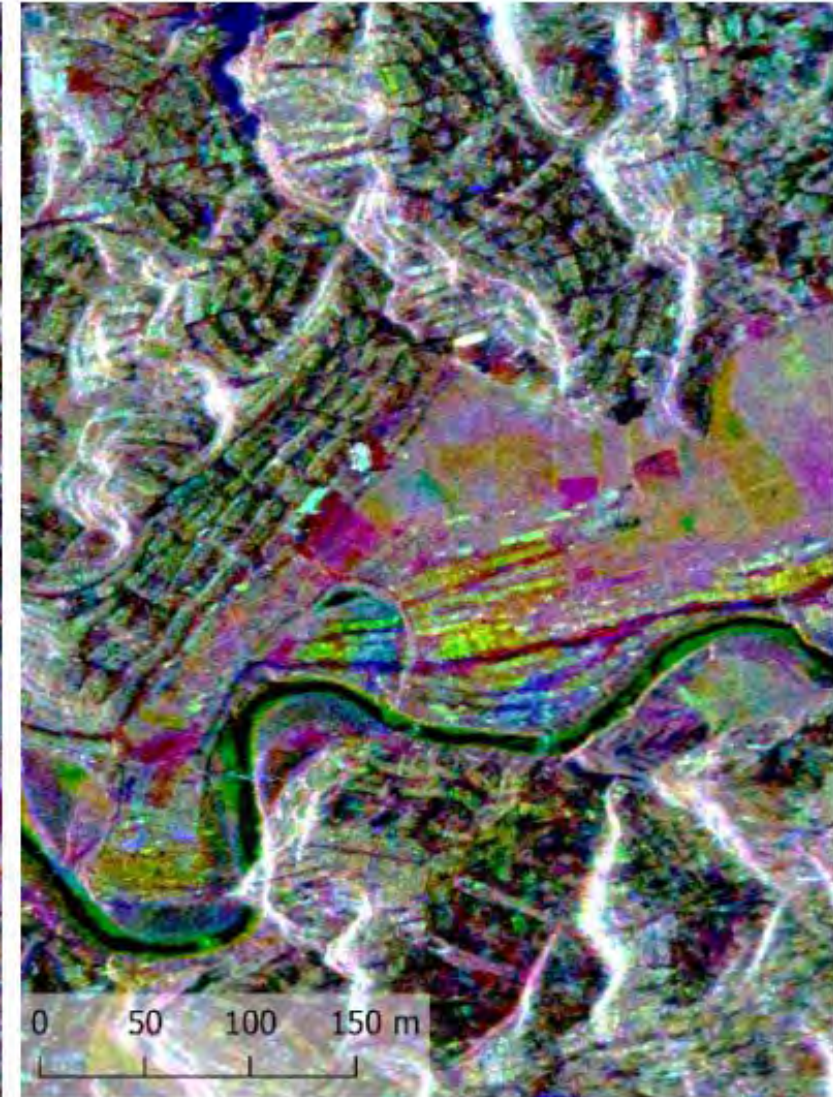
Constructions and demolitions
in the camp center



New buildings in the
expansion area in the west



Demolished buildings
in the floodplains

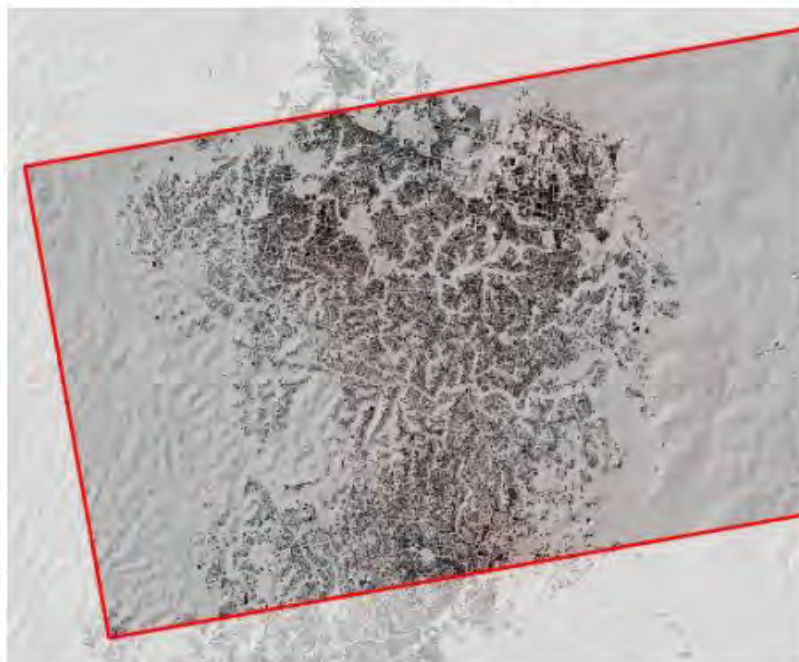
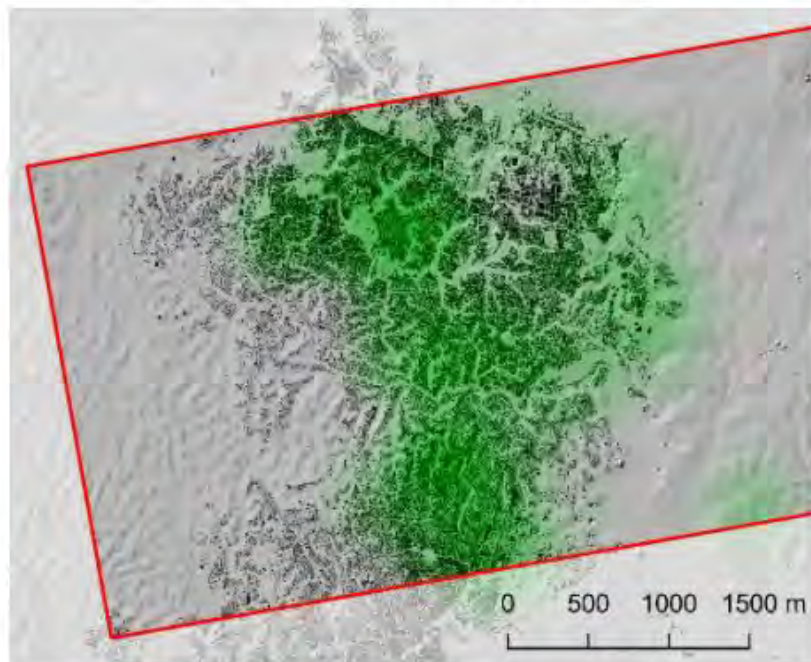


Temporal changes within Kutupalong refugee camp (Bangladesh) identified by VHR SAR color composites (Braun 2019)

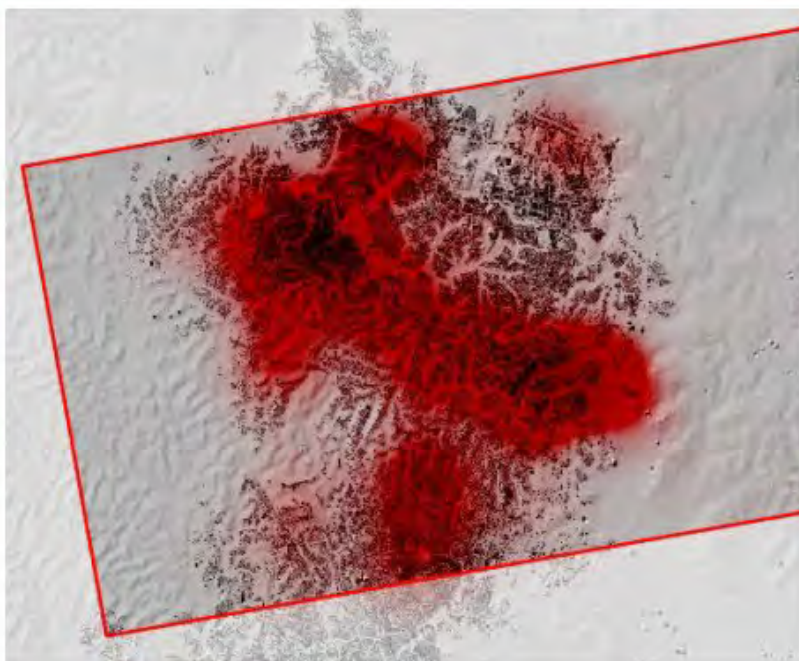
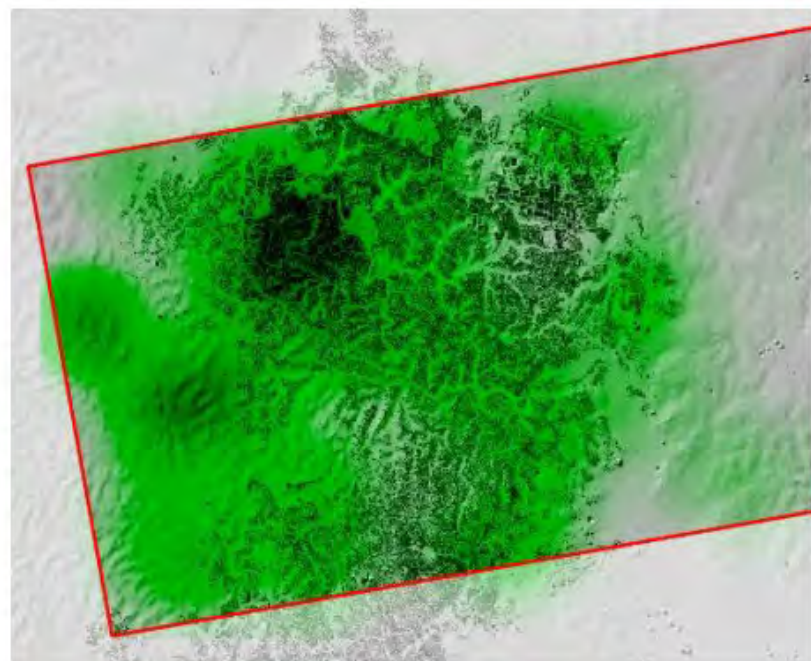
new buildings

demolished

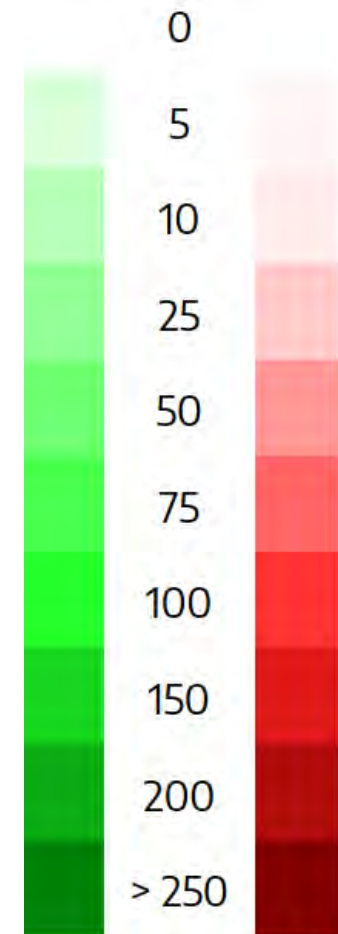
30.09.2017 - 11.10.2017



27.12.2017 - 04.08.2018



number of
changed buildings
within a radius
of 500 meters



Braun 2019

Forest



Credit: Department of Defense

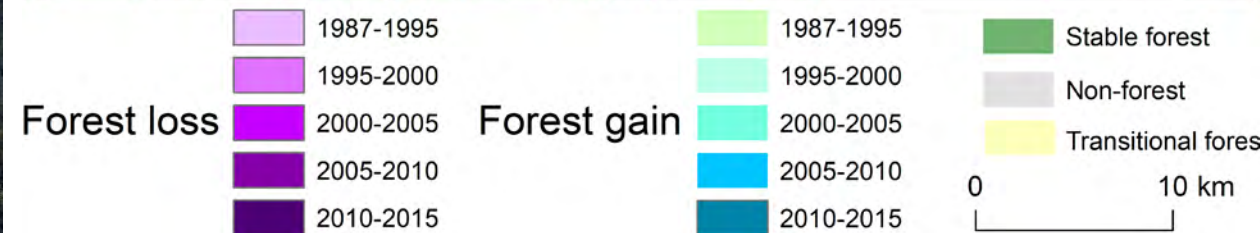
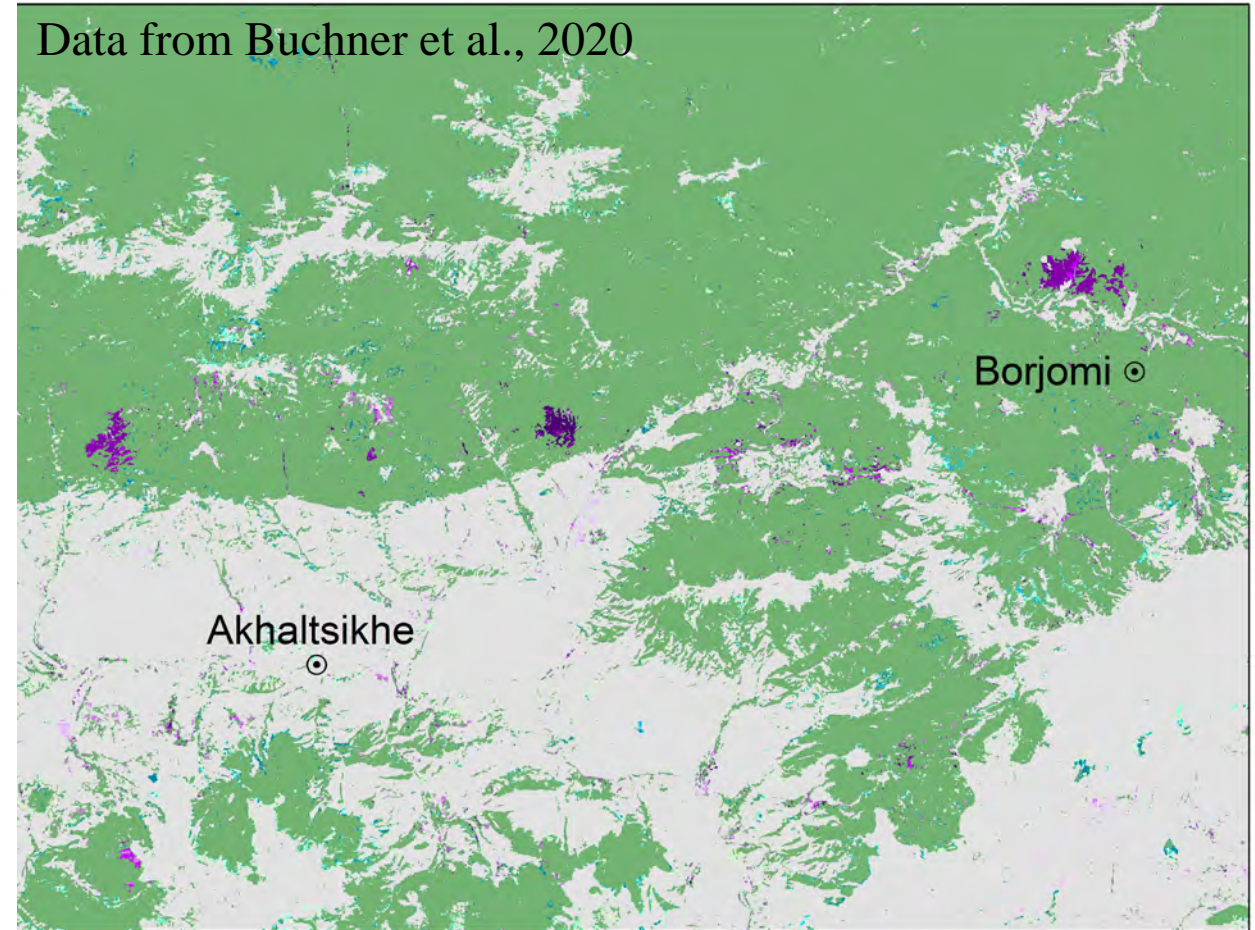
Causing deforestation



Credit: Radeloff

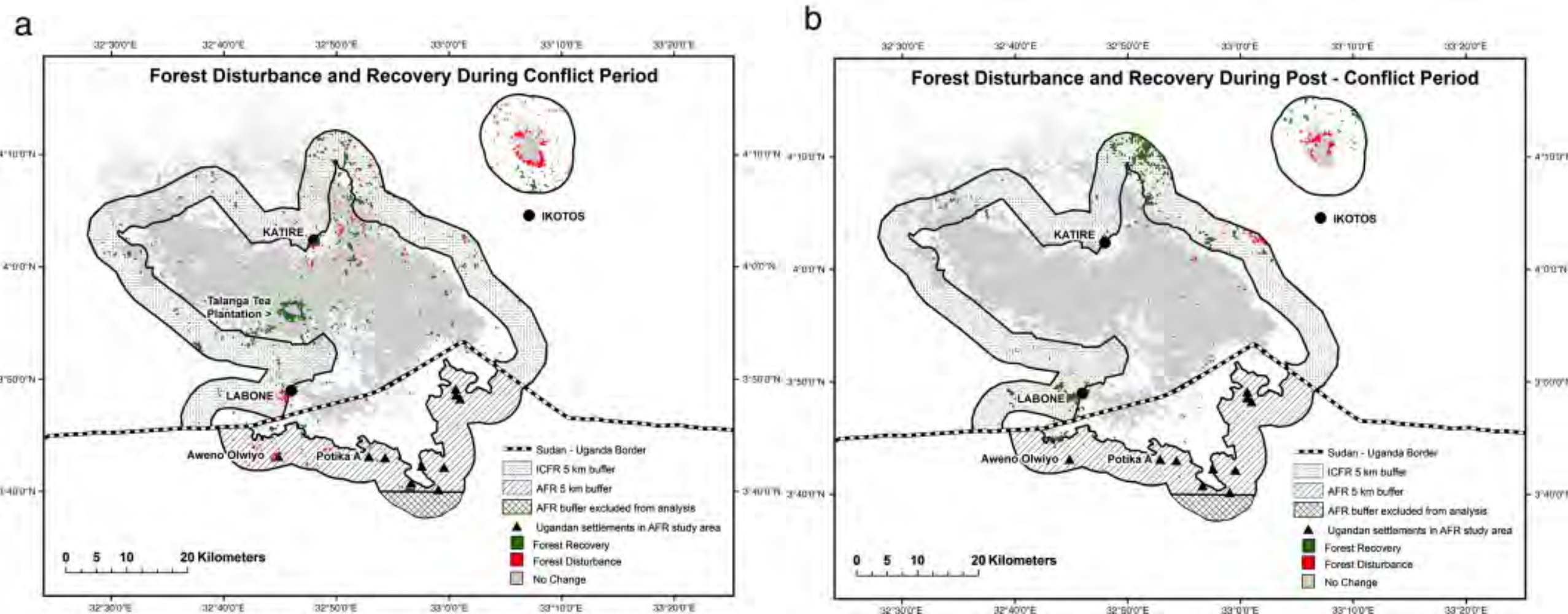
EARNINGS AUGUST 17, 2008 / 9:43 AM / UPDATED 14 YEARS AGO

Data from Buchner et al., 2020



mid-1980s to 2001

2003 to 2010



The impacts of armed conflict on the Eastern Afromontane forest region on the South Sudan — Uganda border

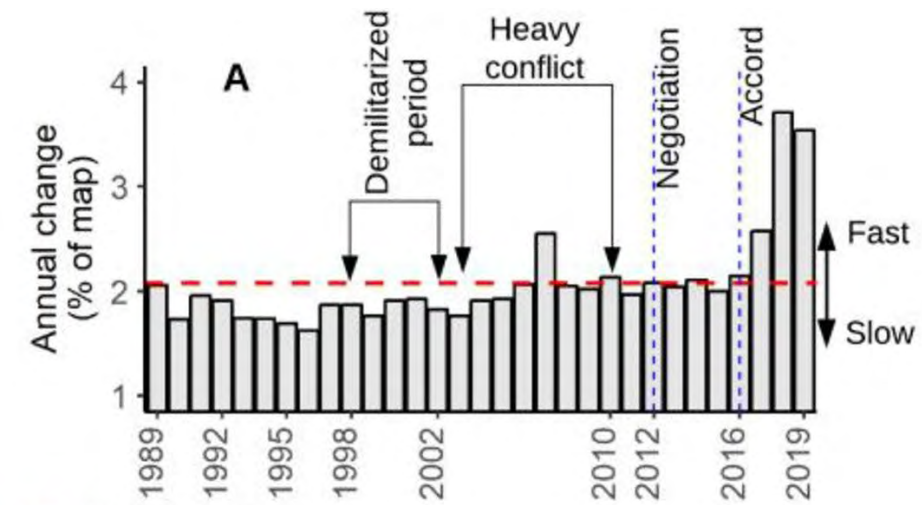
Gorsevski et al., 2012

Preventing deforestation

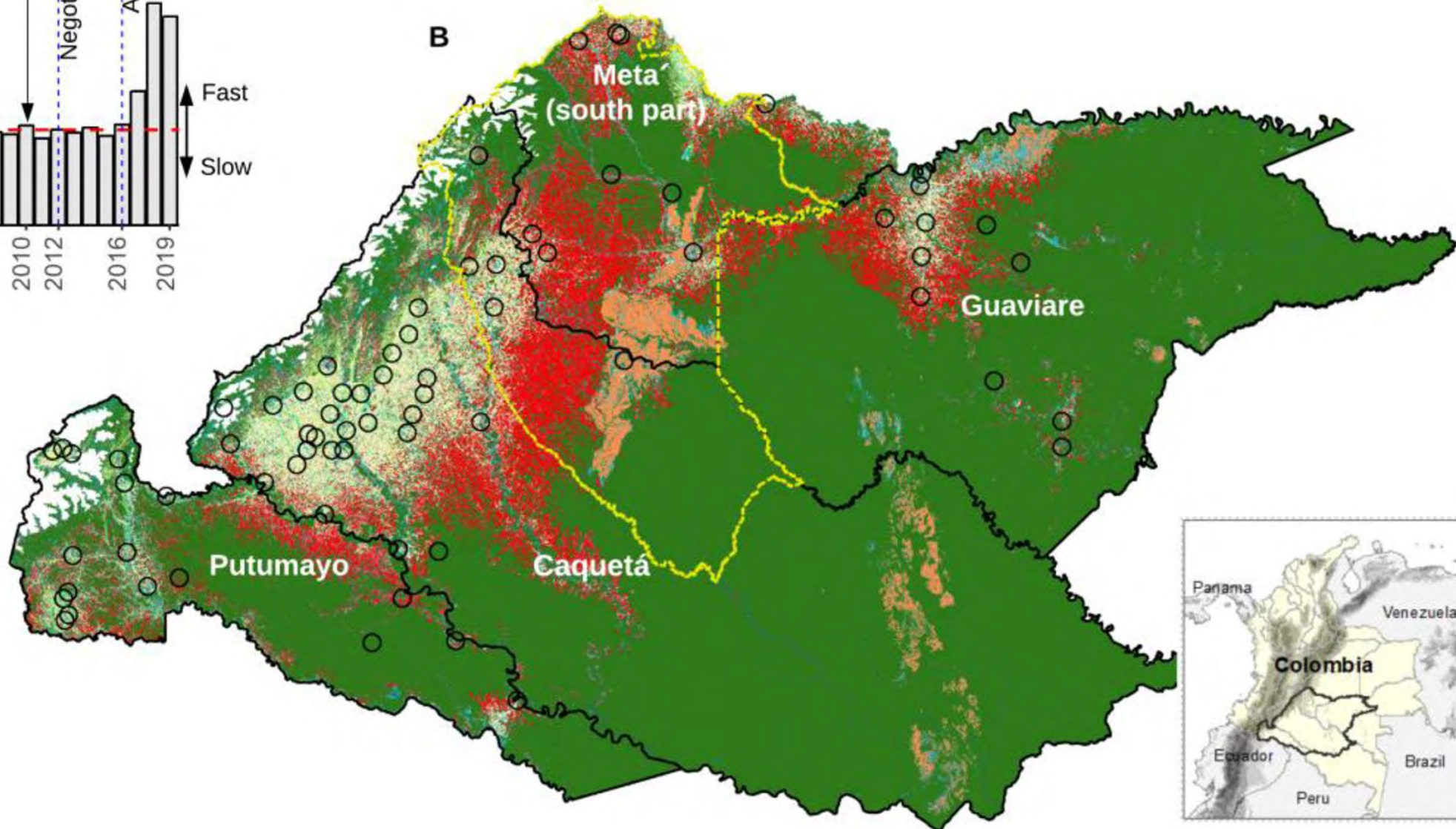


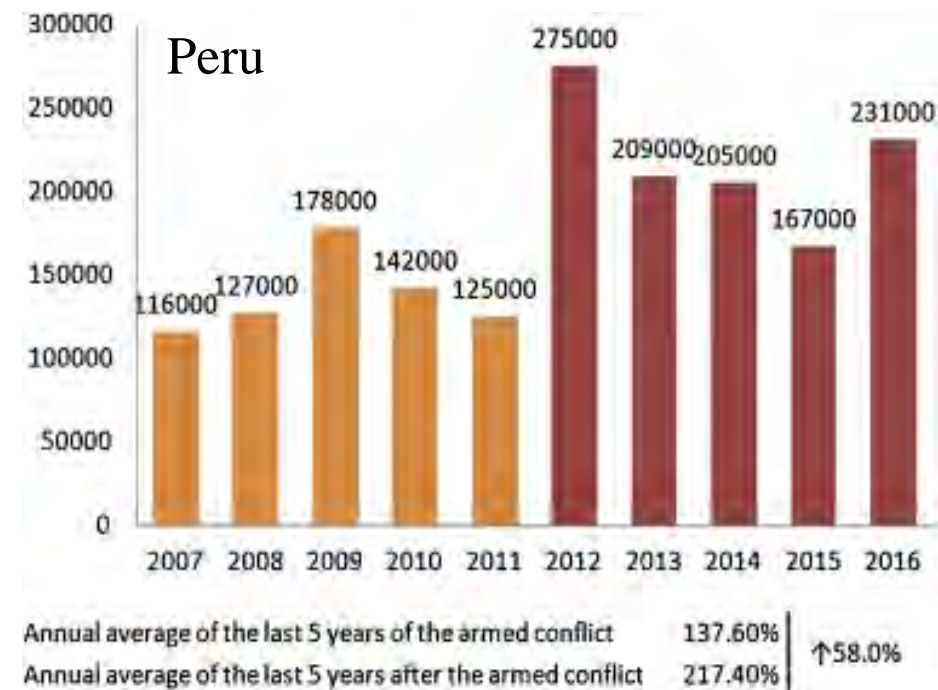
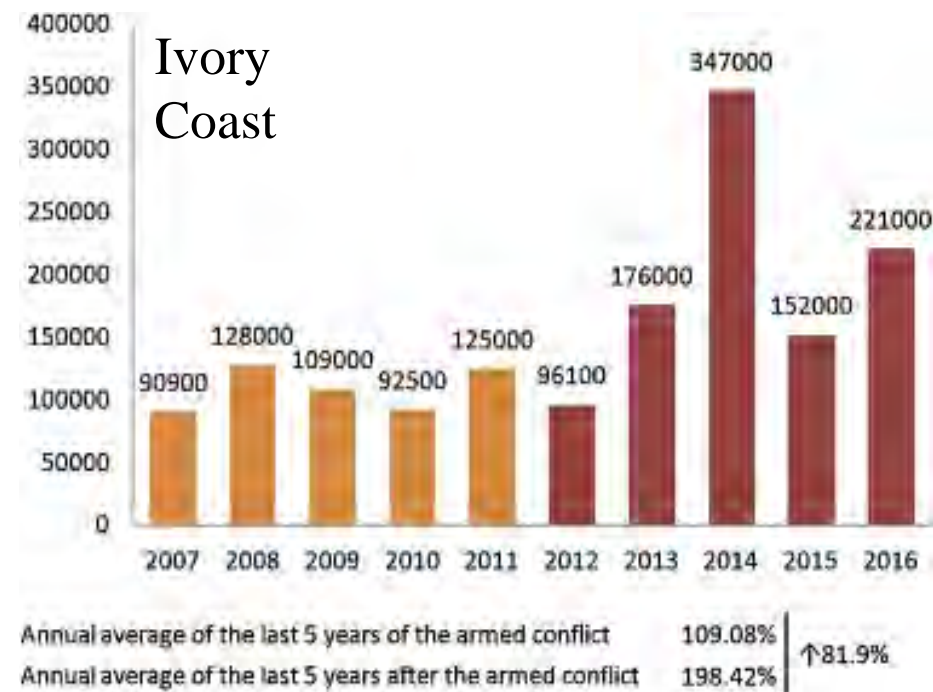
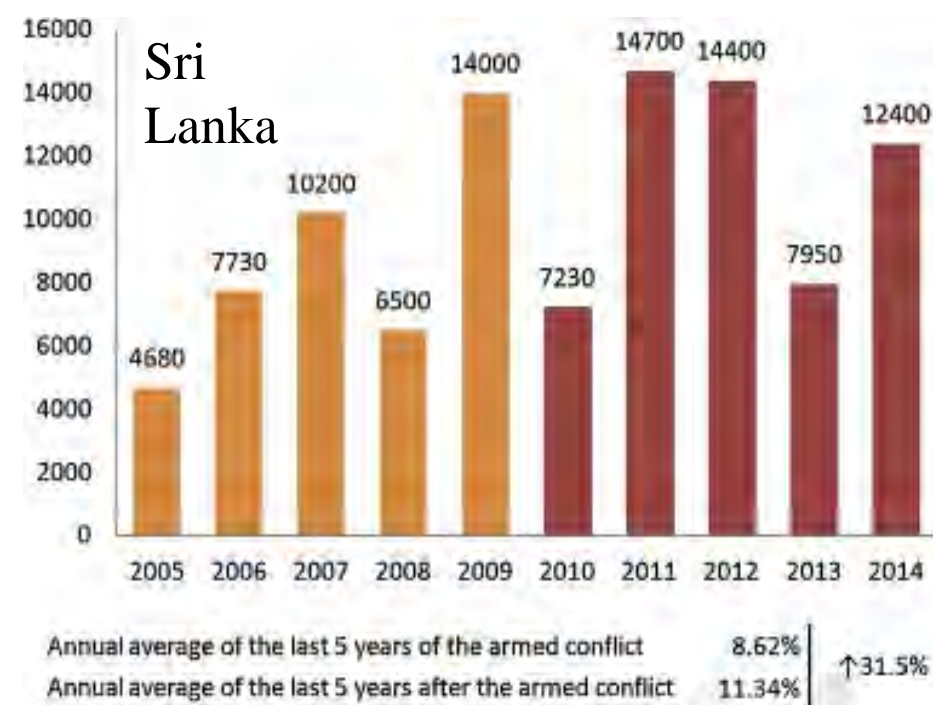
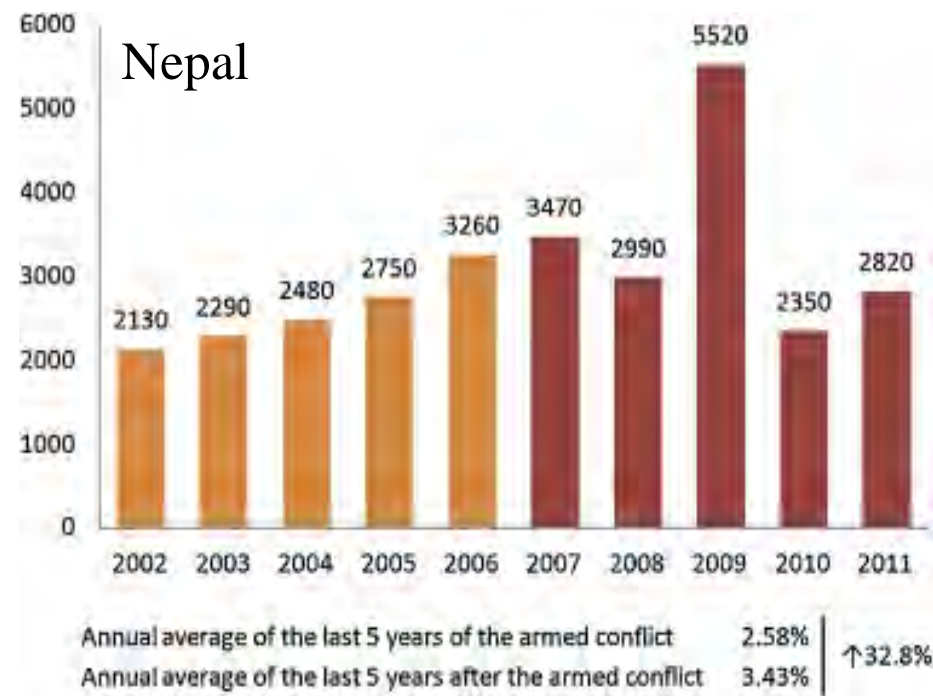
Mongabay 2017

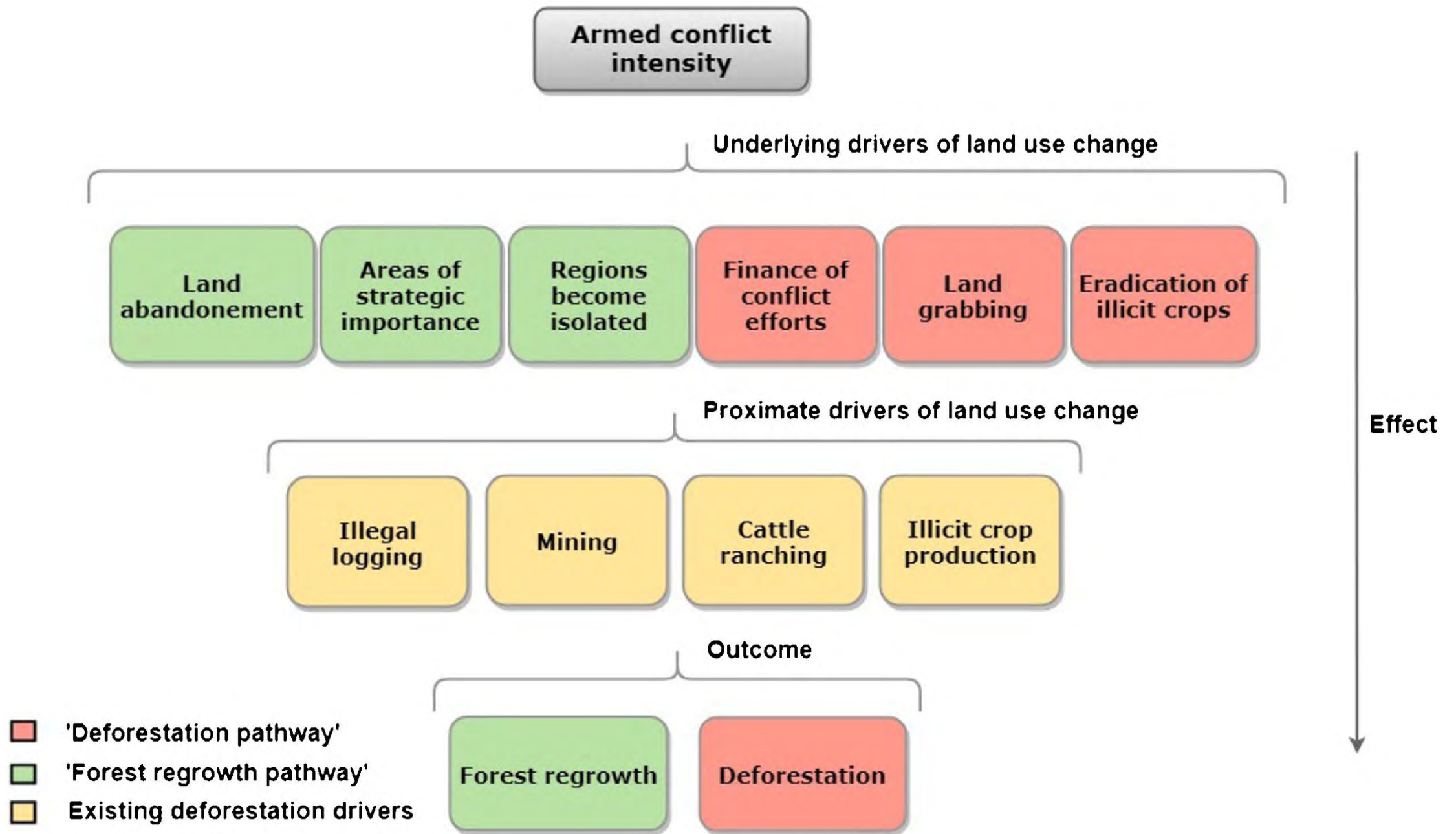


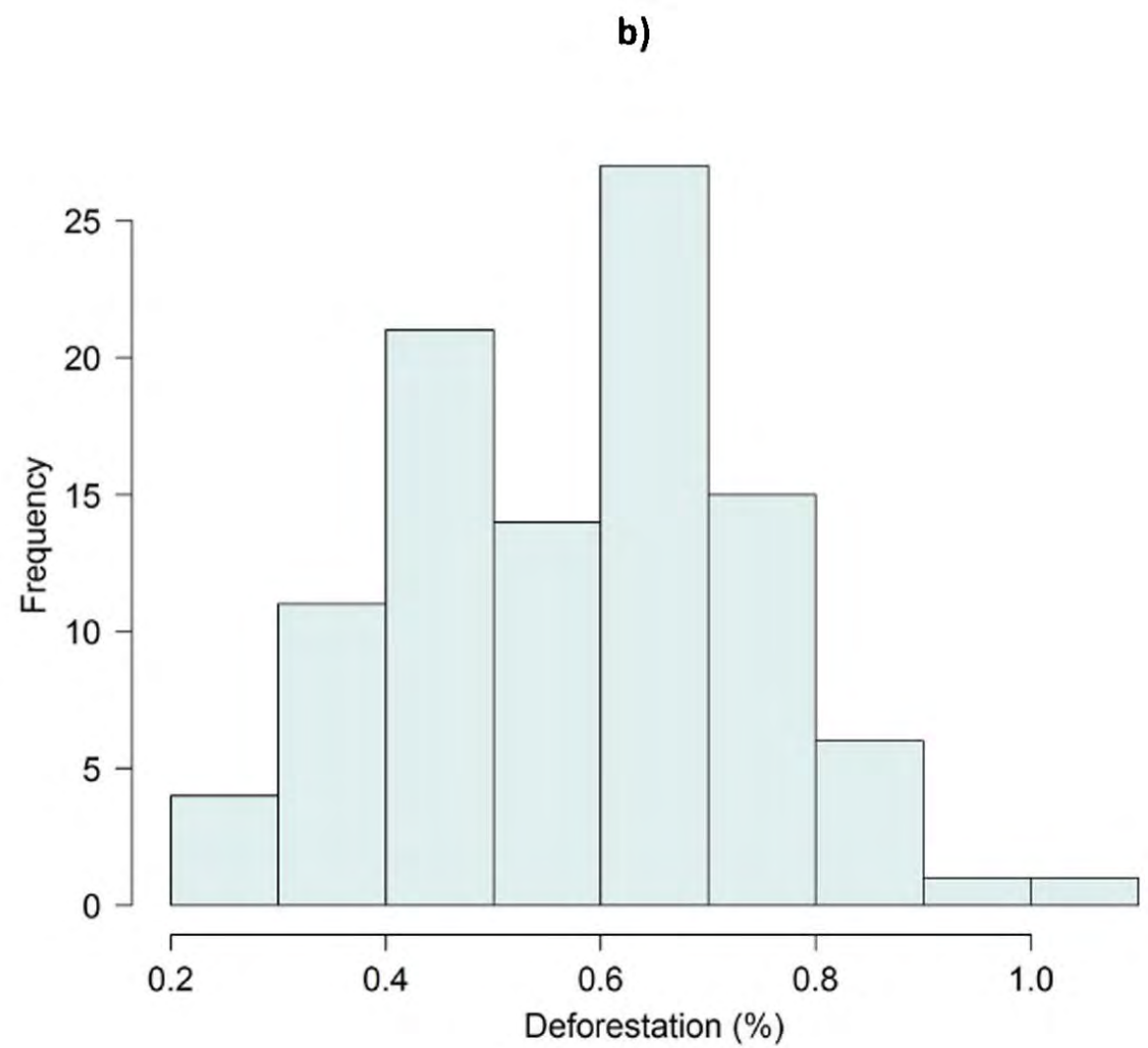


- Stable urban
- Stable agriculture
- Stable forest
- Stable grasslands
- Secondary forest
- Water
- Forest to agriculture
- Forest to secondary forest
- Gain of secondary forest
- other-to-other
- Loss of secondary forest
- Conflict event
- Demilitarized zone











Direct influences of the war on agriculture



Crop burning



Field battles

Indirect influences of the war on agriculture



Infrastructure

Agricultural inputs

Economy

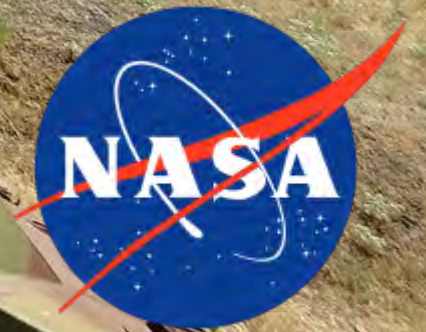
Agriculture abandonment



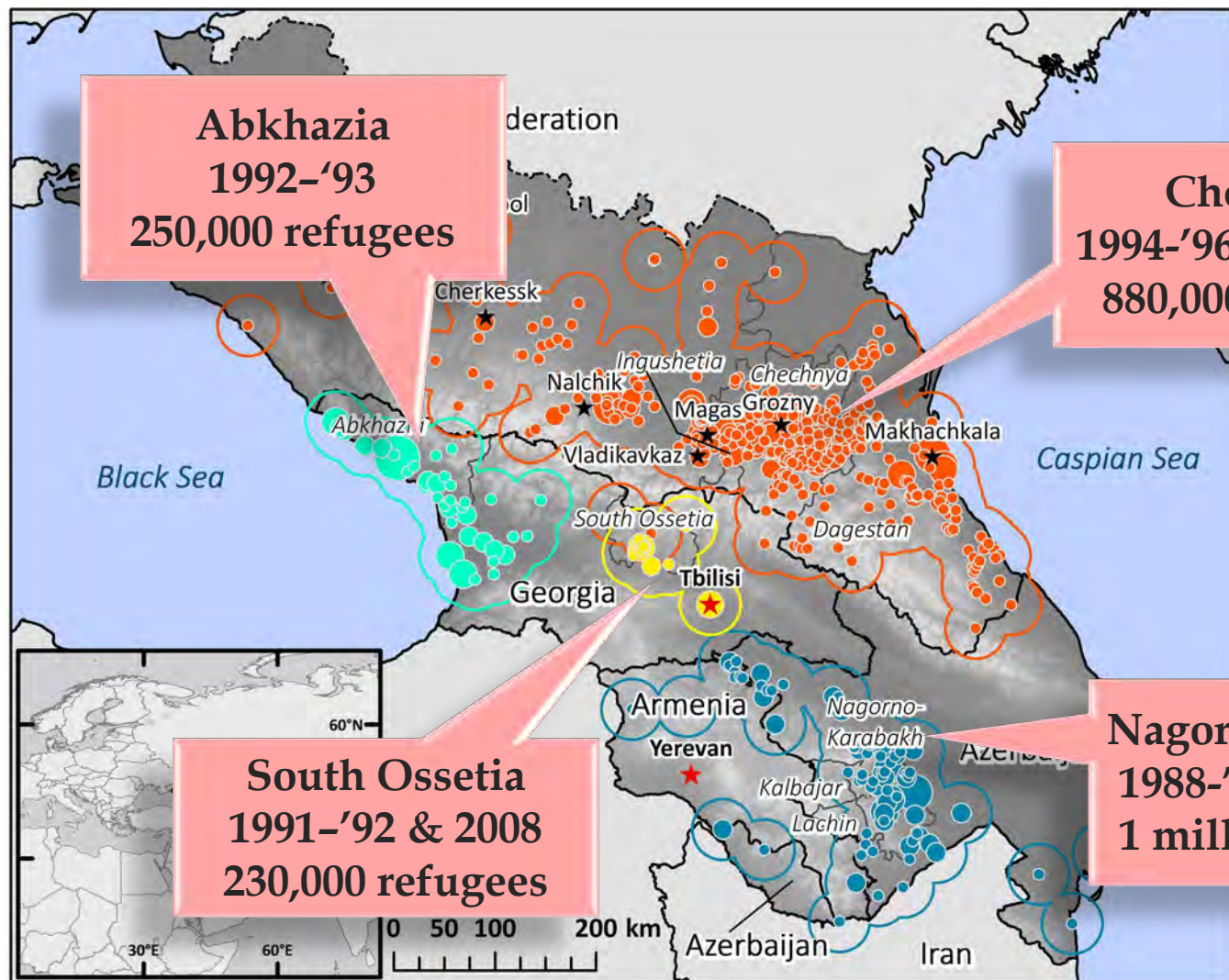
Effects of the post-Soviet wars in the Caucasus on agricultural land use

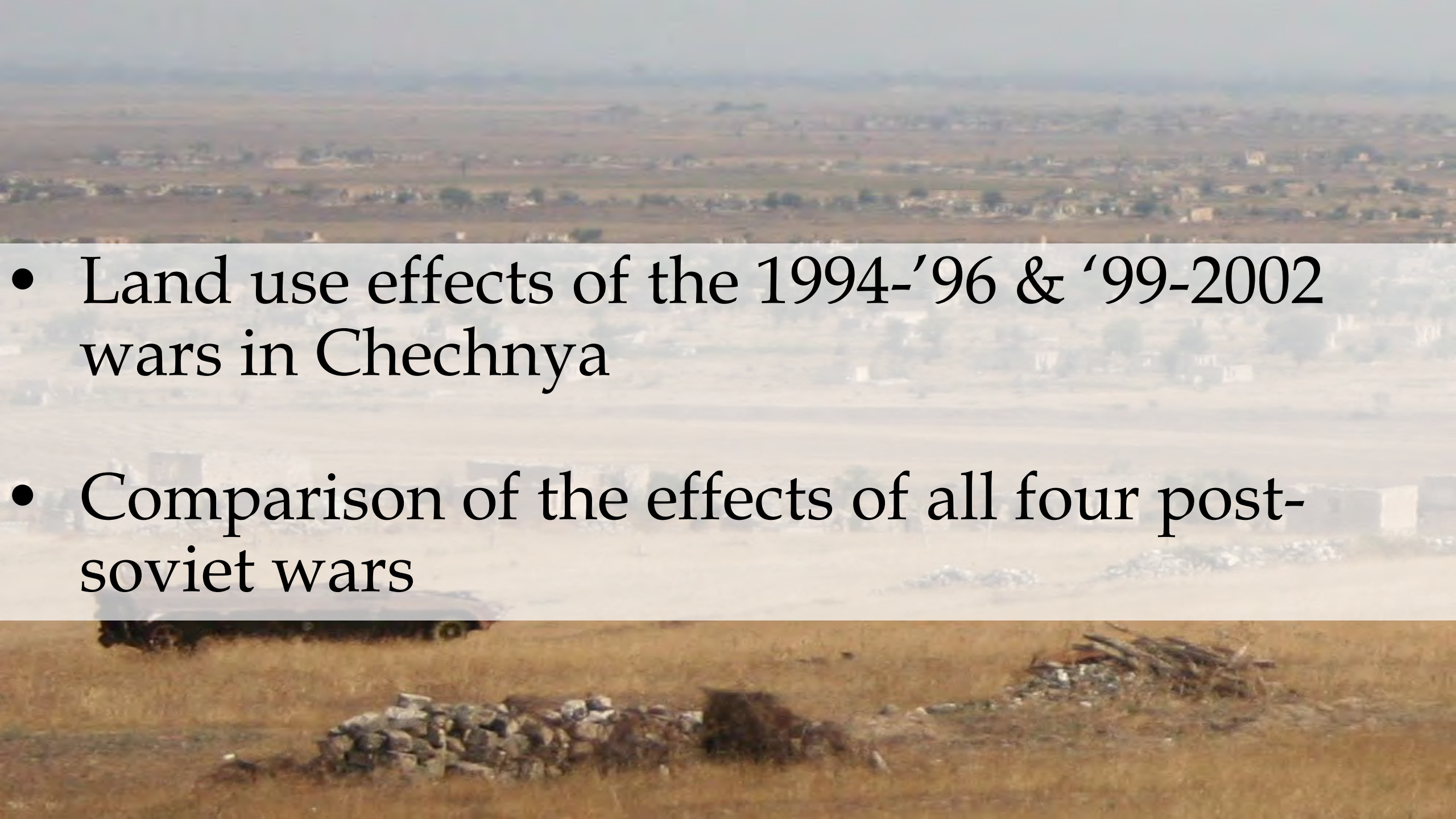


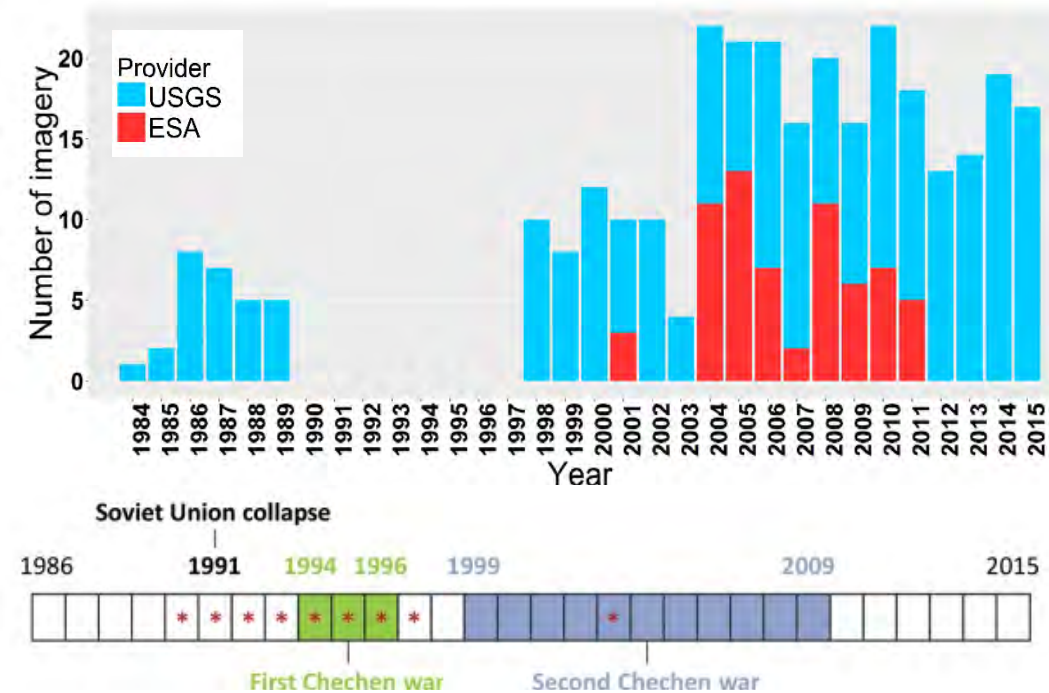
Land-Cover and
Land-Use Change Program

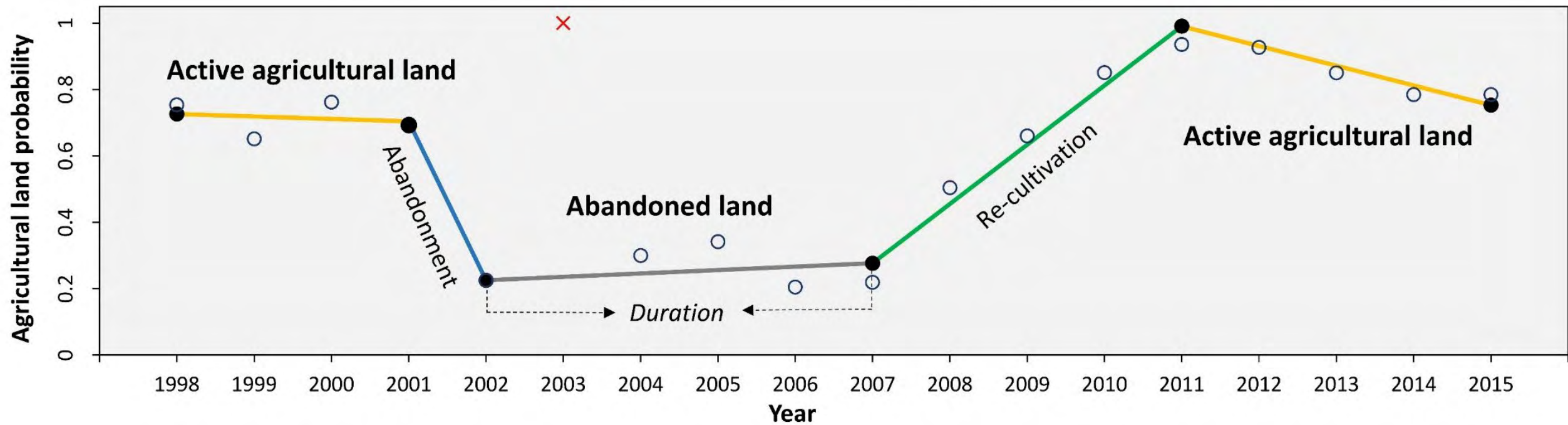
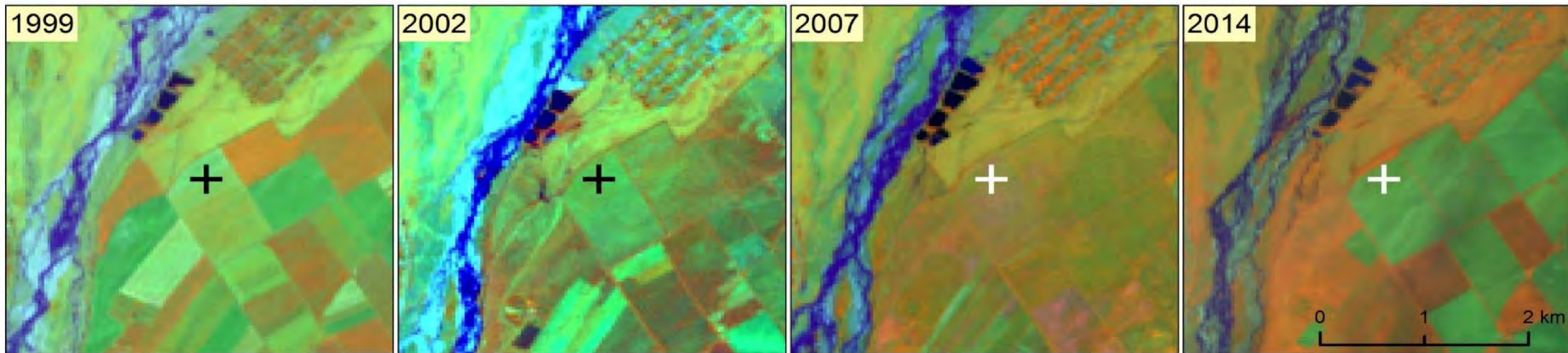


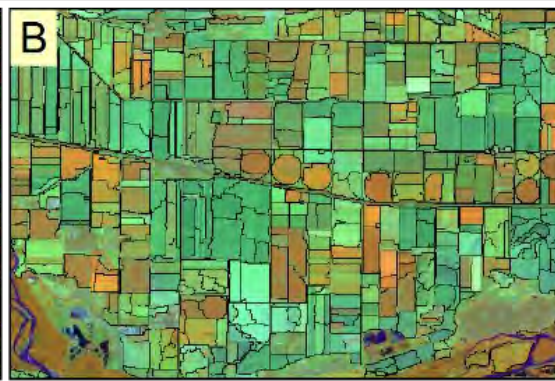
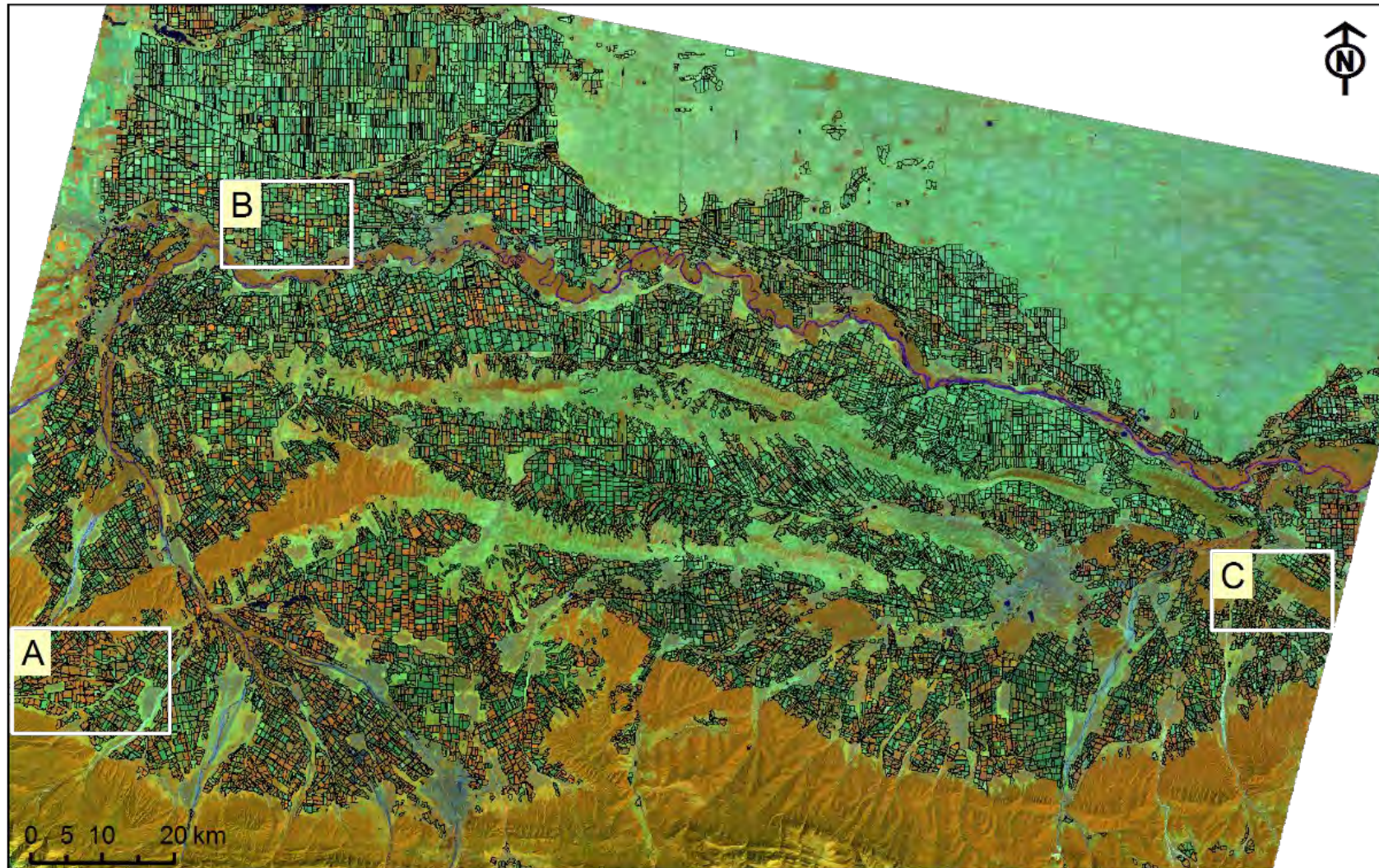


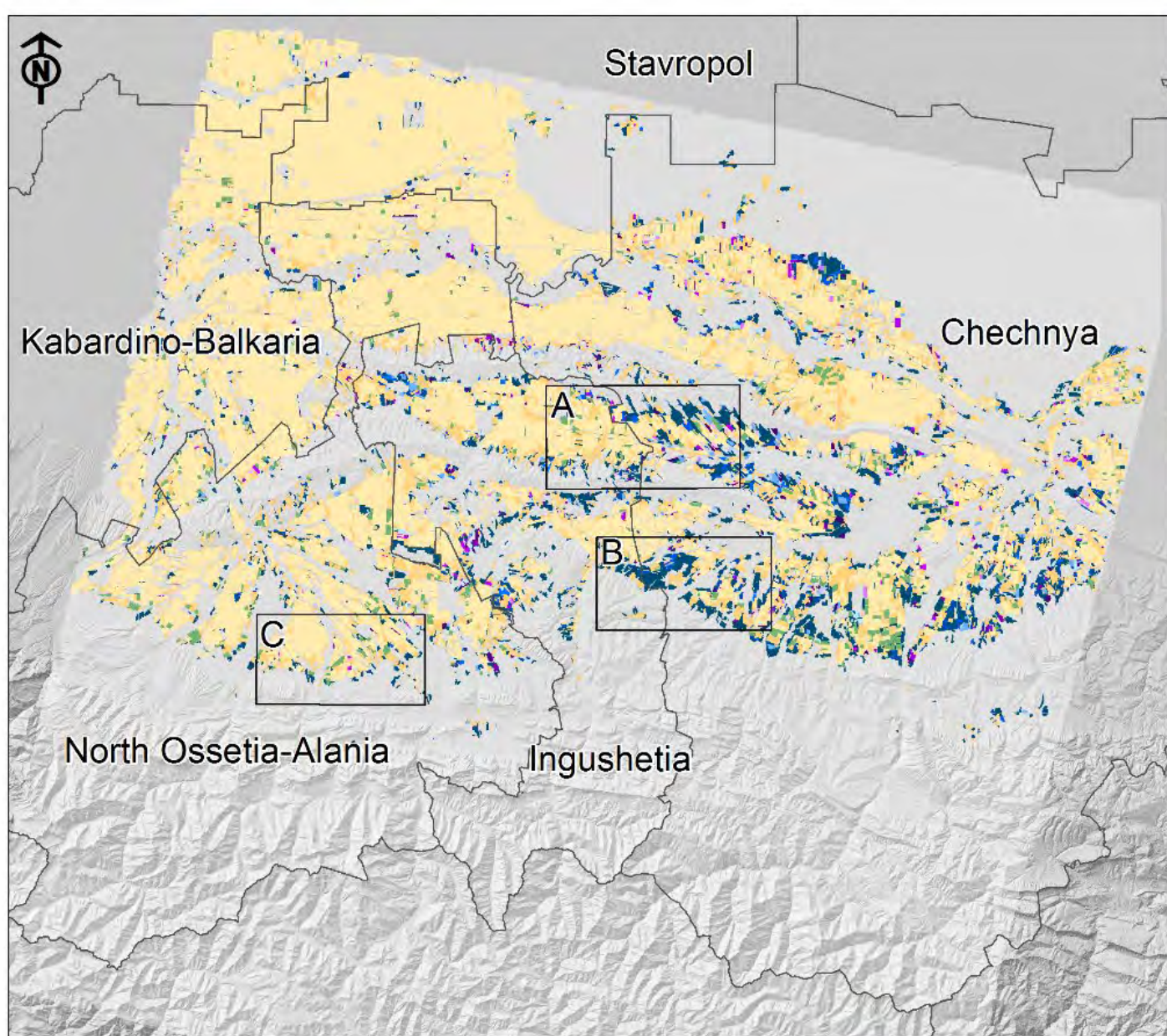


- 
- An aerial photograph of a rural landscape in Chechnya. The foreground shows a dry, brownish field with some scattered debris and a small pile of stones. In the middle ground, there is a road with a white car and some buildings. The background is a vast, hazy landscape with more buildings and distant hills. A semi-transparent white text box is overlaid on the middle of the image, containing two bullet points.
- Land use effects of the 1994-'96 & '99-2002 wars in Chechnya
 - Comparison of the effects of all four post-soviet wars







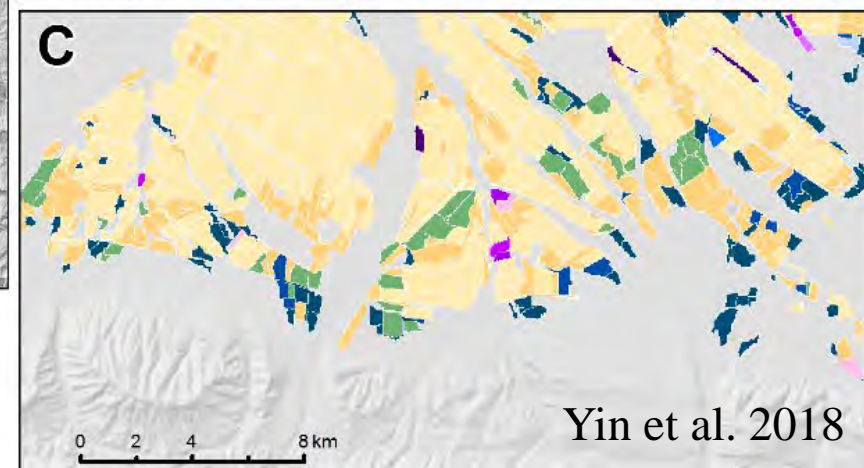
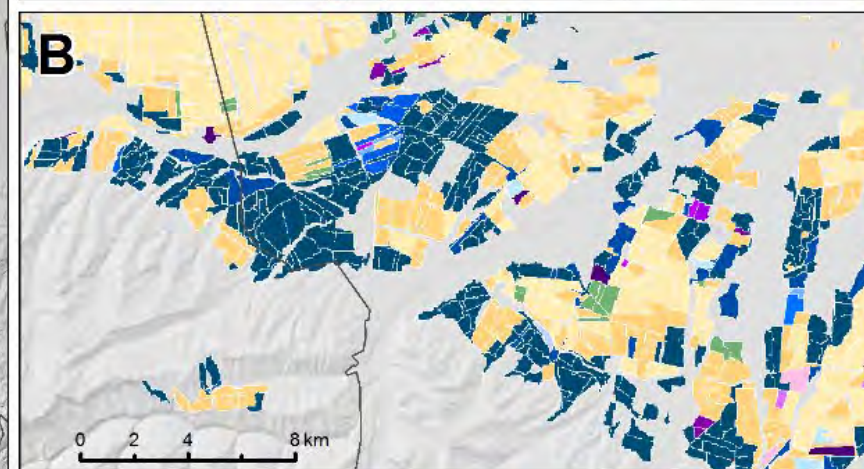
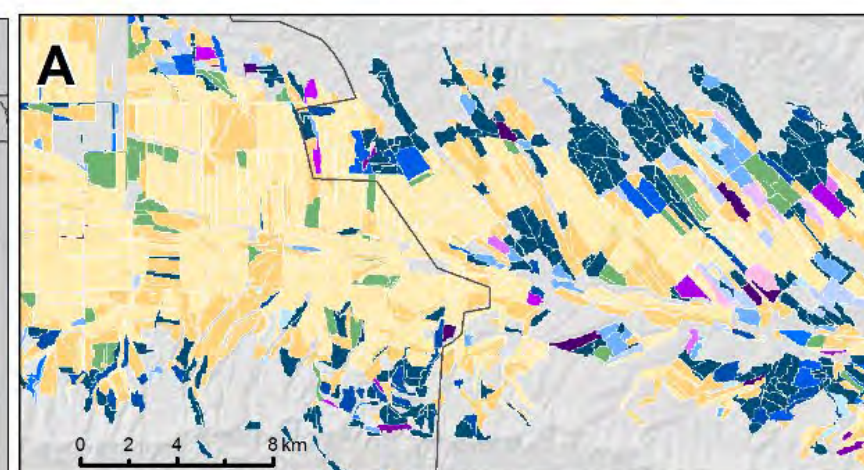


Land abandonment

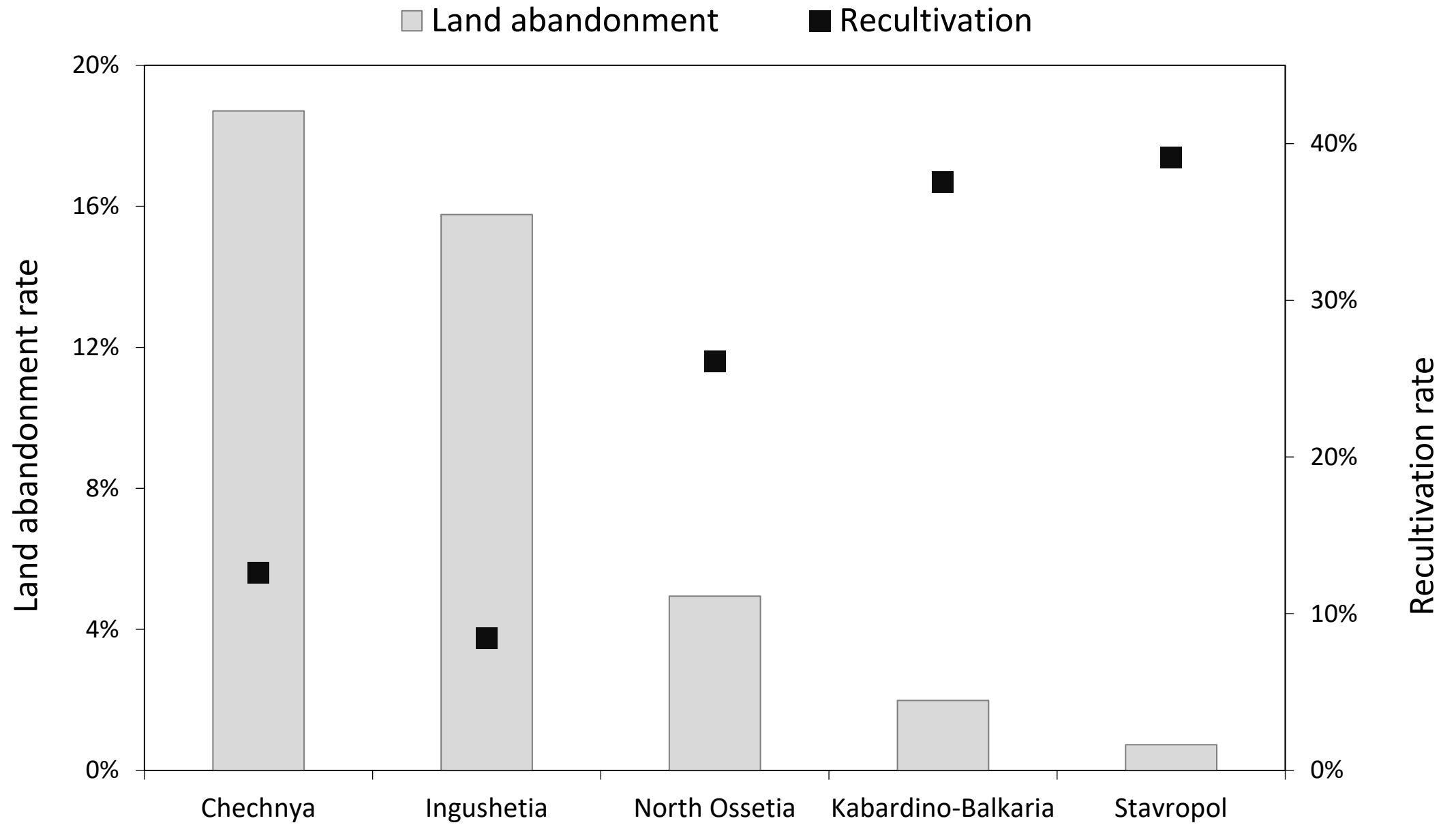
1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011

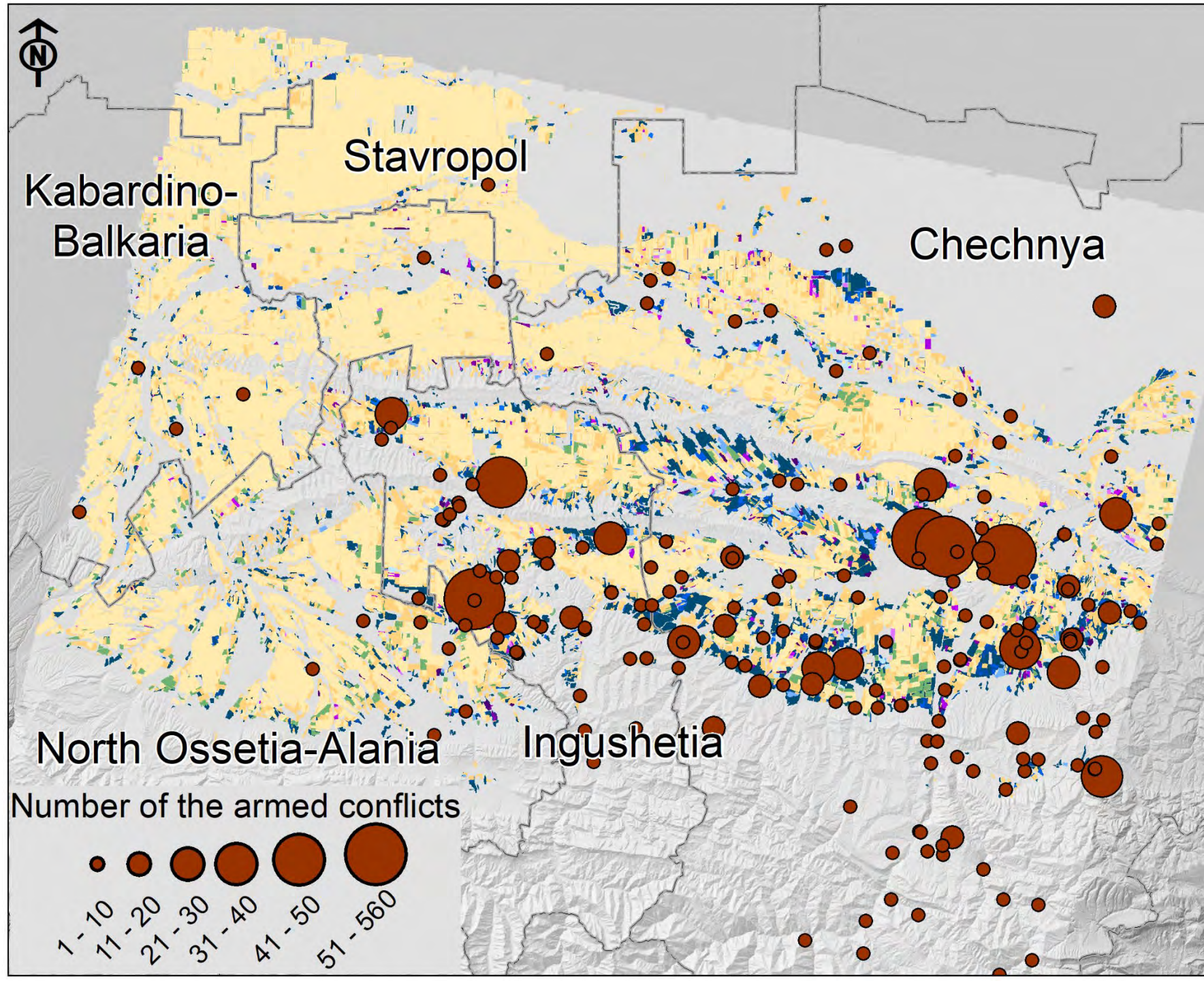
0 10 20 40 km

Stable agricultural land
Recultivation
Fallow Others

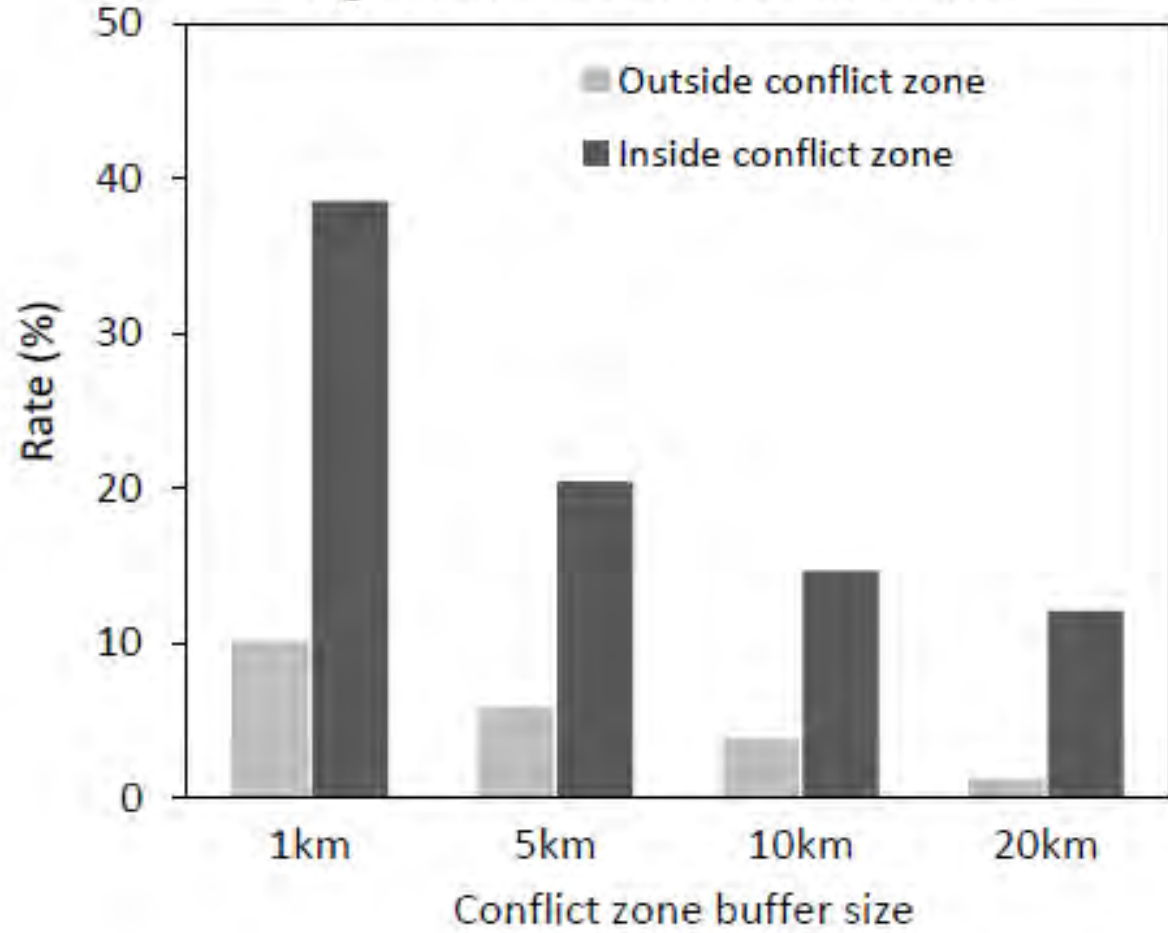


Yin et al. 2018

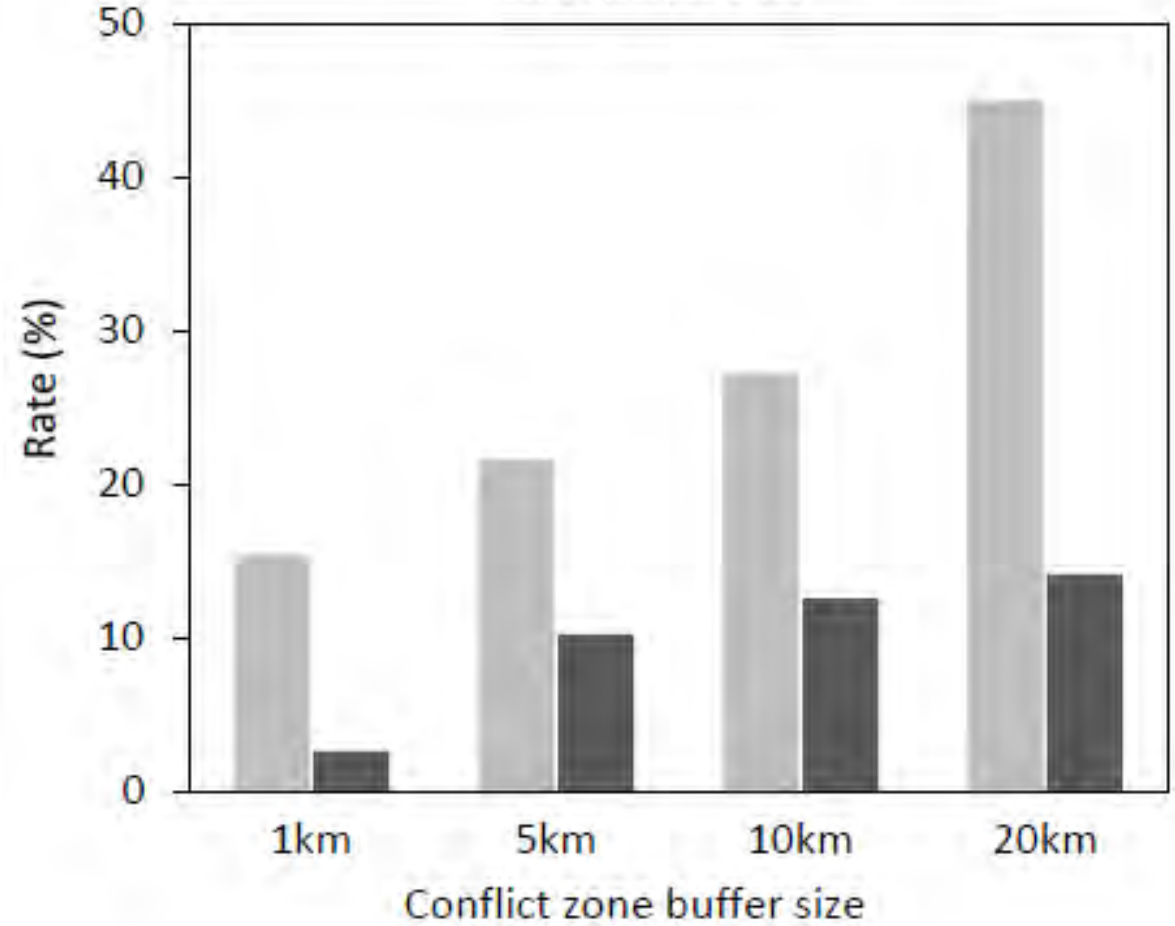




Agricultural land abandonment



Recultivation



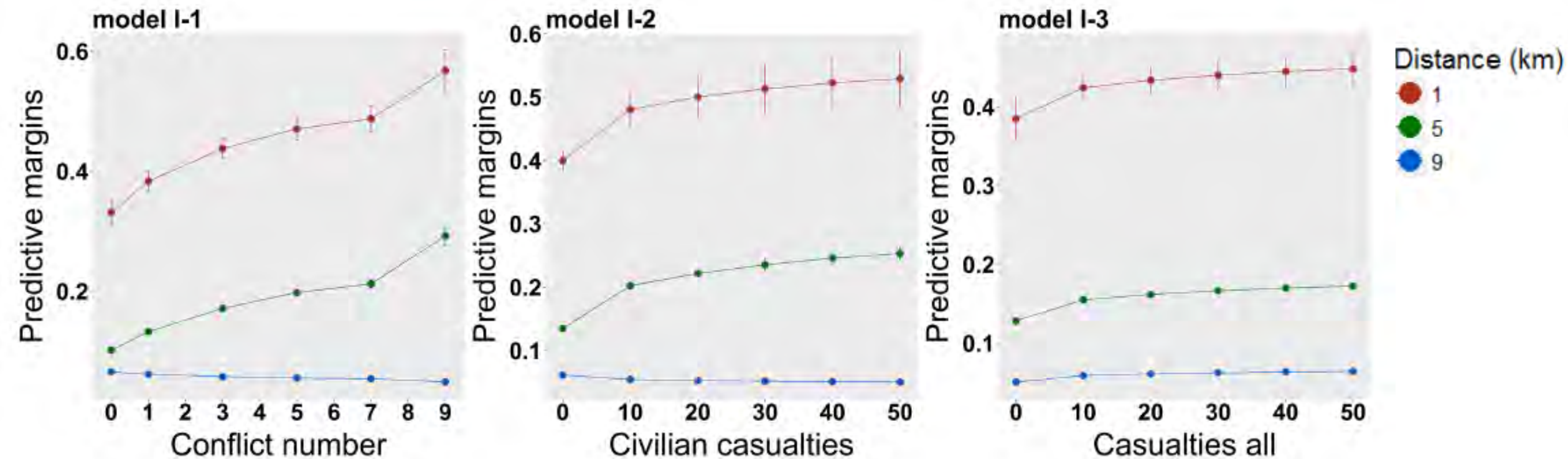
Response variates

Control covariates

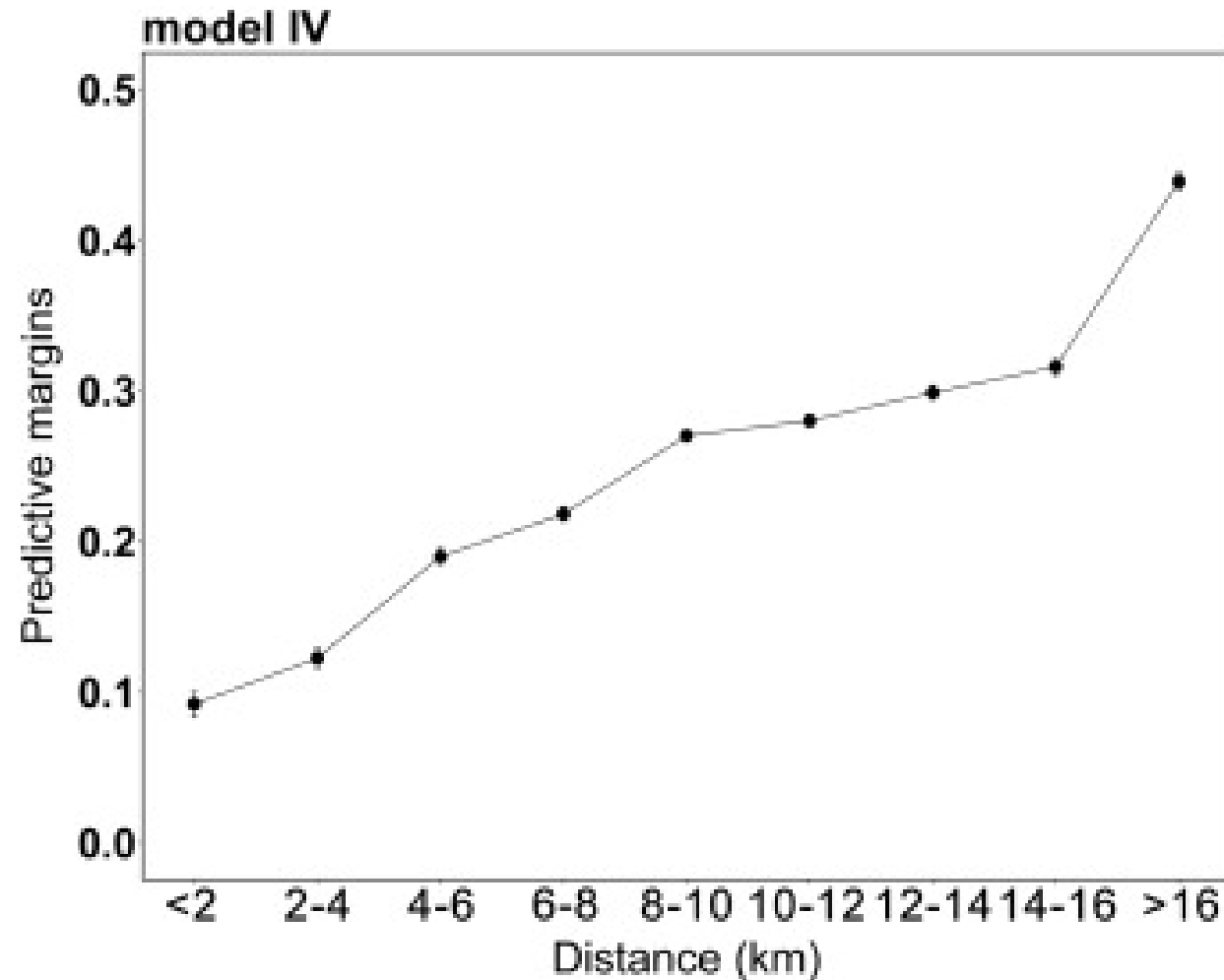
Covariates


Model No.	Model type	Abandonment	Re-cultivation	Elevation	Slope	Soil organic matter	Distance to settlement	Distance to river	Distance to road	Region	Longitude	Latitude	Distance to conflict event	Conflict event Number	Civilian casualties	Total casualties	Period
I-1	logit																1989-1998
I-2	logit																1989-1998
I-3	logit																1989-1998
II-1	fixed effects																1999-2012
II-2	fixed effects																1999-2012
II-3	fixed effects																1999-2012
III-1	random effects																1999-2012
III-2	random effects																1999-2012
III-3	random effects																1999-2012
IV	random effects																1999-2012


Abandonments are more likely in the areas close to the conflicts



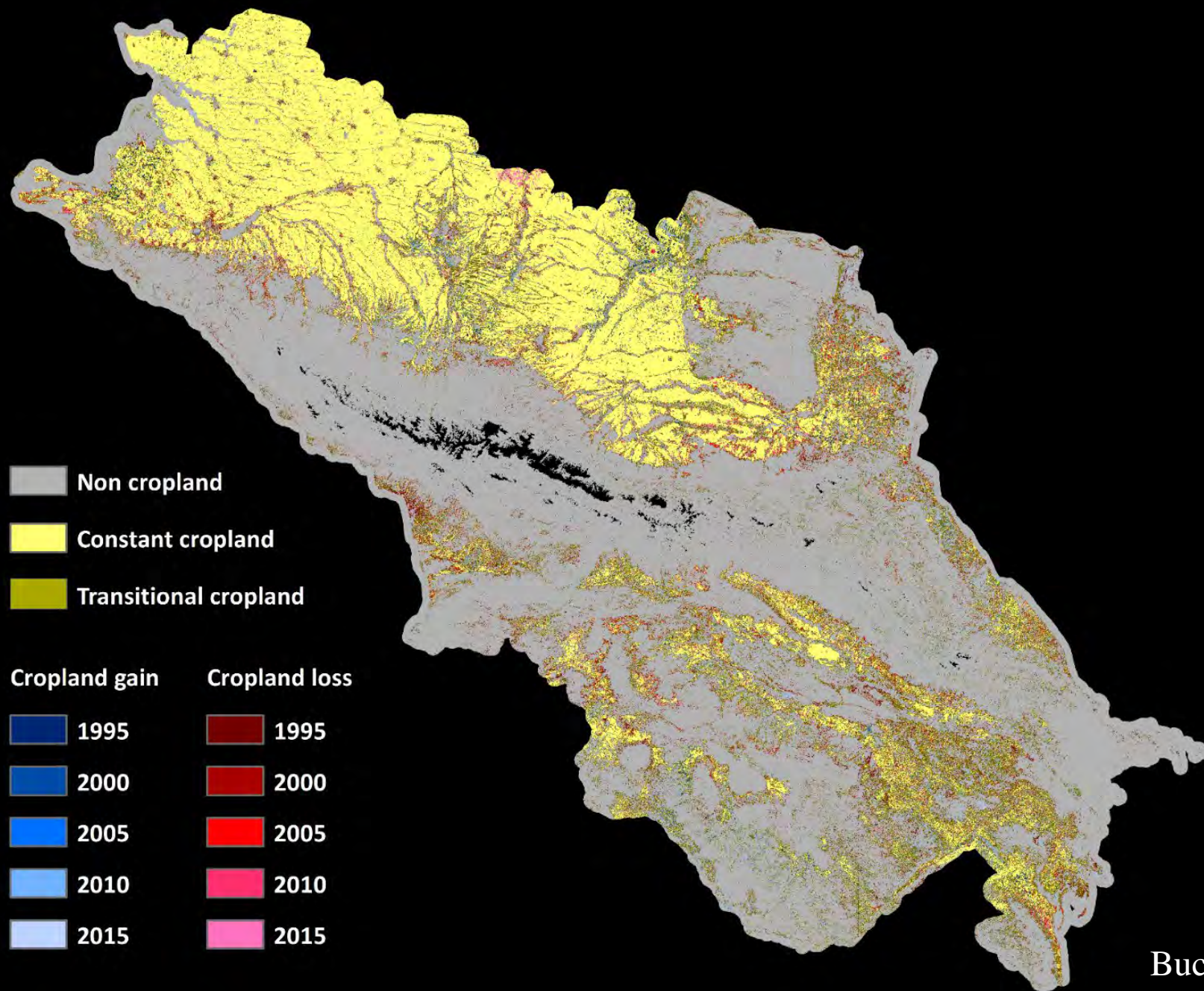
Recultivation are less likely in the areas close to the conflicts

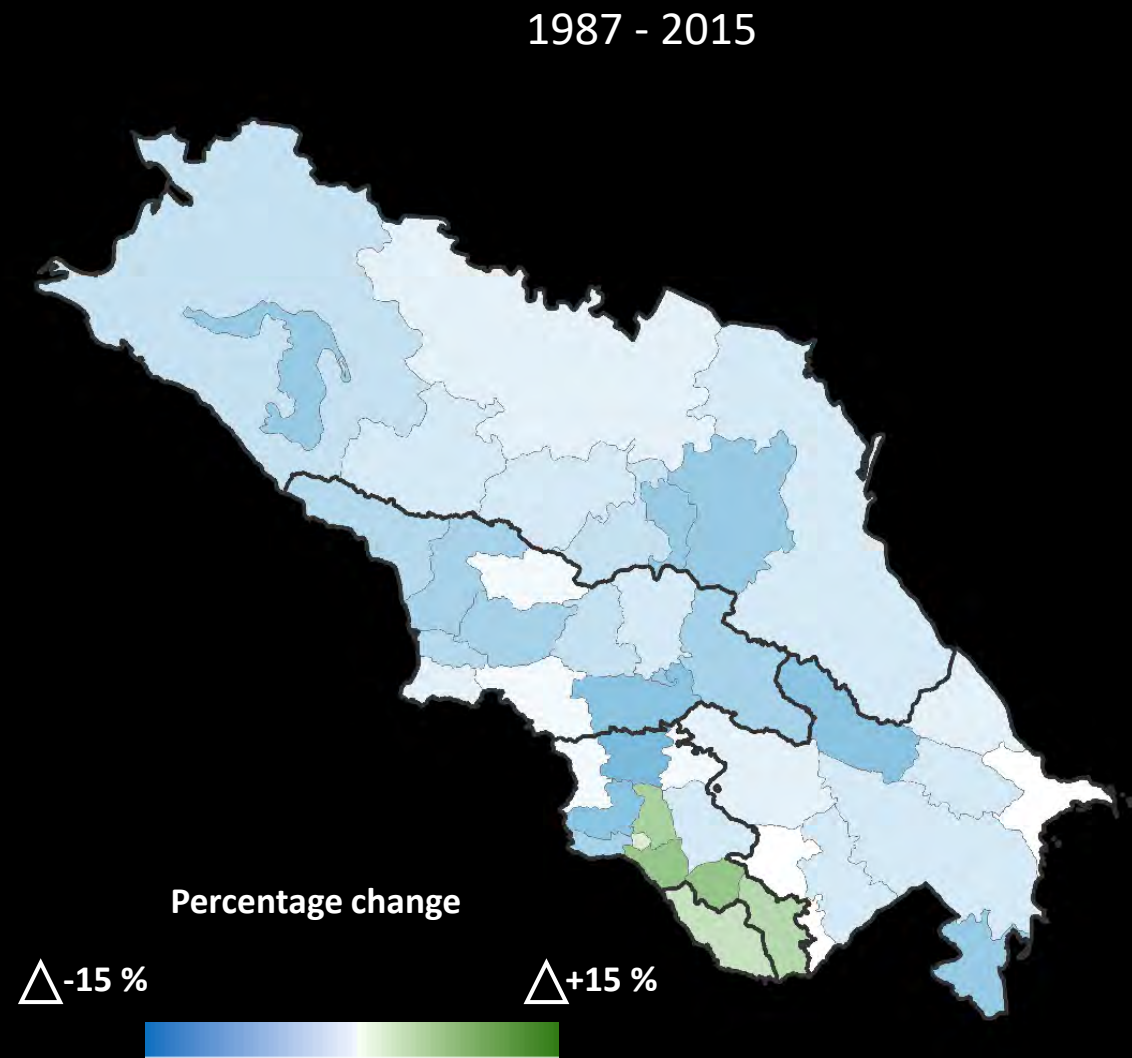
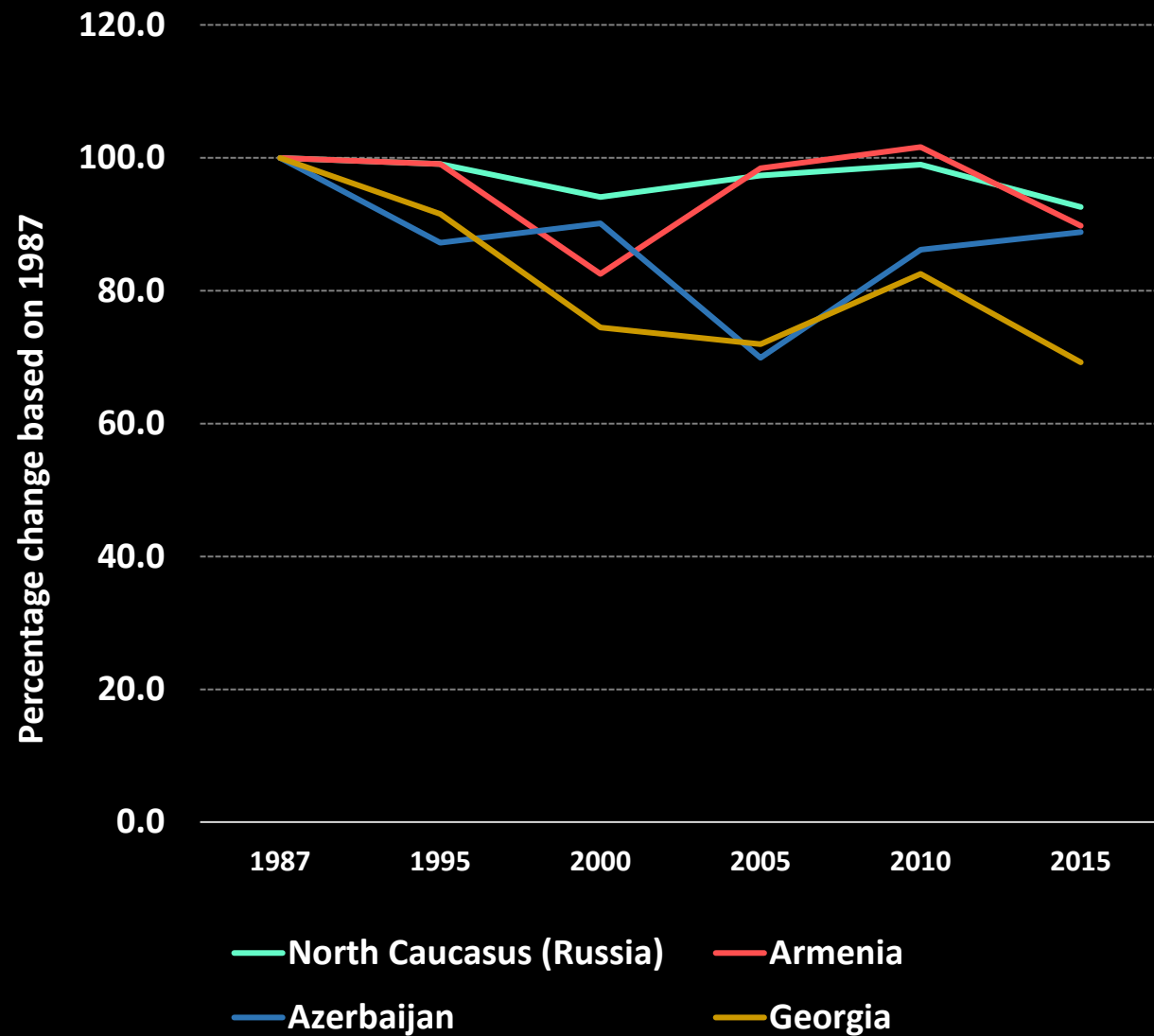


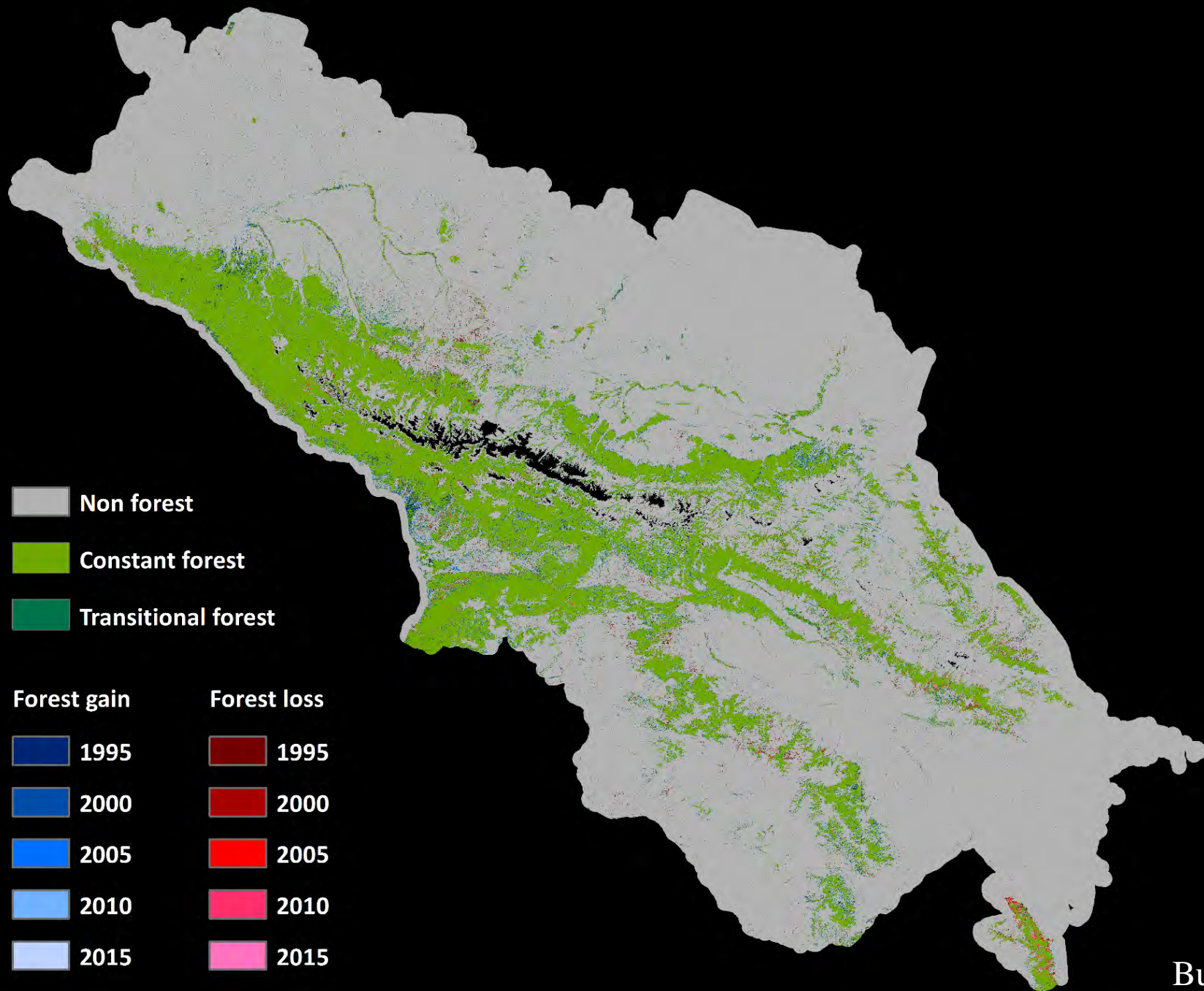
- 
- The background image is a composite. The top half shows a wide, hazy aerial view of a rural landscape with a small village in the distance. The bottom half shows a close-up of a dry, brown field with a low stone wall in the foreground. A semi-transparent white box containing a bulleted list is centered over the image.
- Spatial-temporal segmentation supports better cropland mapping
 - Spatial and temporal-variations in agricultural land use
 - Agricultural land abandonment was related to the Chechen Wars

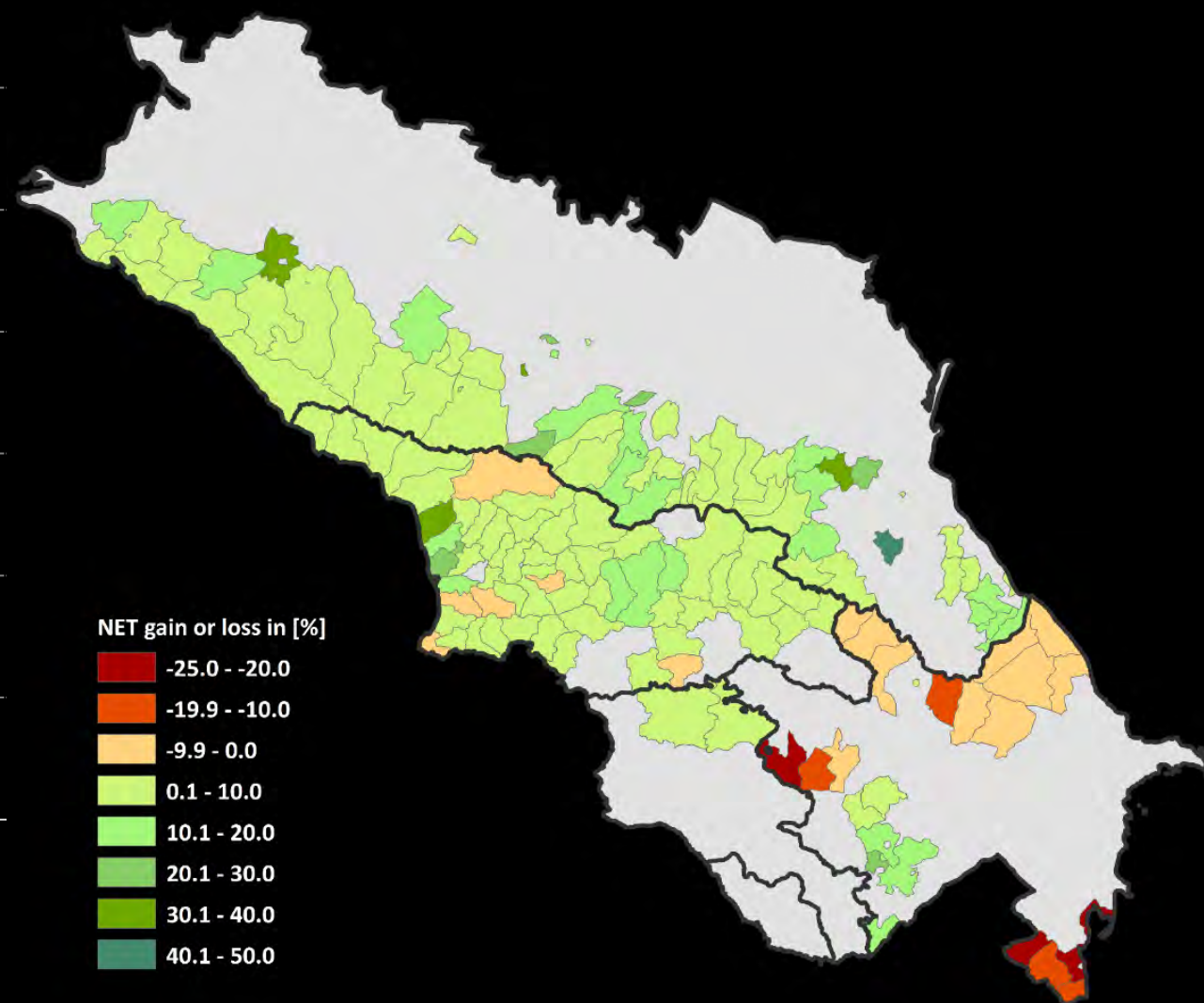
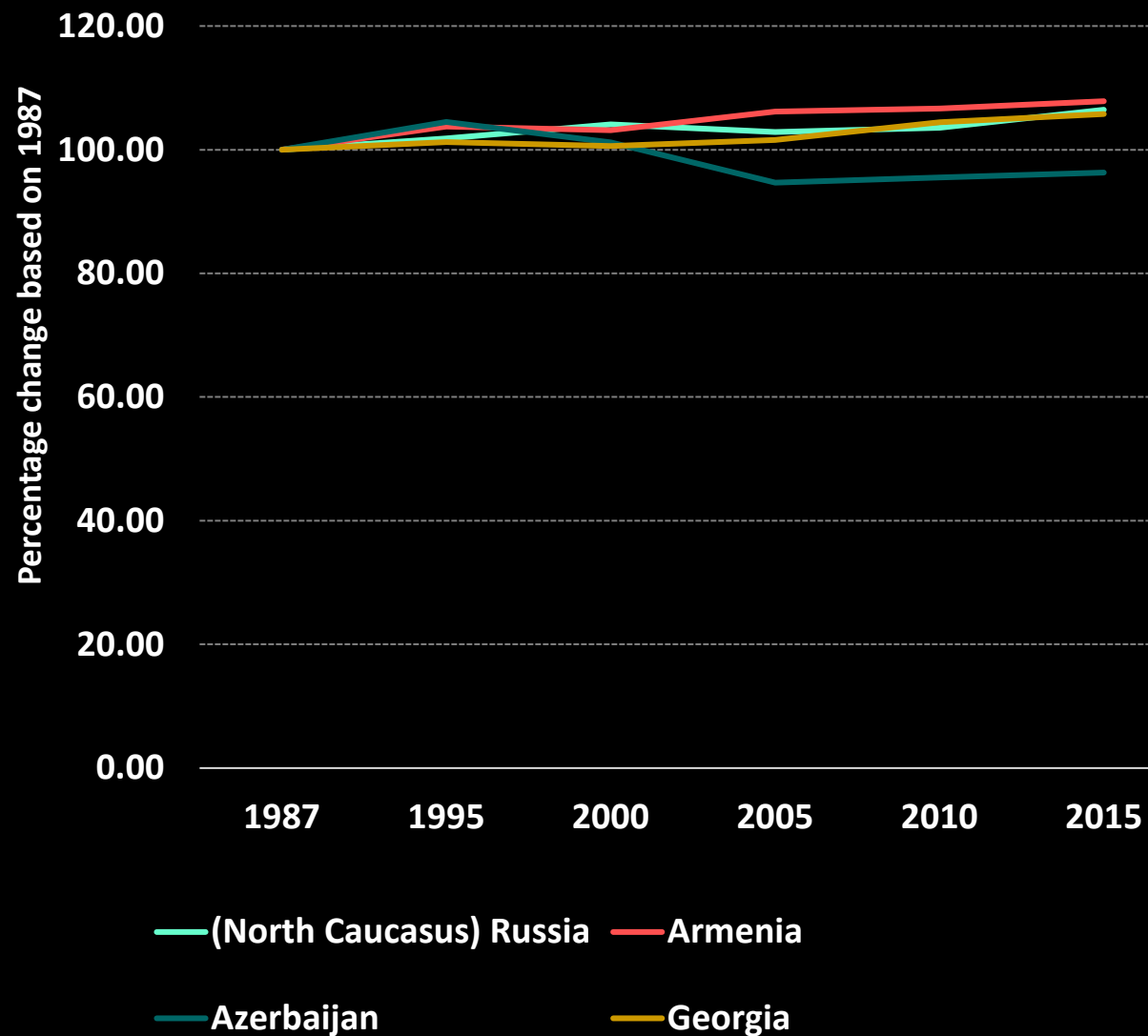
- 
- Comparison of the land use effects of all four post-soviet wars. We predicted that:
 - the Chechen wars affected land use most, and
 - that multiple conflict events have additive effects



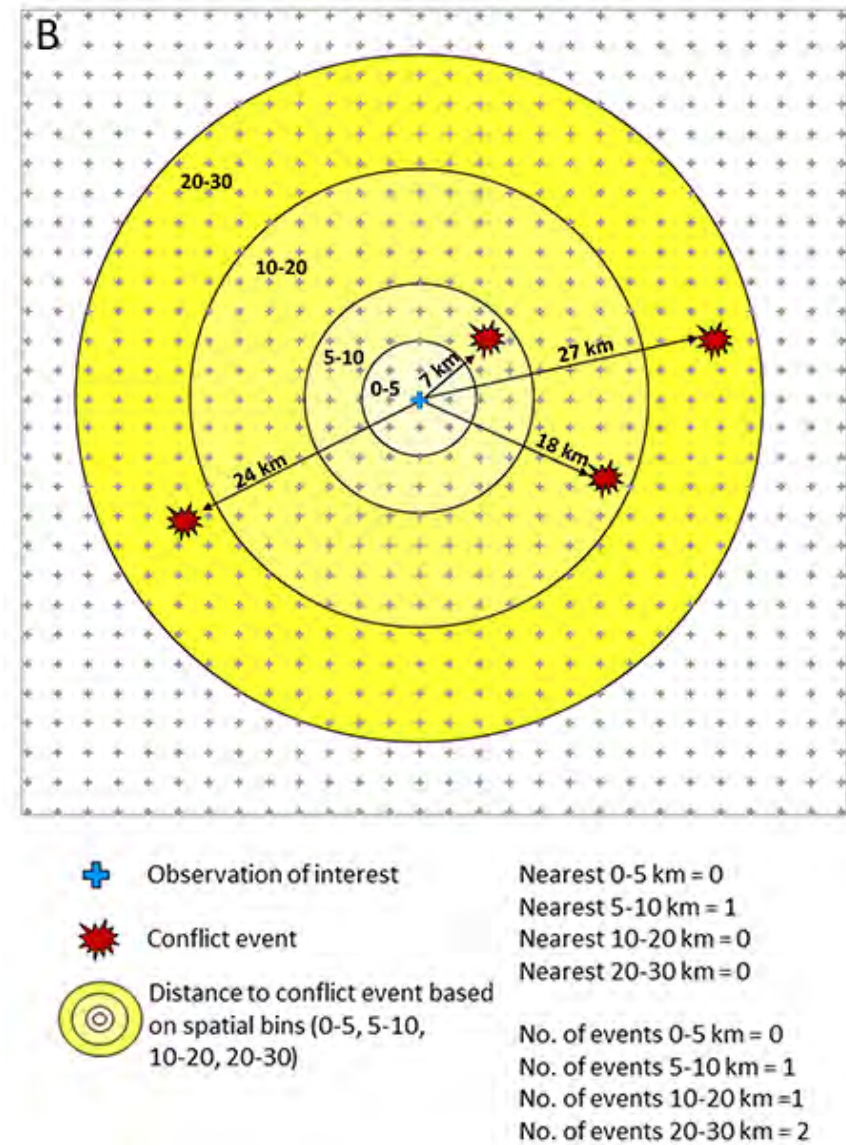
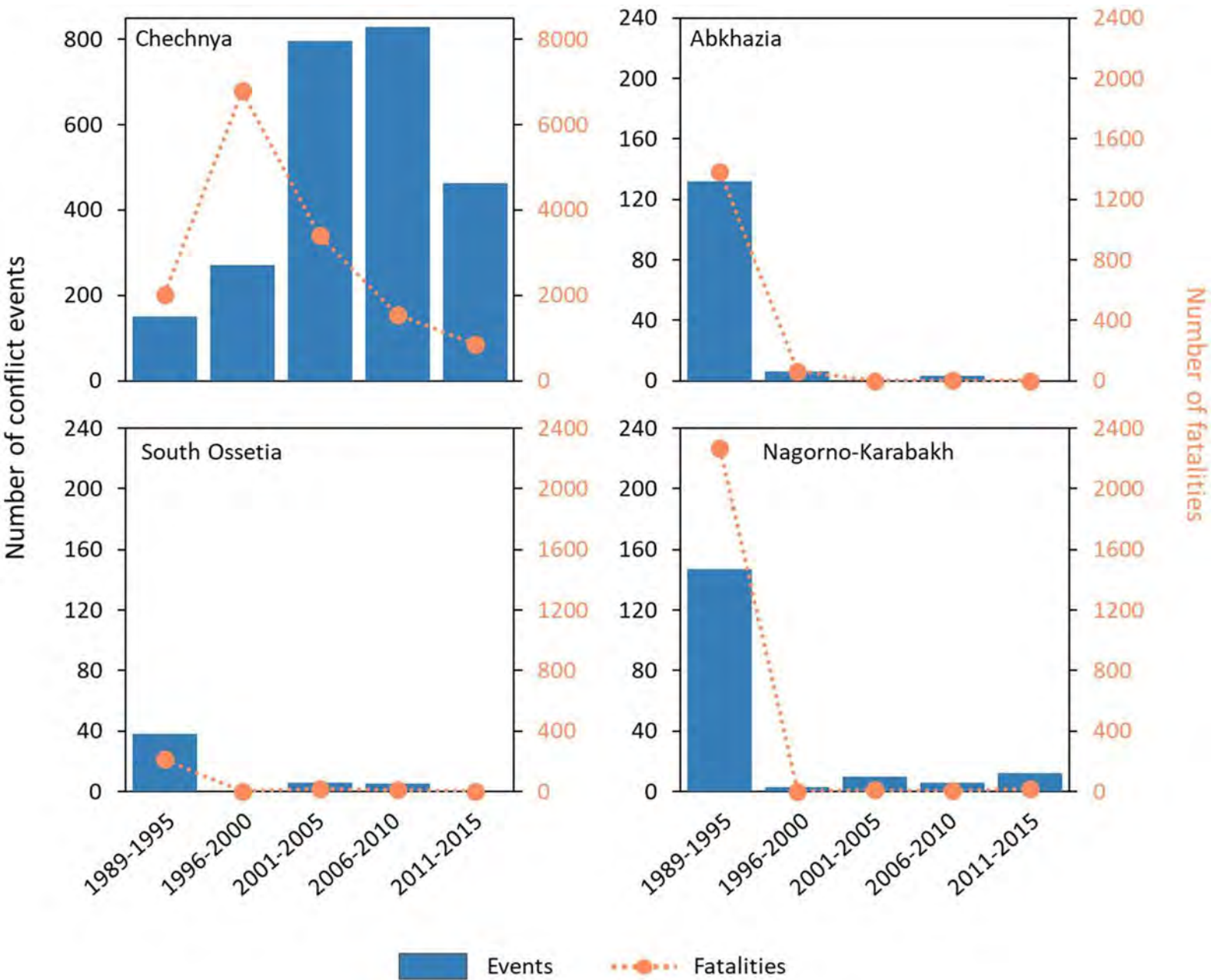




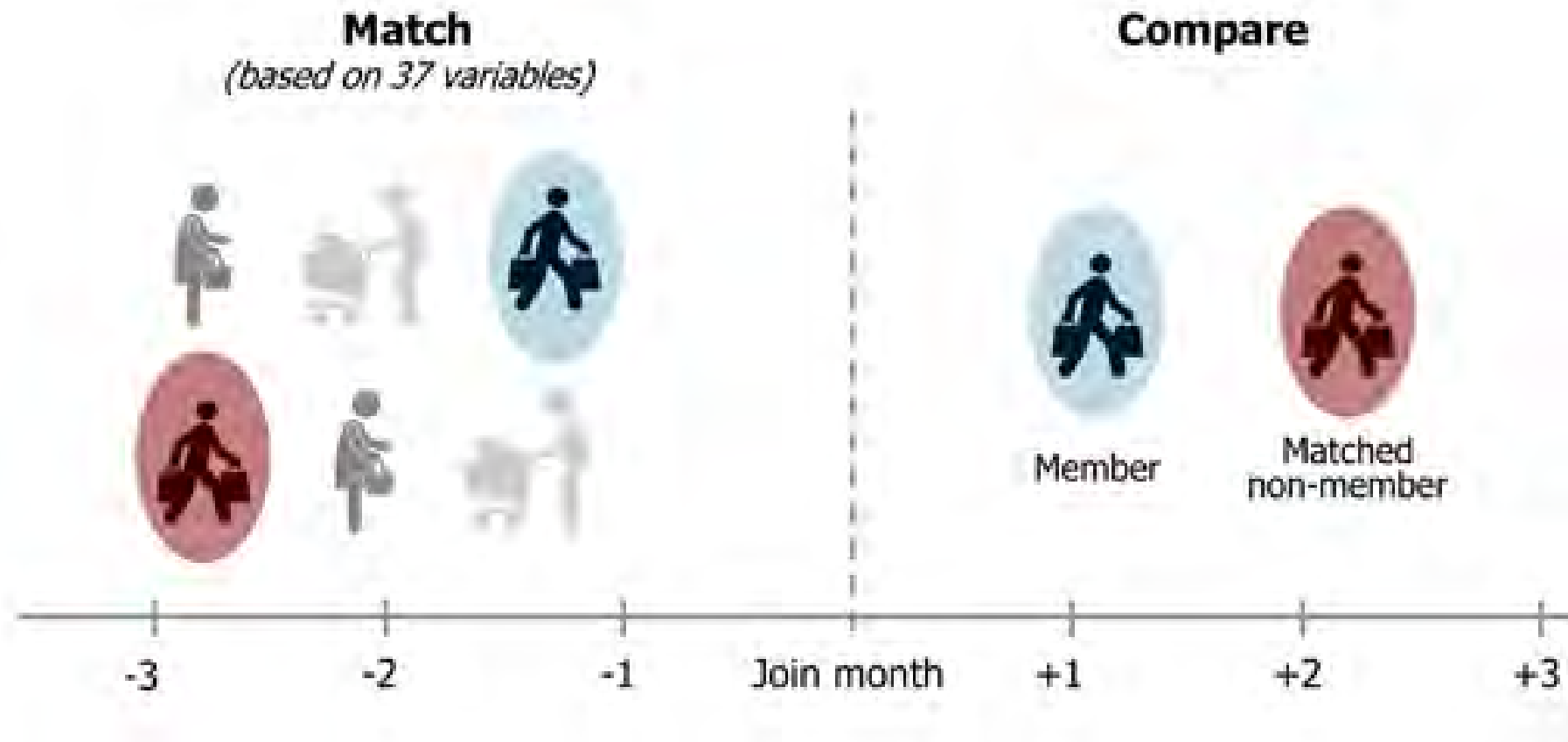




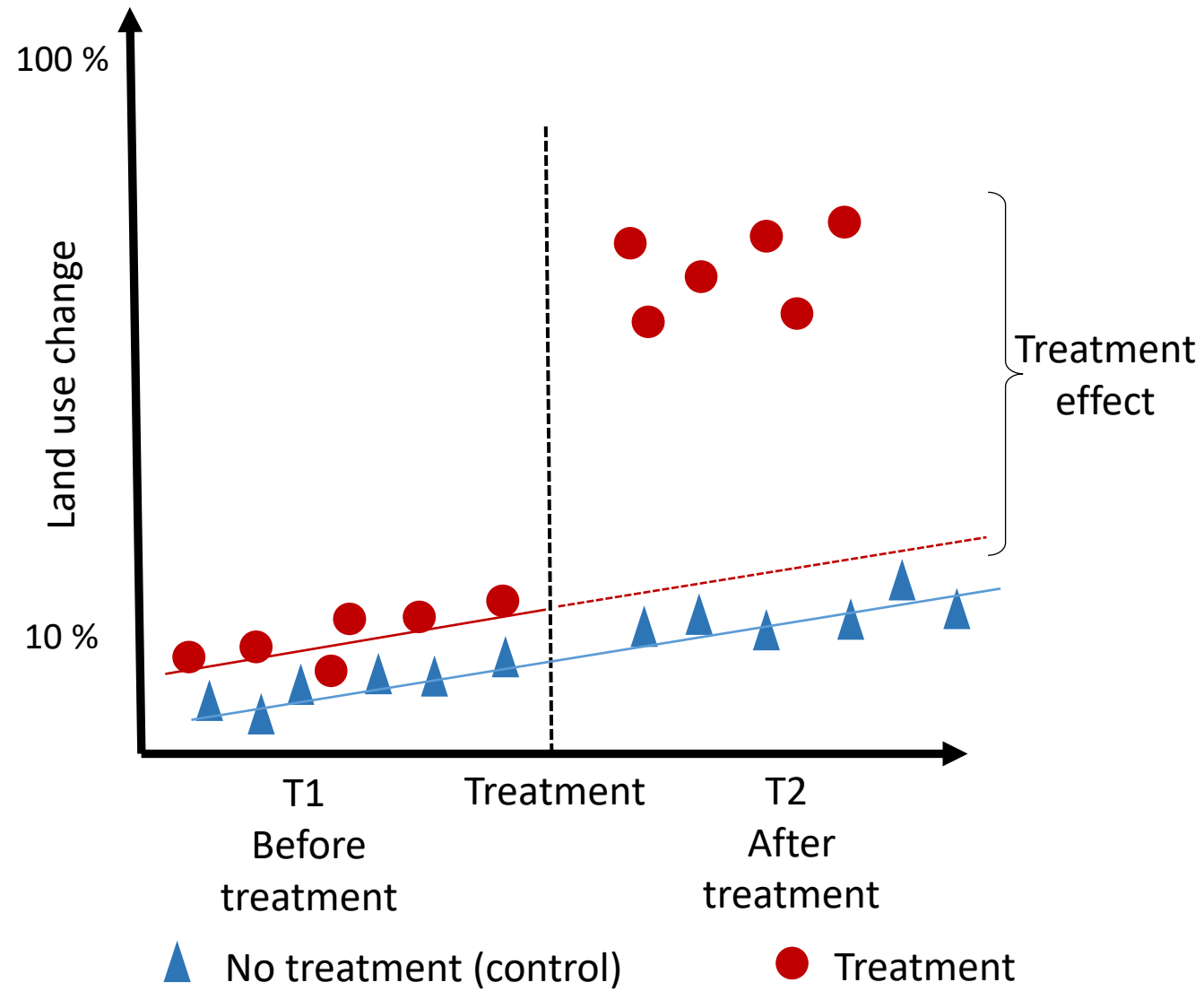
Methods



Methods



Matching



Difference-in-differences (DiD)

Credit: Buchner

Methods

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{it} = & \beta_1 * nearest_{0-5km\ it} + \beta_2 * I_{0-5km\ it} + \beta_3 * nearest_{0-5km\ it} * I_{0-5km\ it} + \\ & \beta_4 * nearest_{5-10km\ it} + \beta_5 * I_{5-10km\ it} + \beta_6 * nearest_{5-10km\ it} * I_{5-10km\ it} + \\ & \beta_7 * nearest_{10-20km\ it} + \beta_8 * I_{10-20km\ it} + \beta_9 * nearest_{10-20km\ it} * I_{10-20km\ it} + \\ & \beta_{10} * nearest_{20-30km\ it} + \beta_{11} * I_{20-30km\ it} + \\ & \beta_{12} * nearest_{20-30km\ it} * I_{20-30km\ it} + \beta_{13} * C_i + \beta_{14-23} * X_{it} + \\ & \beta_{24} * C_i * X_{it} + \beta_{25} * Year_{it} + e_{it} \end{aligned}$$

Y_{it} is cropland abandonment (1), or not (0), for observation i in time period t ,

$nearest_{it}$ is a dummy variable indicating if conflict location within defined distances (0-5, 5-10, 10-20, and 20-30 km) is nearest (1), or not (0),

I_{it} is the intensity measure, i.e., the number of conflict events or number of total fatalities, of observation i in time period t ,

$nearest_{it} * I_{it}$ is the interaction term between $nearest_{it}$ and I_{it} ,

C_i is a categorical variable indicating the country,

X_{it} is the vector of control variables,

$C_i * X_{it}$ is the interaction term between Country and the control variables,

$Year_{it}$ is a categorical variable indicating the time step,

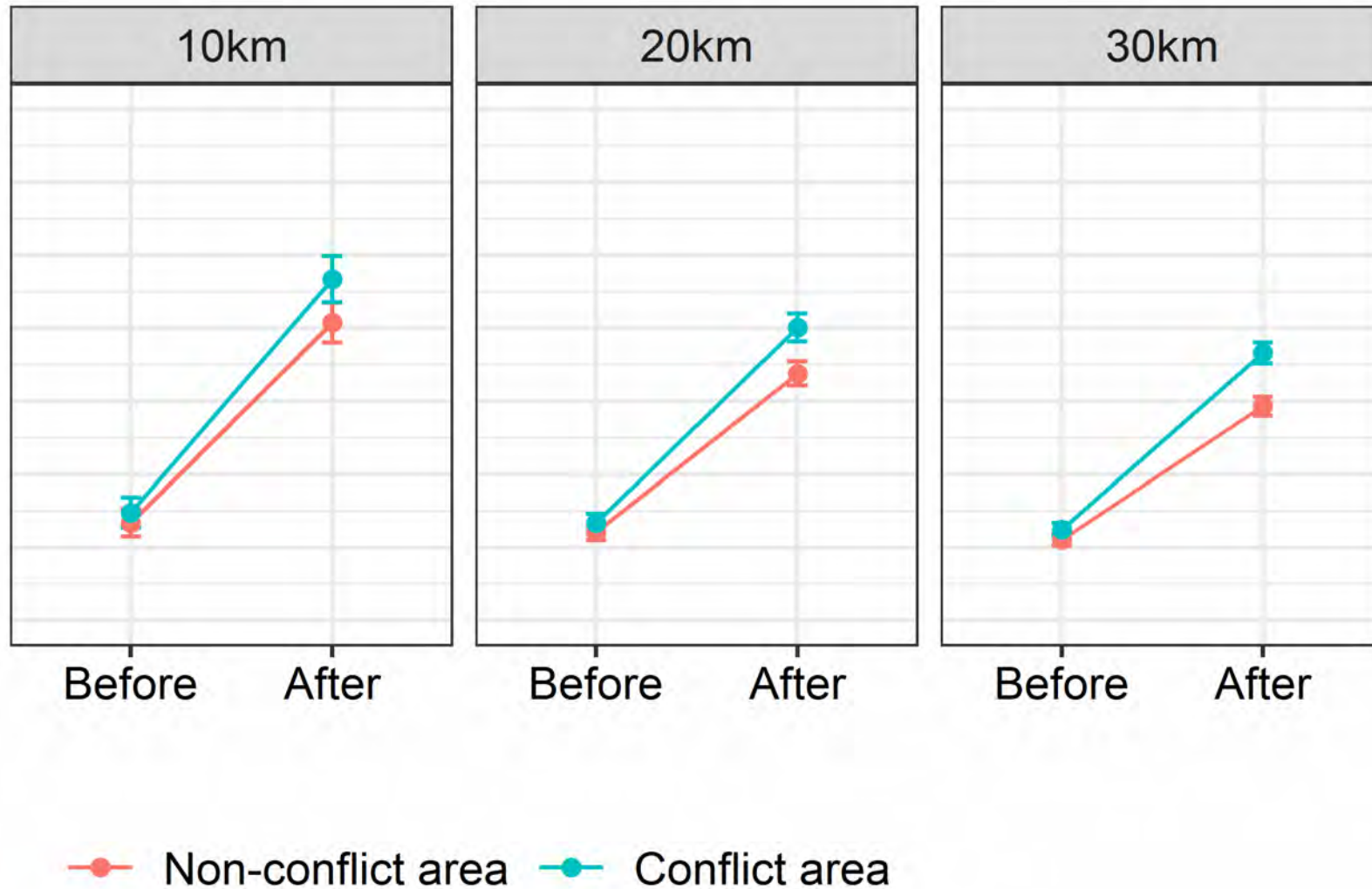
β_1 - β_{25} are the coefficients to be estimated,

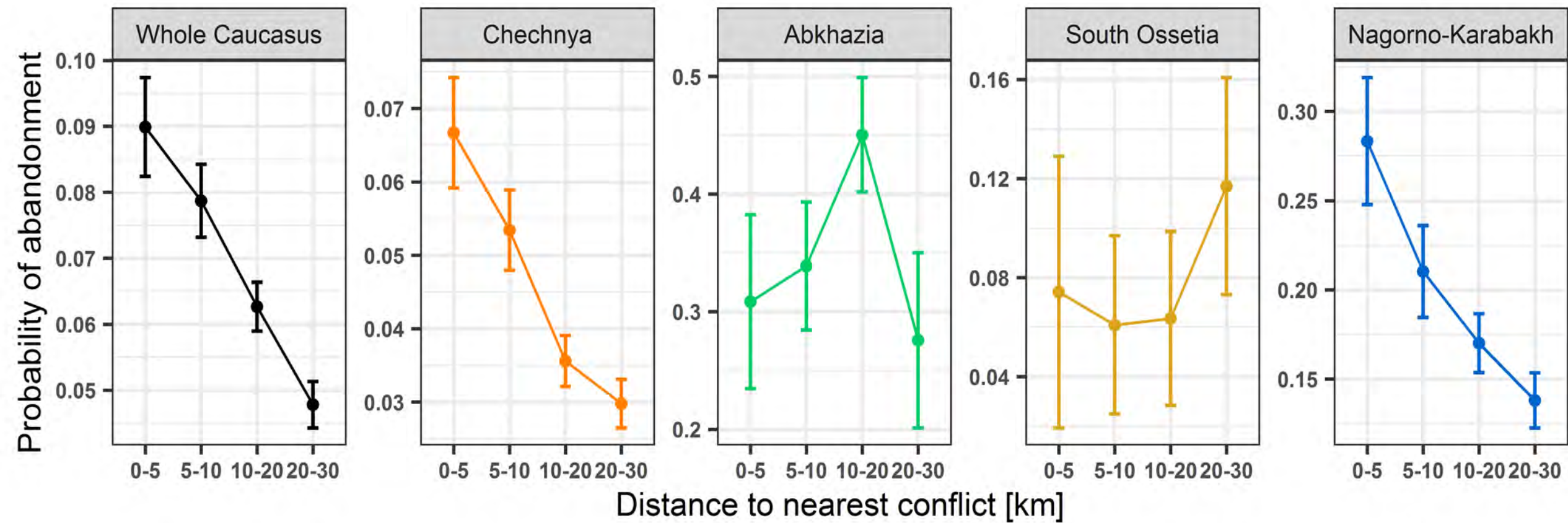
and e_{it} is the error term

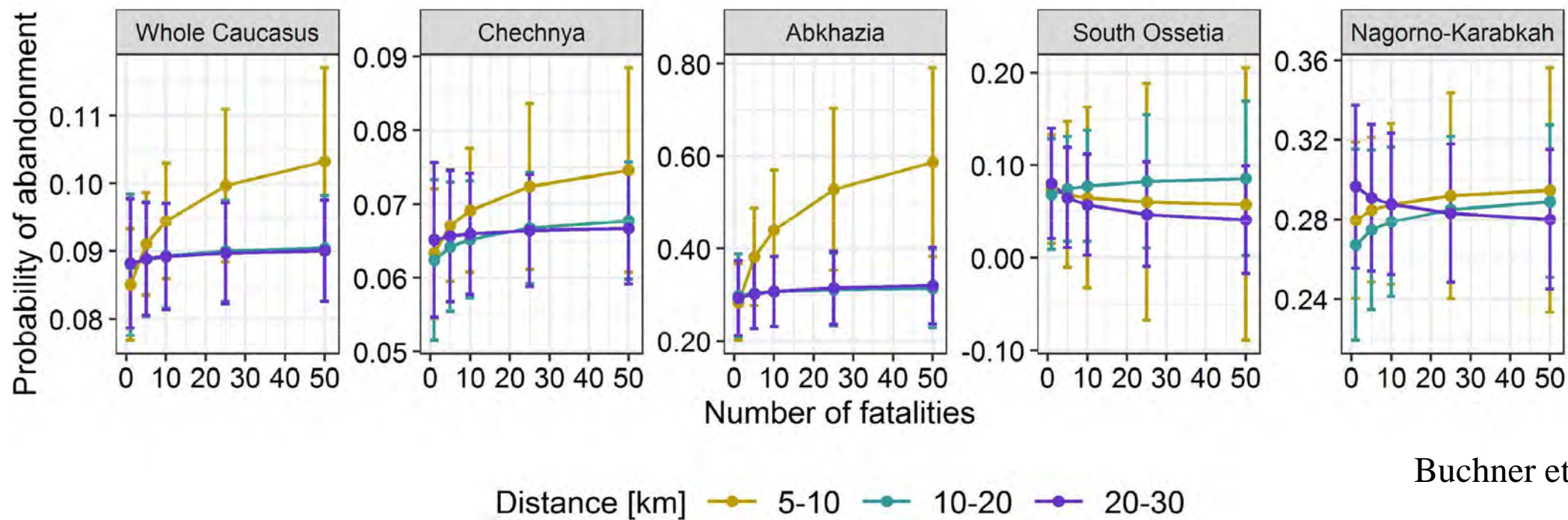
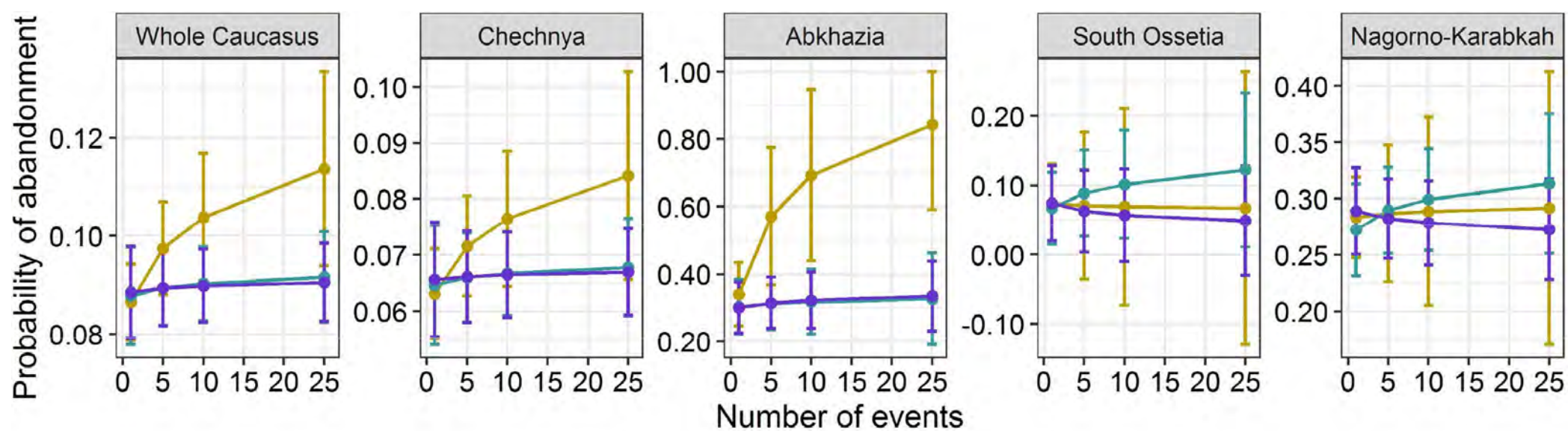
Results – overall effect on abandonment

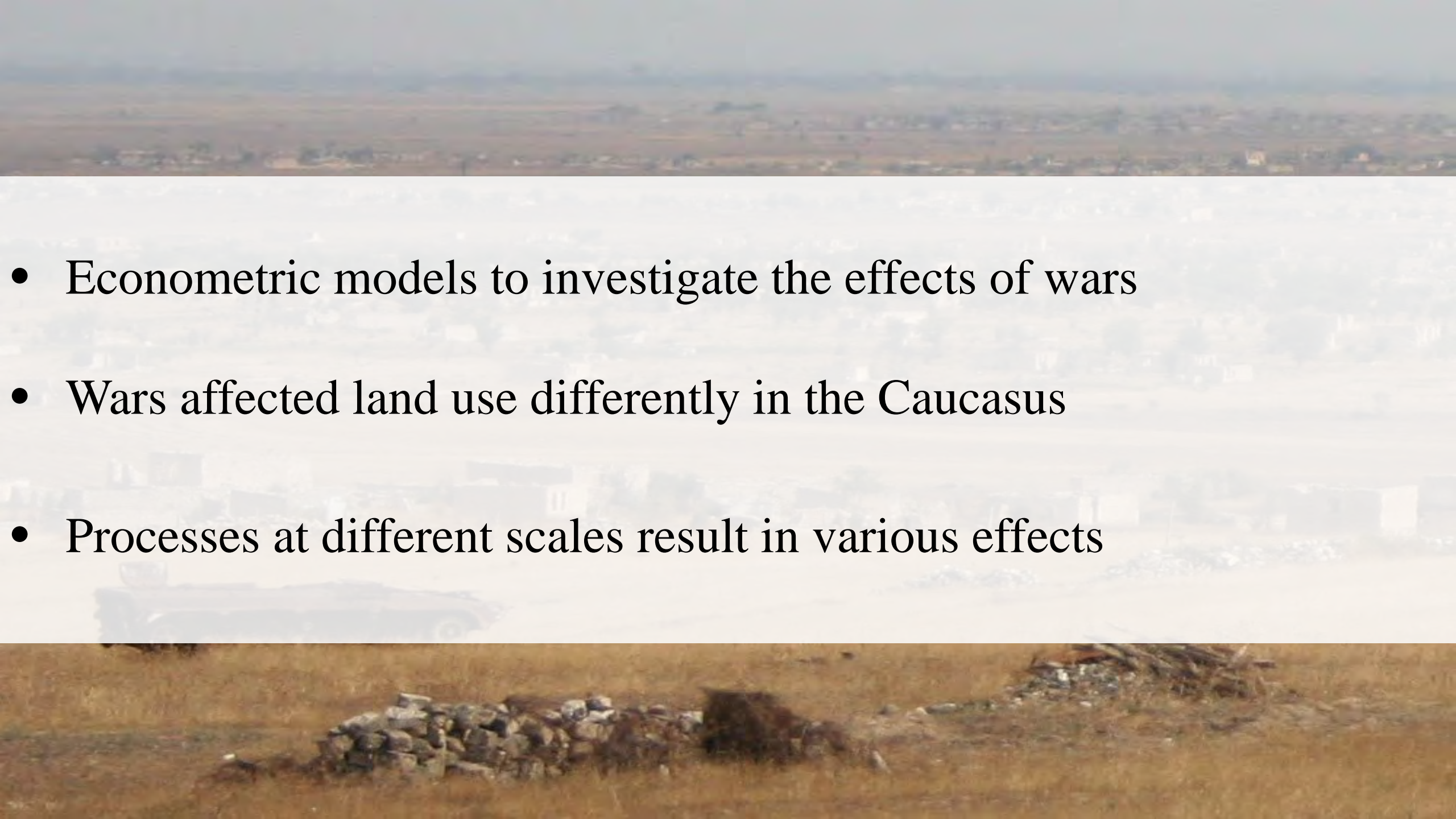
	Marginal effect (Percent change in abandonment)	
	10 km	30 km
All four wars	15.8	27.3
Chechnya	46.5	38.7
Abkhazia	19.0	45.1
South Ossetia	50.0	-7.1
Nagorno-Karabakh	-64.4	-39.7

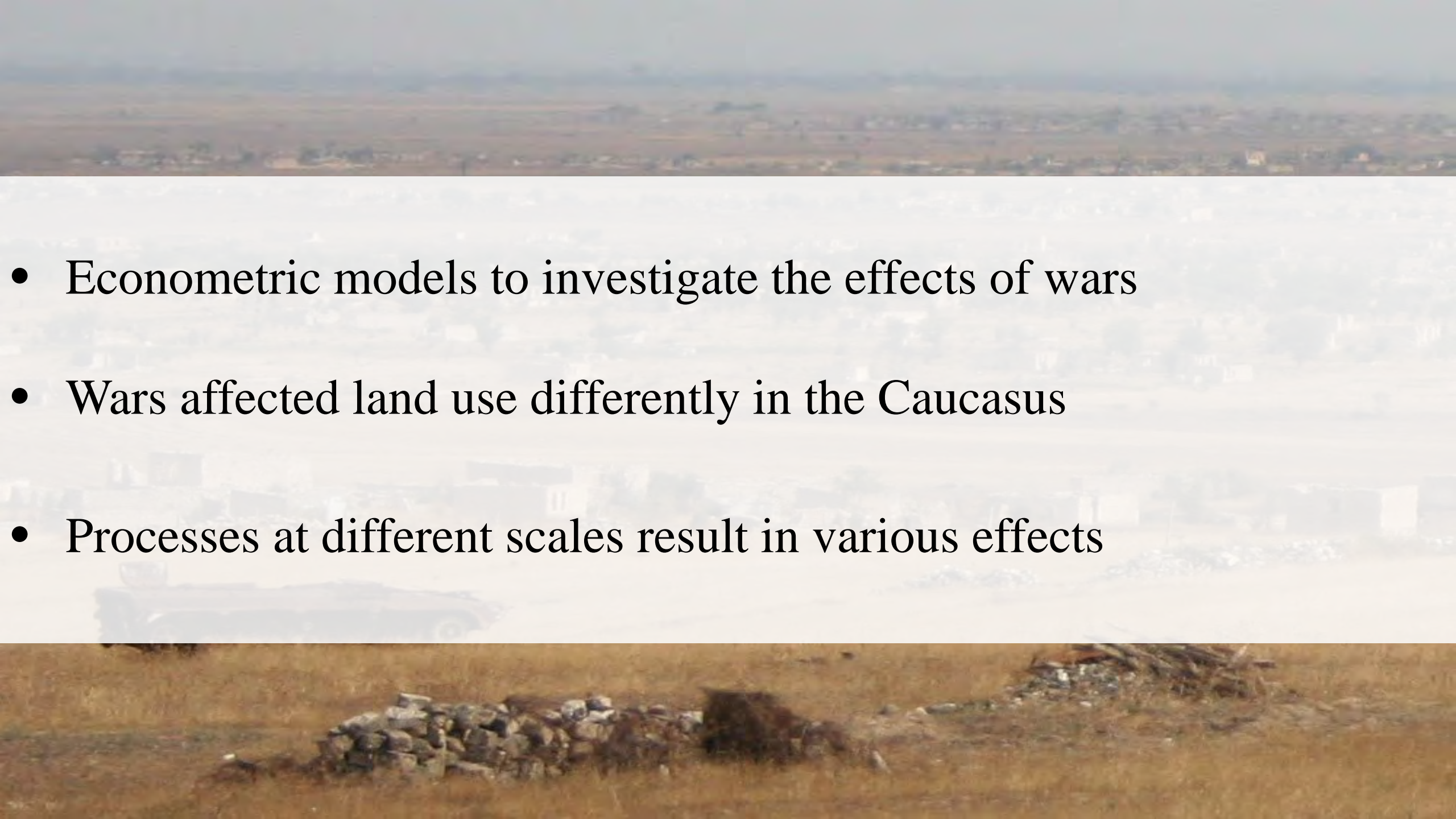
Results – overall effect on abandonment







- 
- Econometric models to investigate the effects of wars
 - Wars affected land use differently in the Caucasus
 - Processes at different scales result in various effects

- 
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 - Wars affected land use differently in the Caucasus
 - Processes at different scales result in various effects

Effects of the Syrian Civil War on cropland in the Mediterranean region

The New (Early Career) Investigator
Program (NIP) in Earth Science





Forces



Syrian Arab Republic



Hezbollah



Iran



Russia (2015–present)



Iraq (2017–2019)



Interim Government



Turkey (2016–present)



Salvation Government



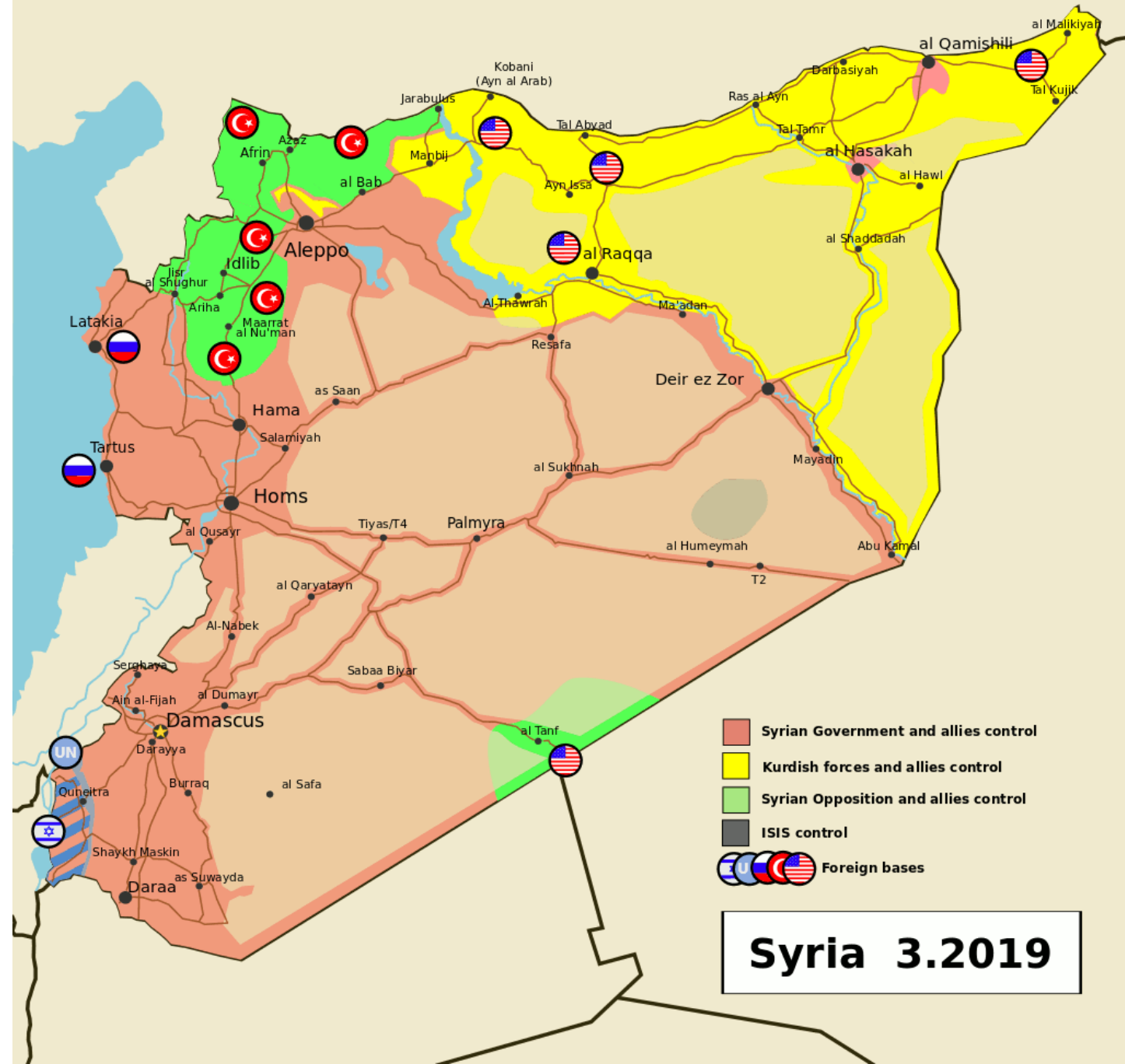
Islamic State (2013–present)

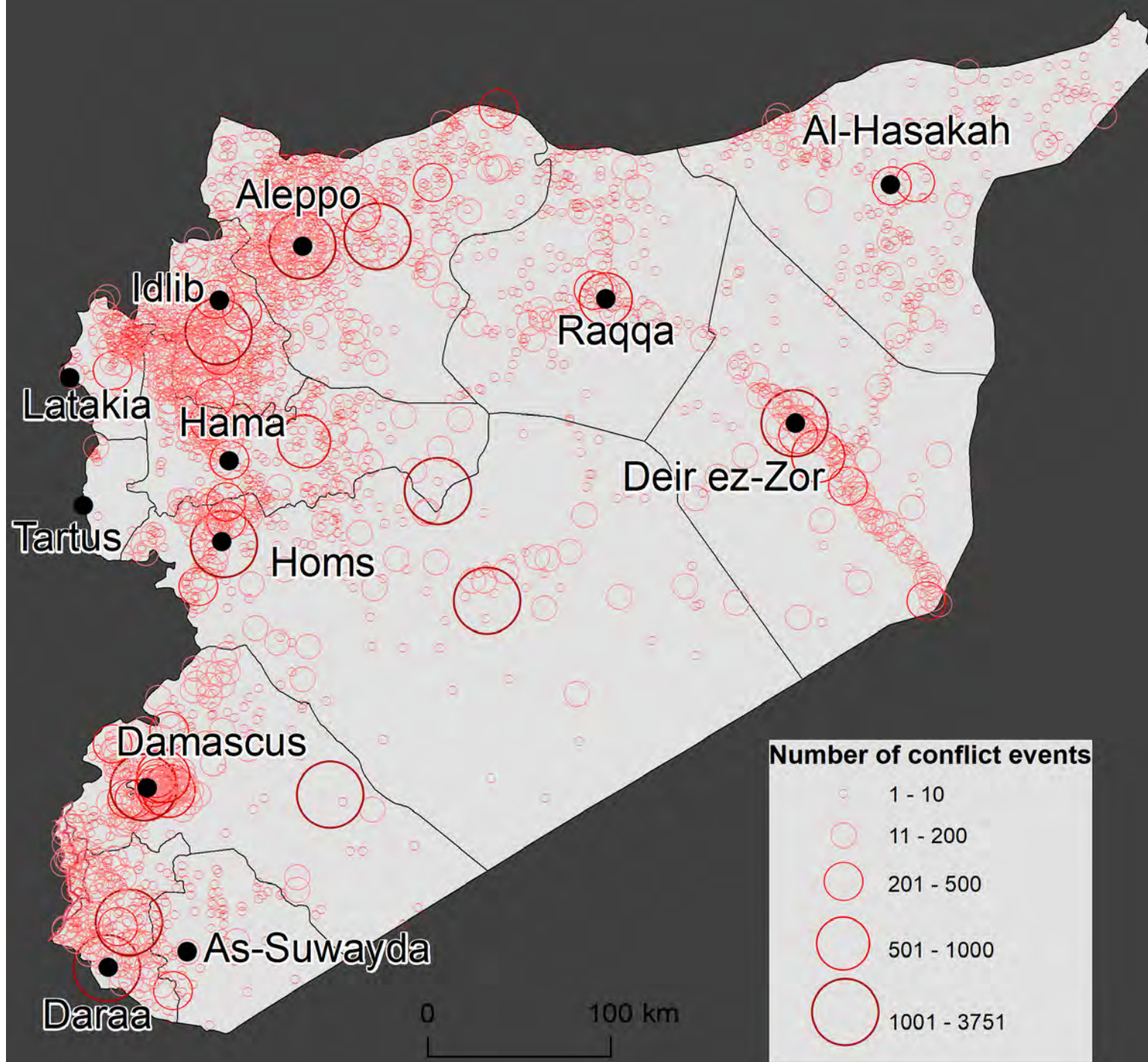


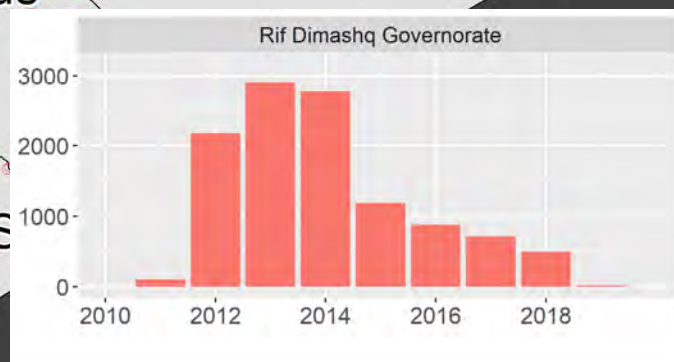
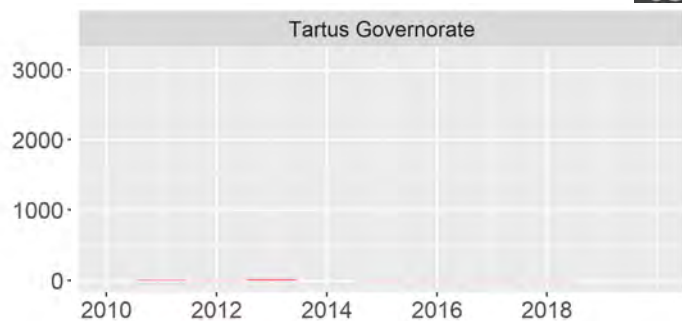
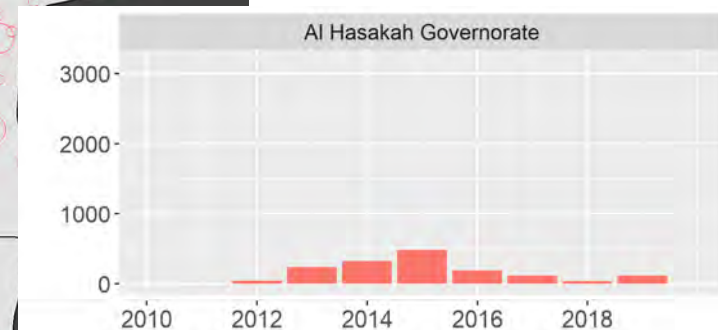
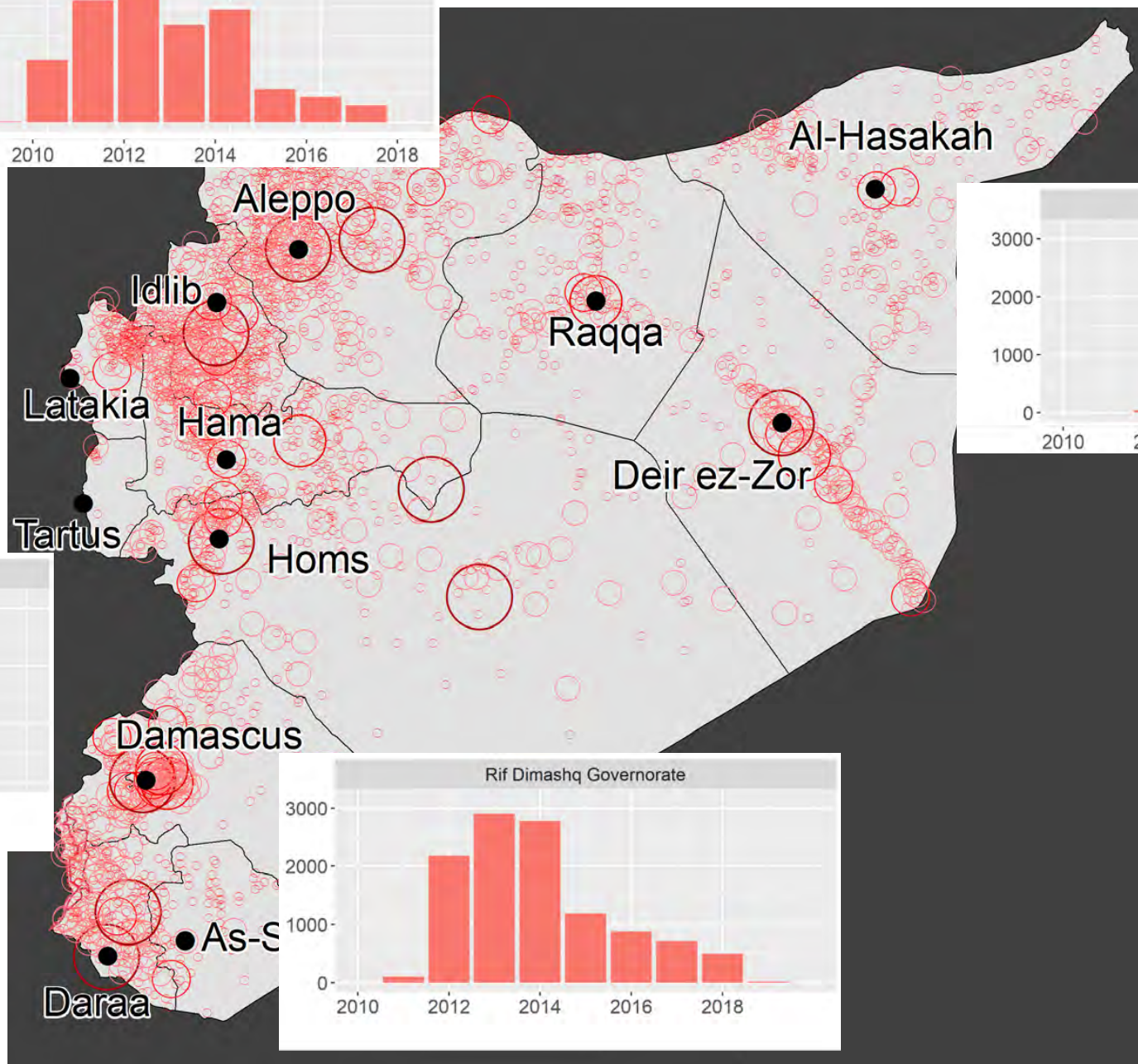
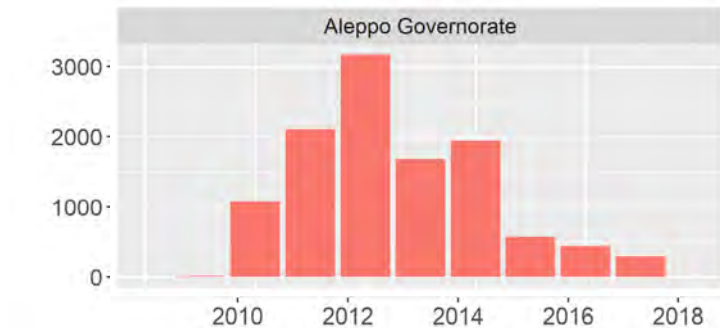
SDF (2012–present)



CJTF-OIR (2014–present)









How the cropland has been changed during the Syrian Civil War?

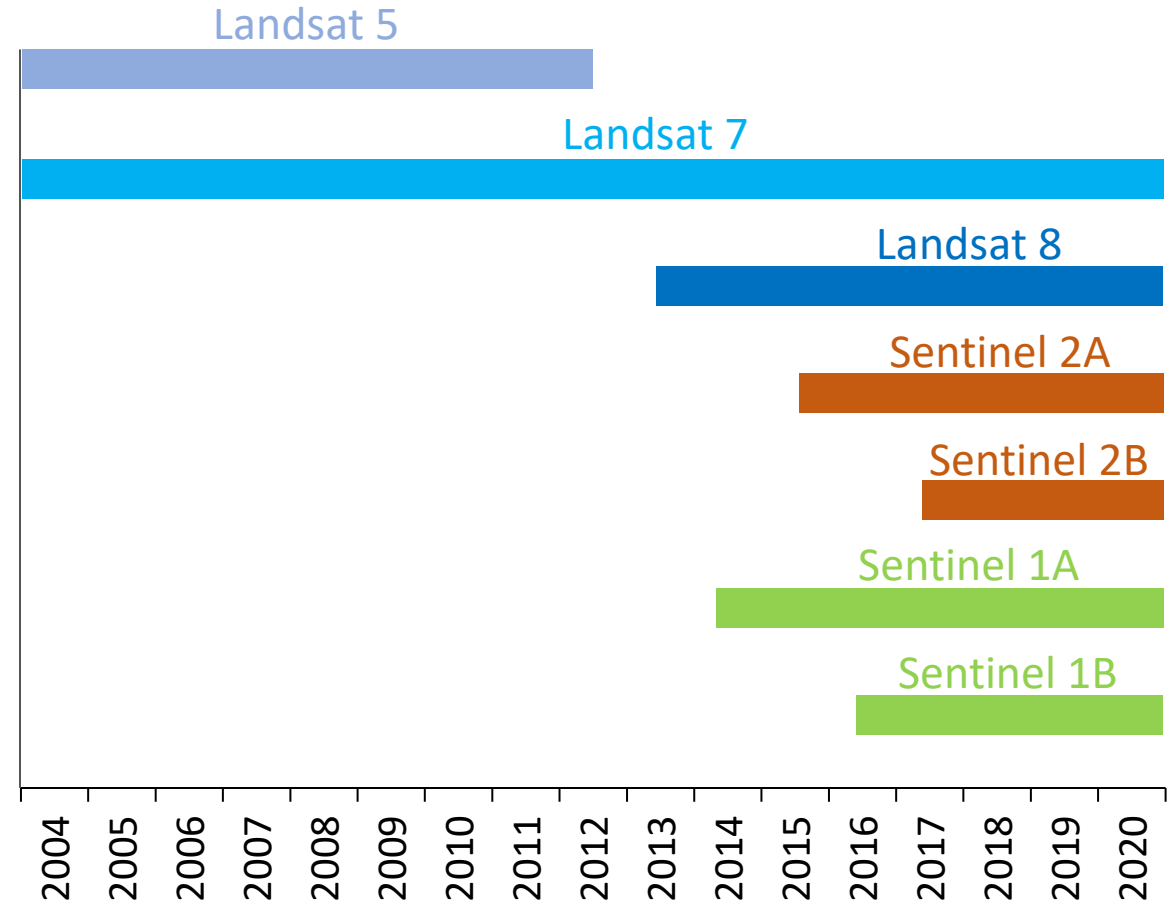
Data analysis

1. Annual cropland mapping

- 2004-2020
- 30-m resolution

2. Mapping the timing and type of cropland change

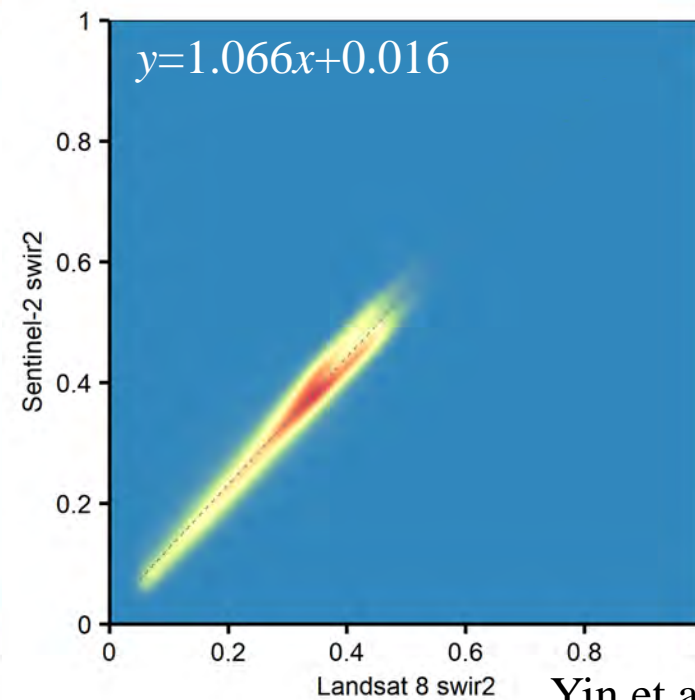
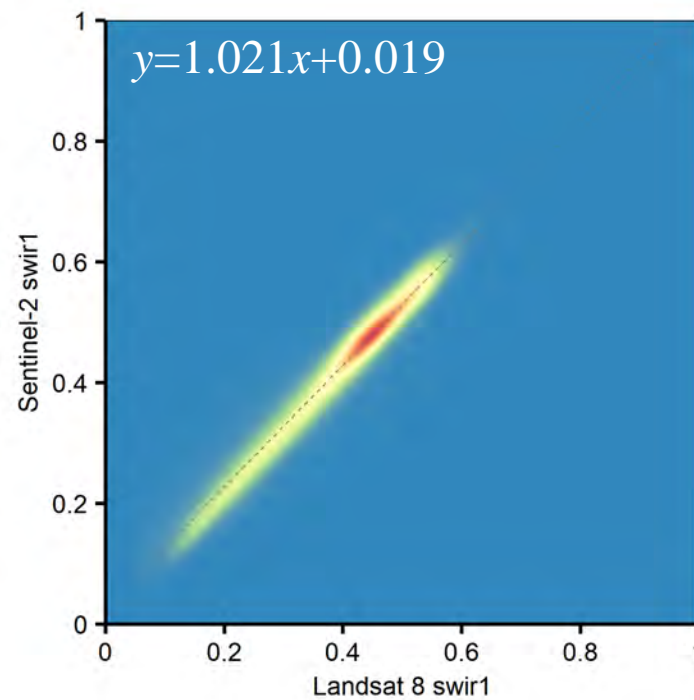
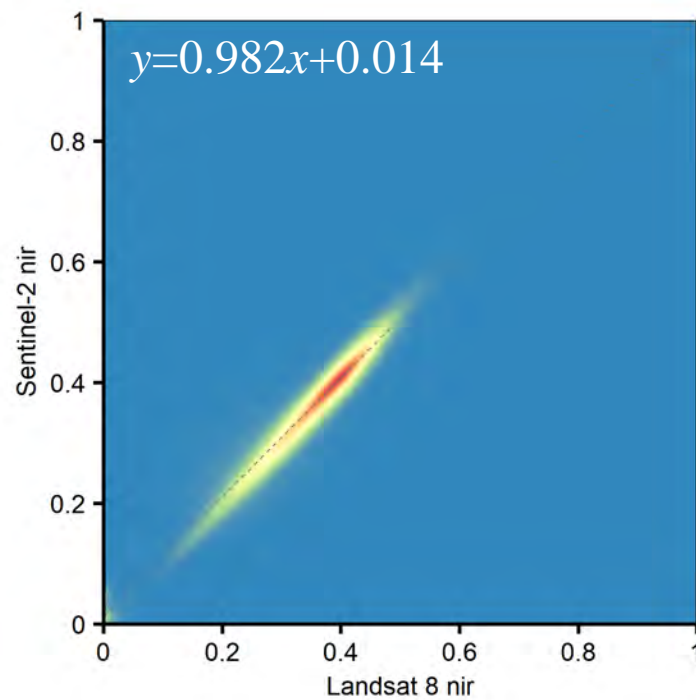
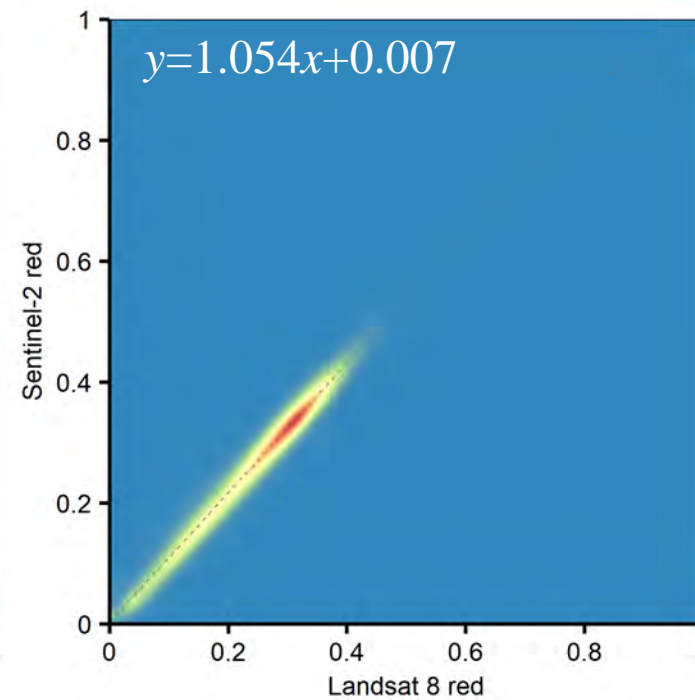
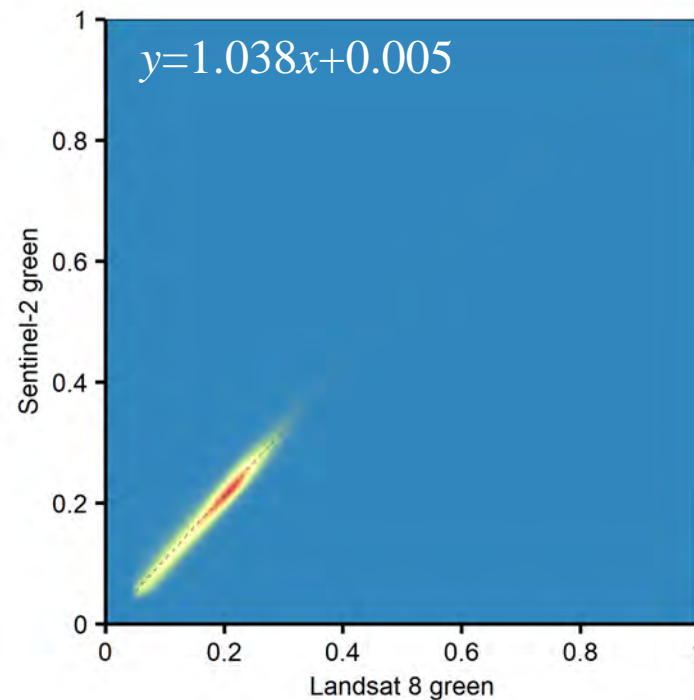
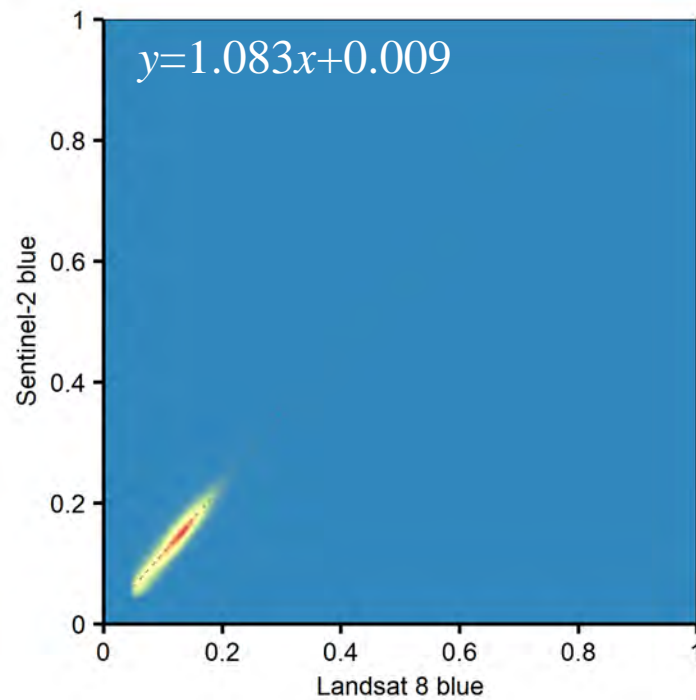
- Abandonment
- Re-cultivation

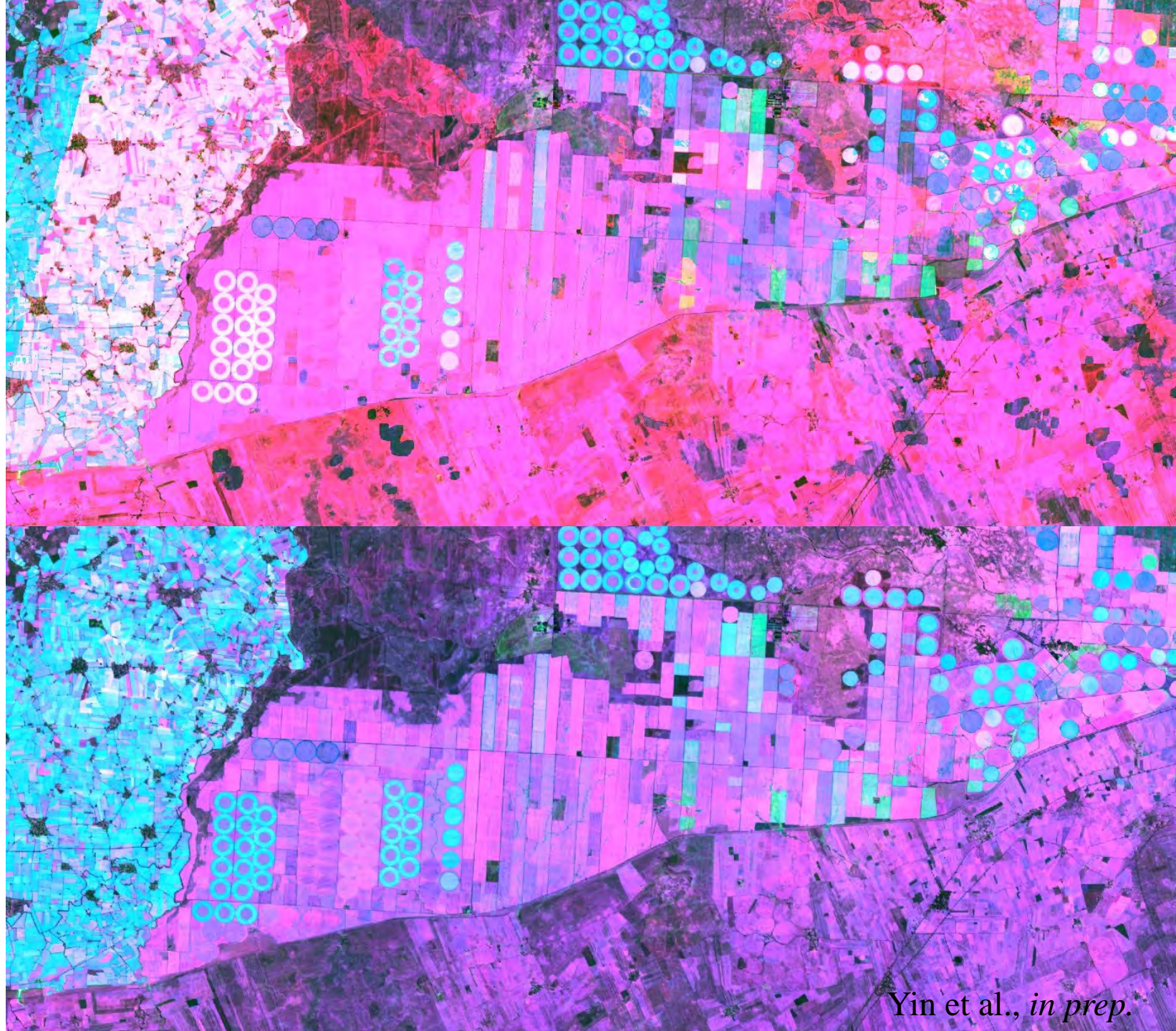
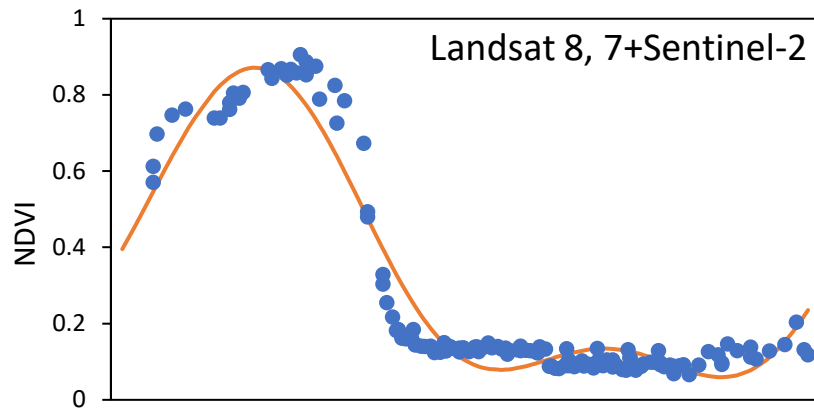
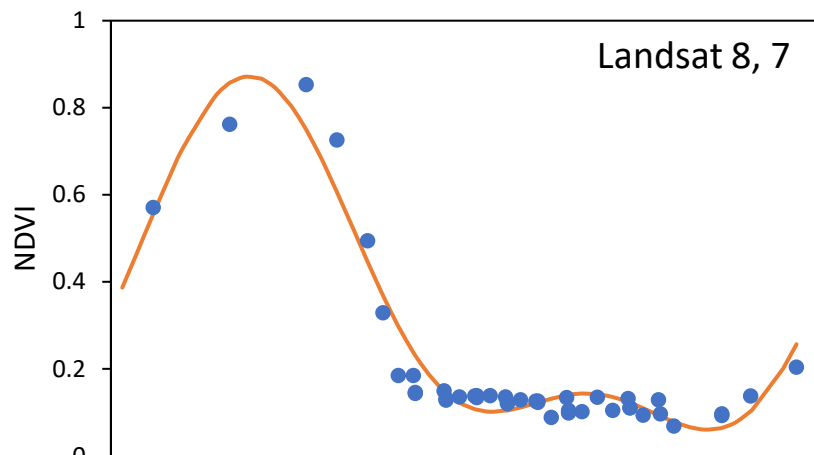
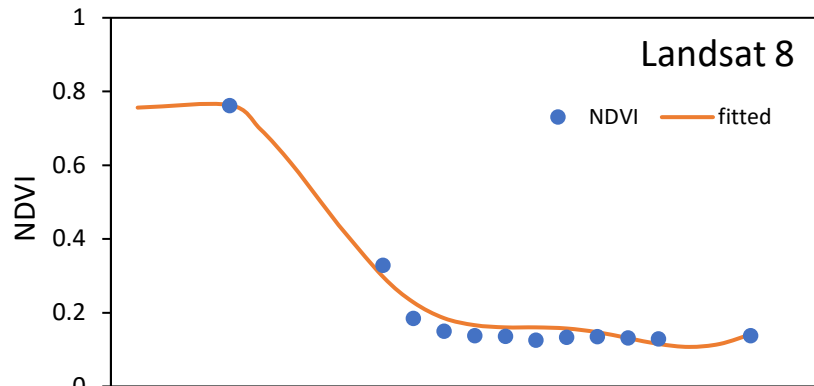


Annual cropland mapping

Period	Sensors	Features
2004-2013	Collection 2 Landsat 5, 7 and 8	220 input features
2014-2020	Collection 2 Landsat 5, 7, 8, Sentinel-1, 2	244 input features
2020	Landsat, Landsat+Sentinel-2, Landsat+Sentinel-1, 2	220/244 features

- Classifier: random forest





Annual cropland mapping

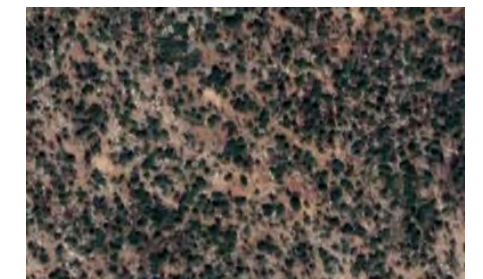
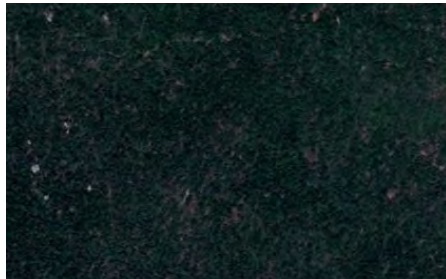
Tree crops



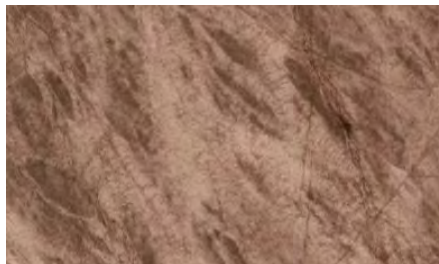
Other crops



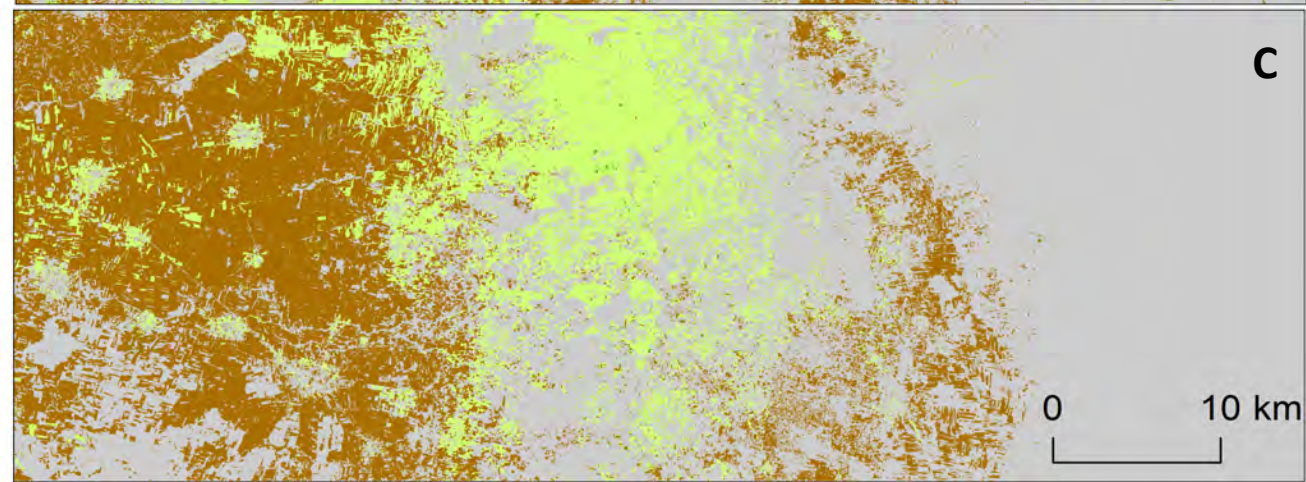
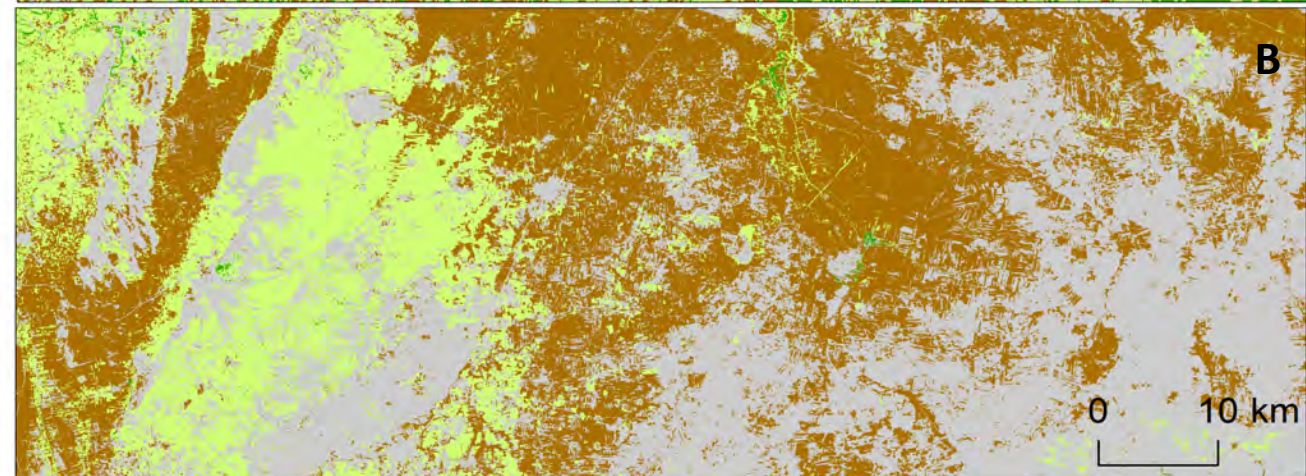
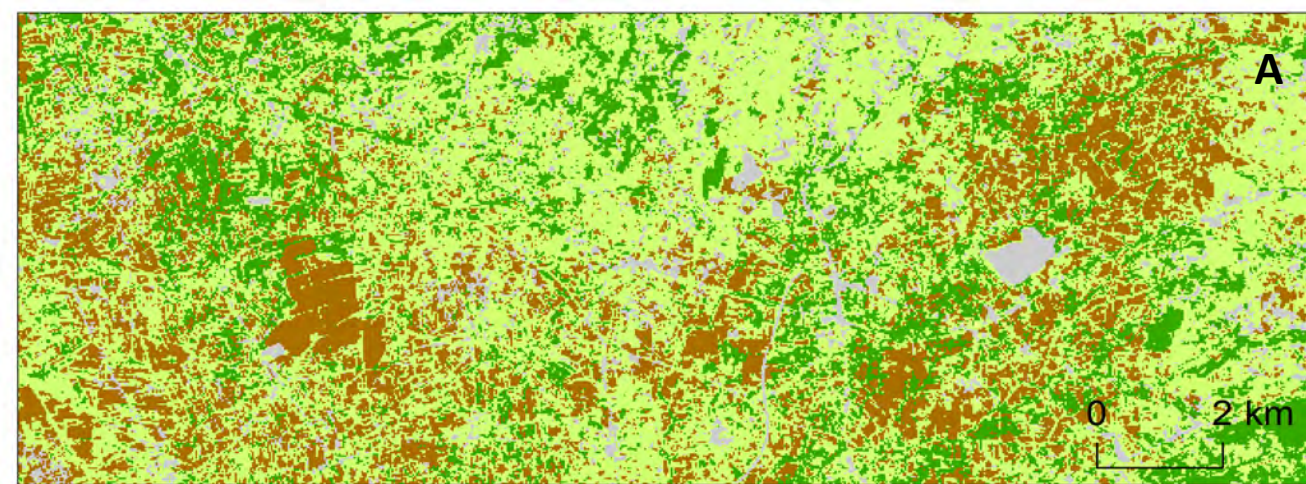
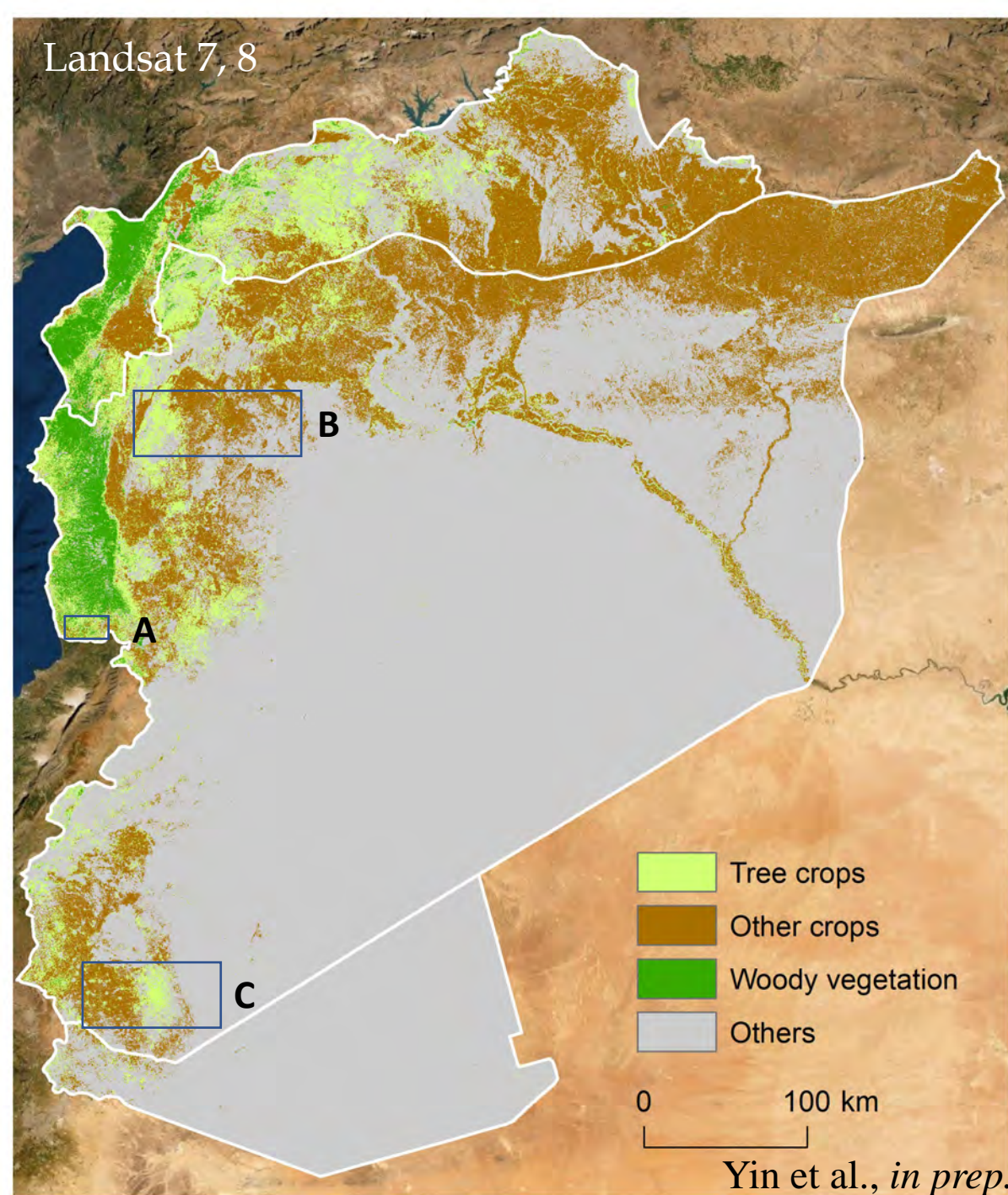
Woody vegetation



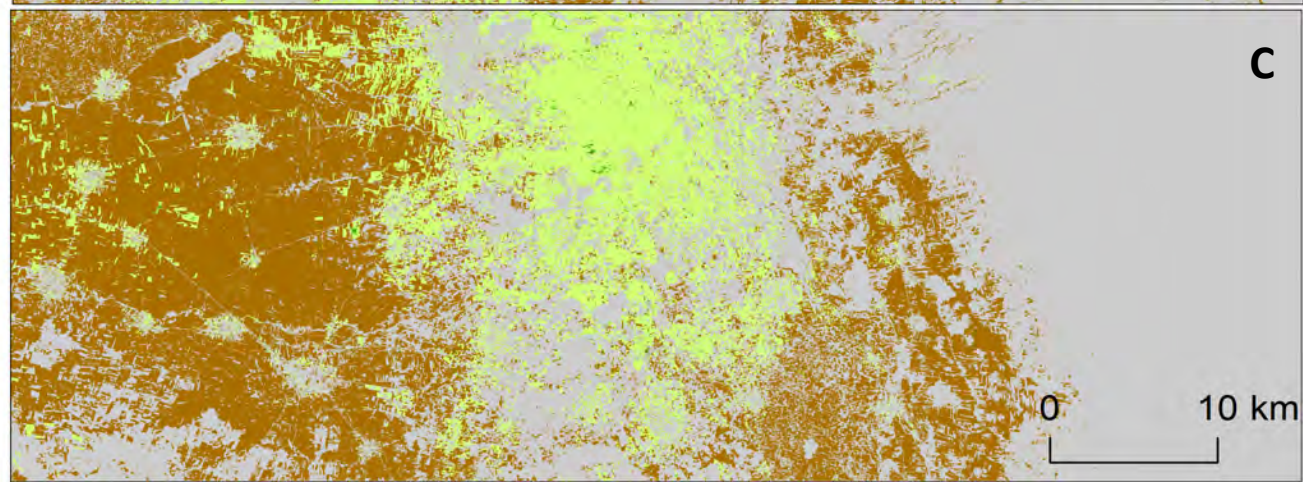
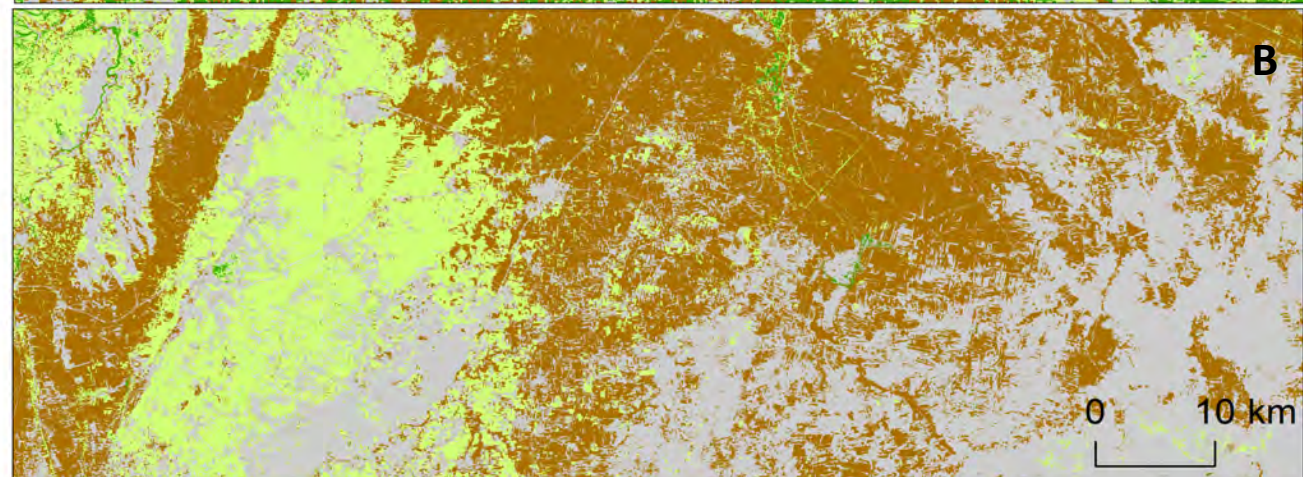
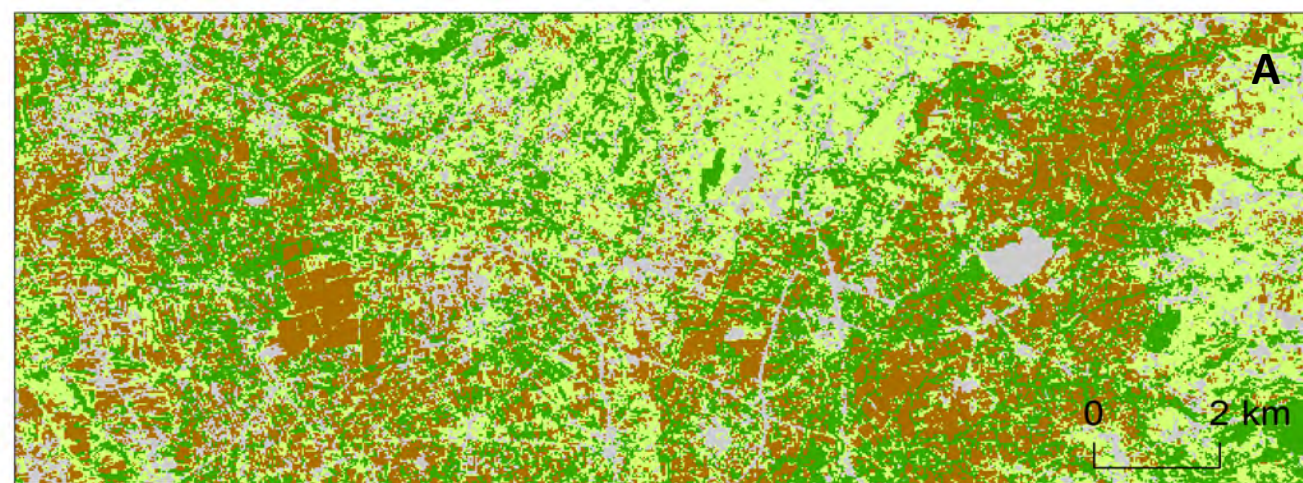
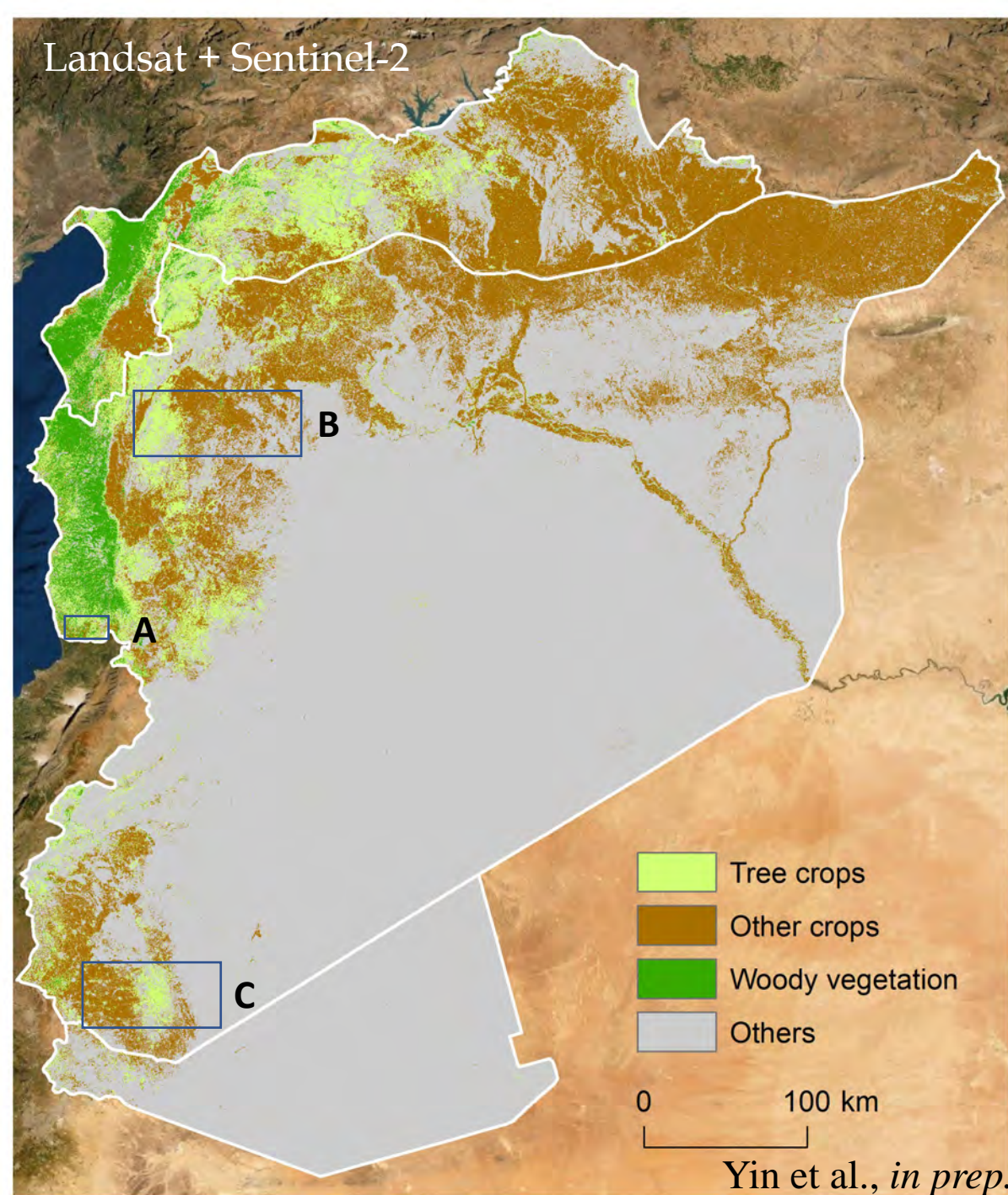
Others



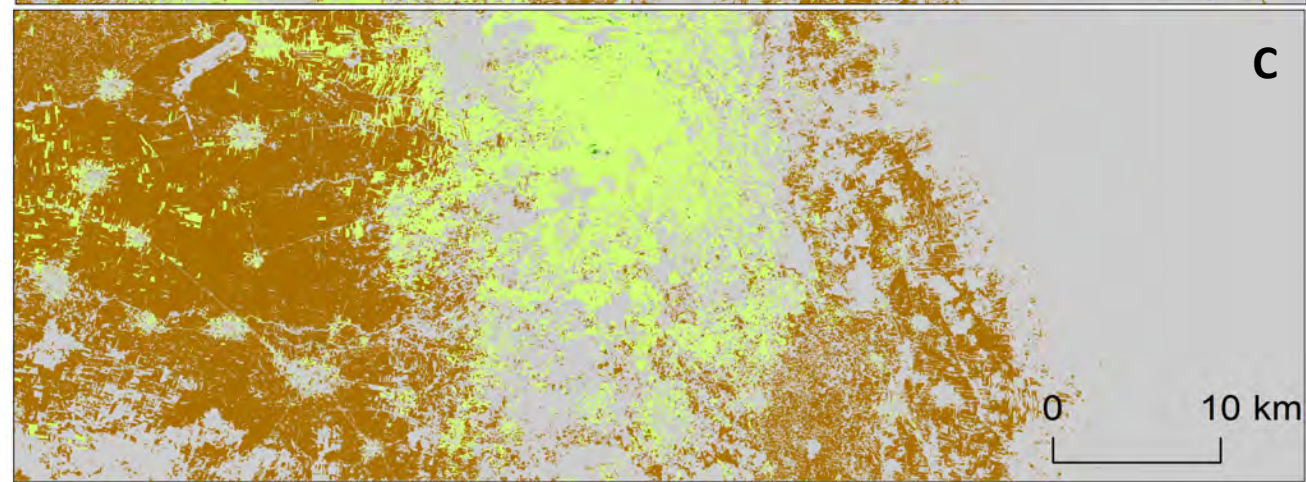
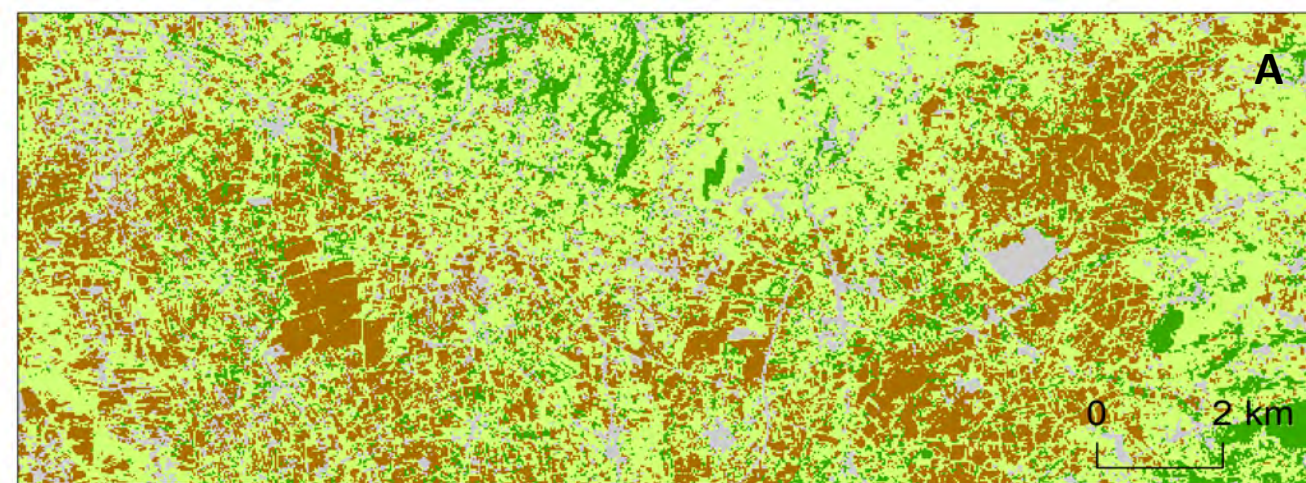
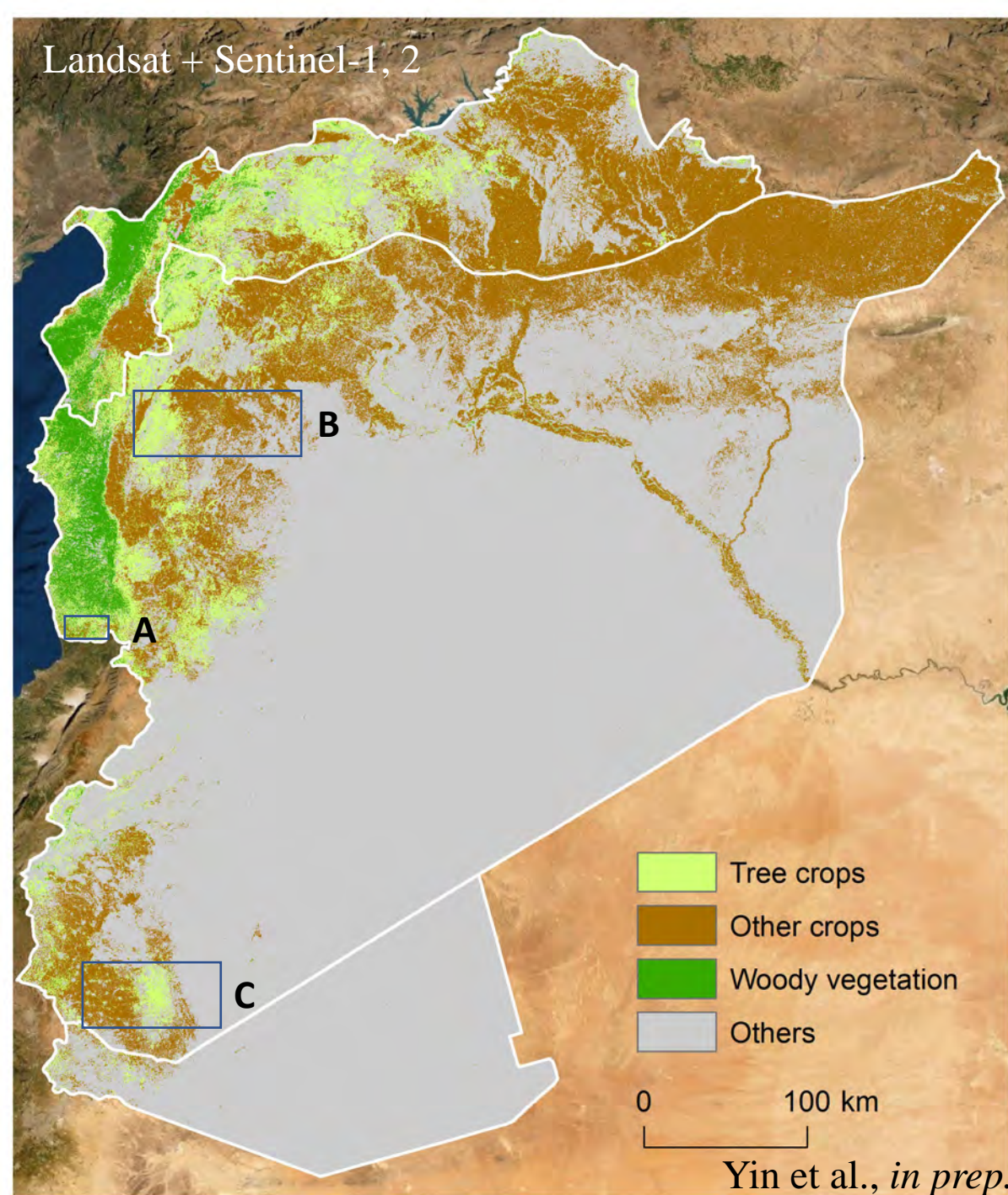
Landsat 7, 8



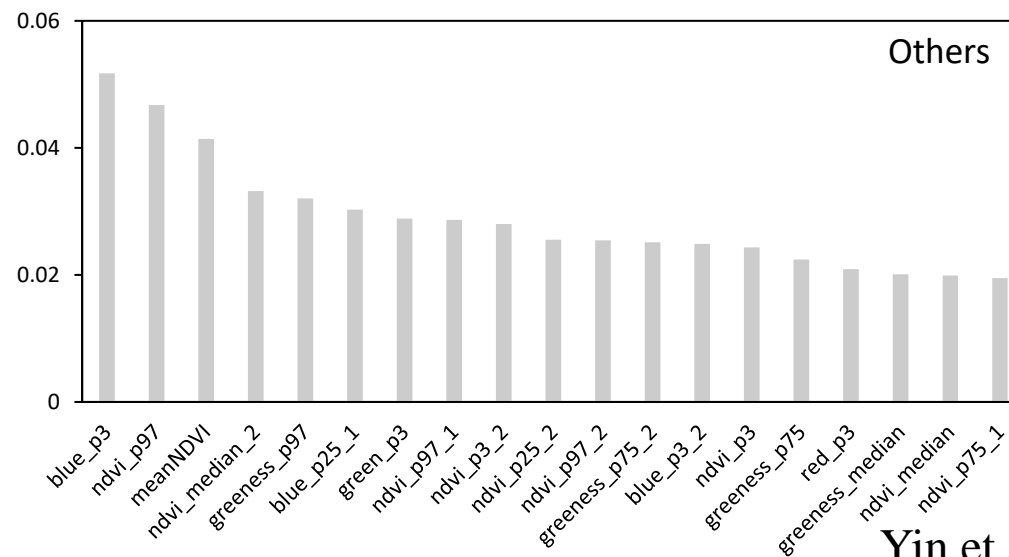
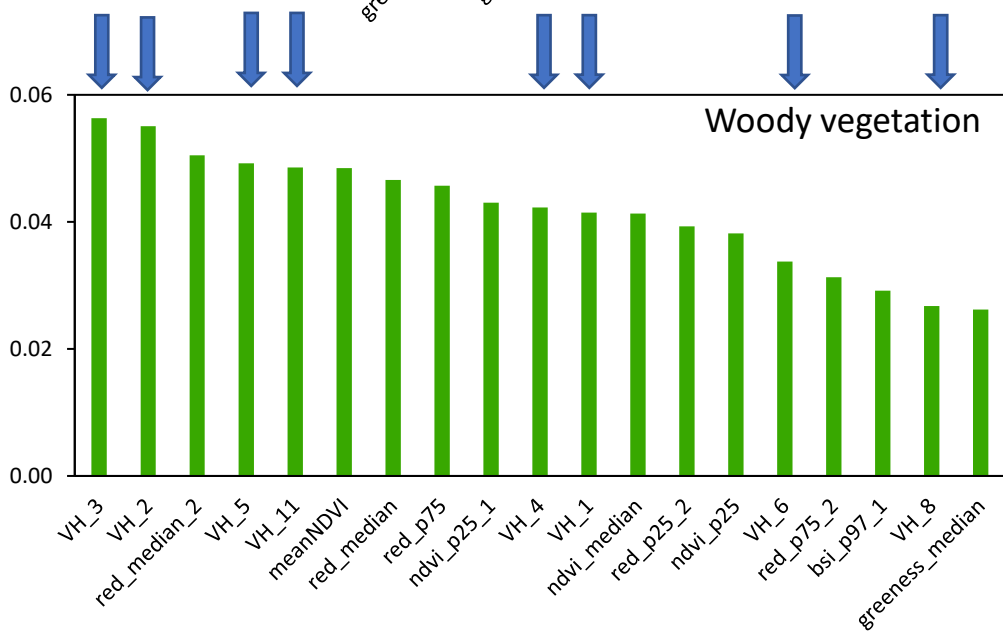
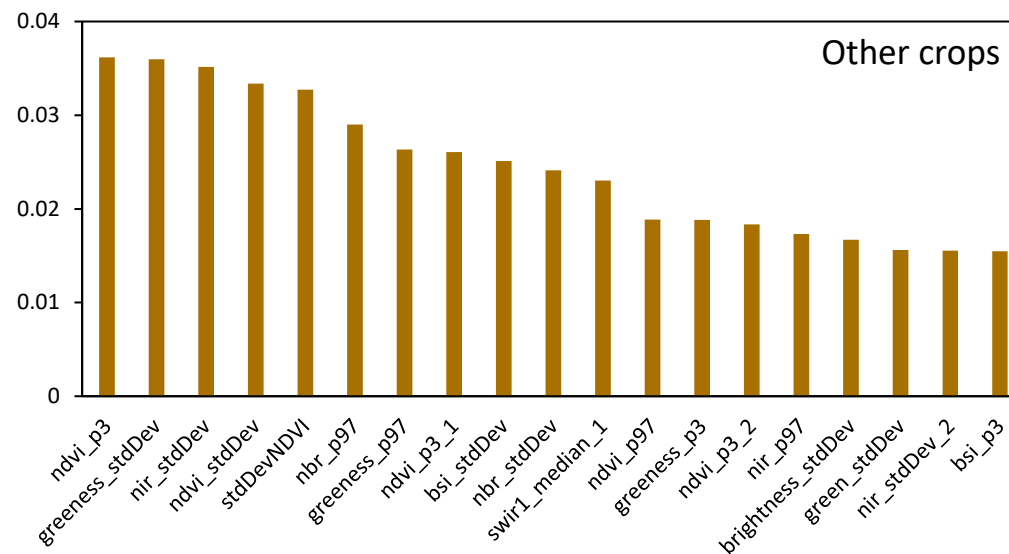
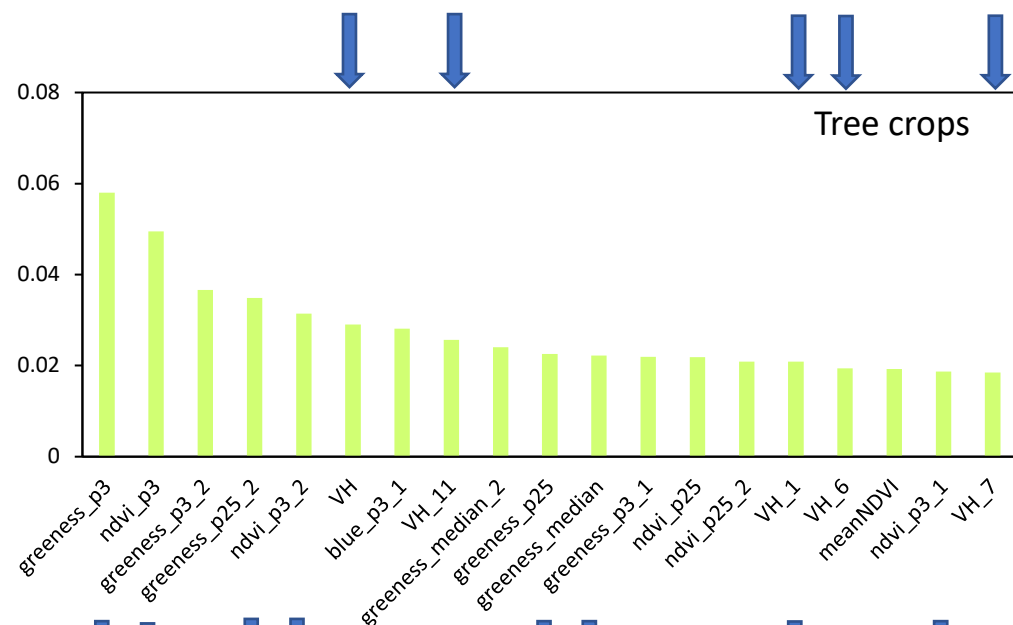
Landsat + Sentinel-2

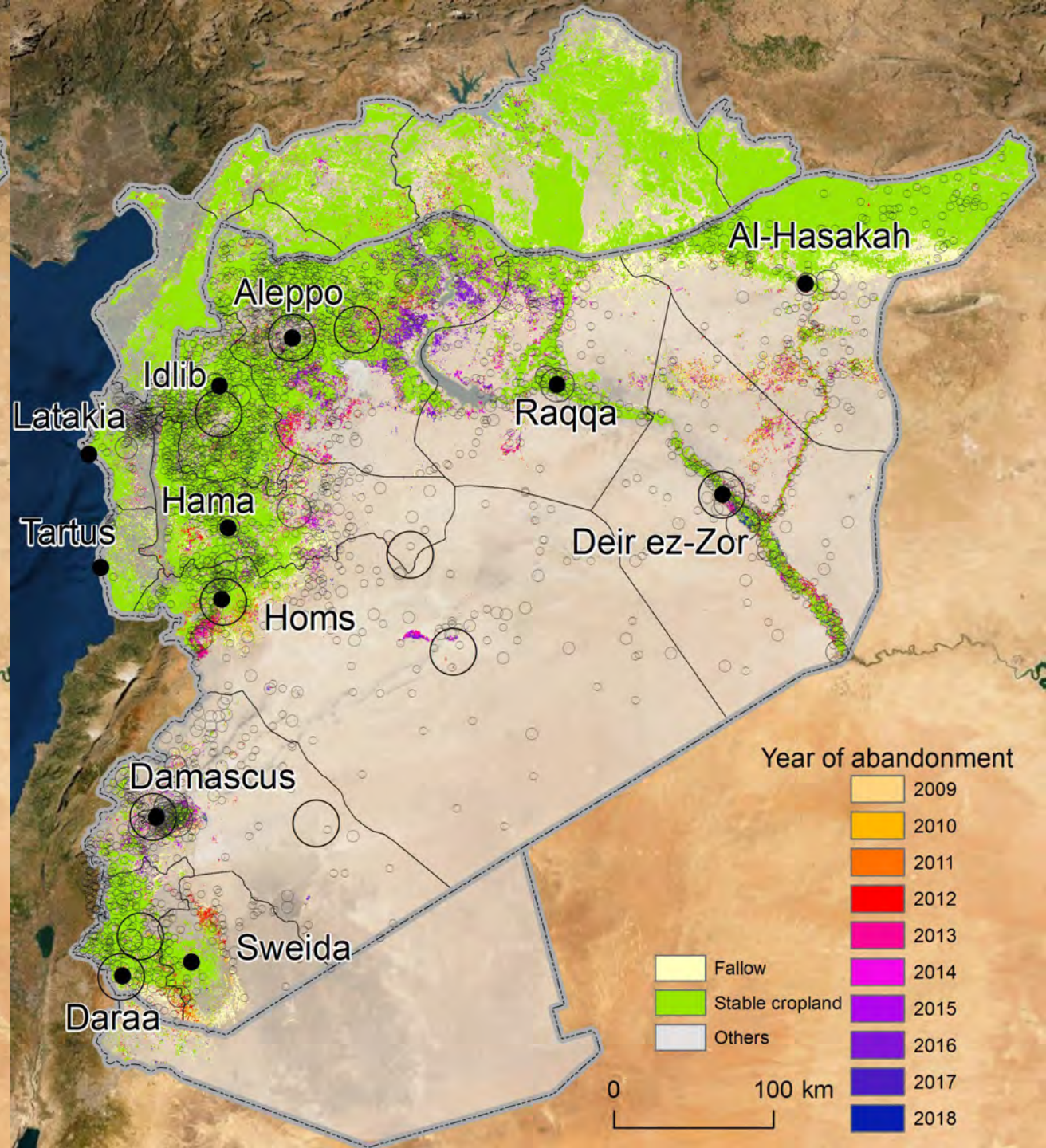
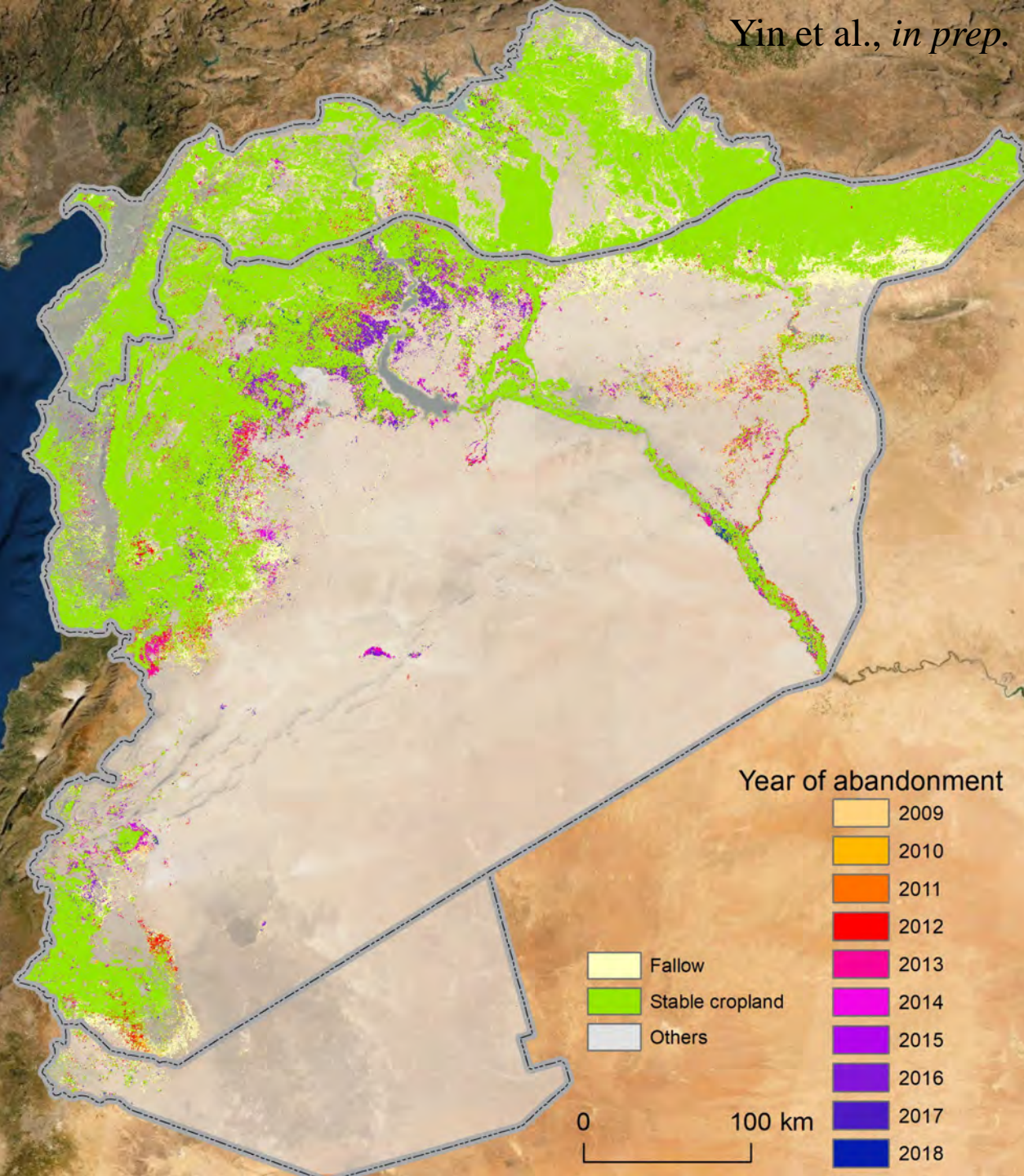


Landsat + Sentinel-1, 2

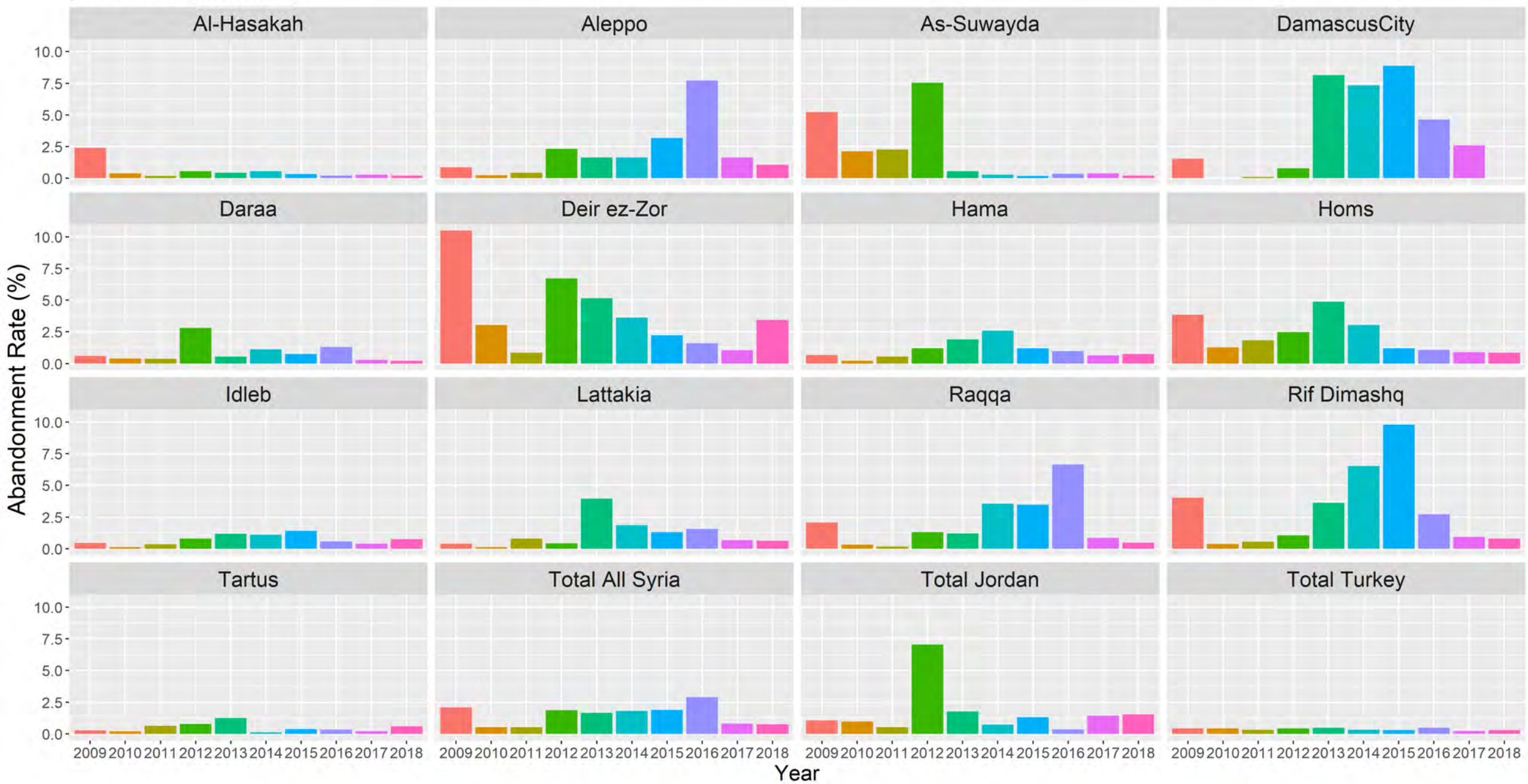


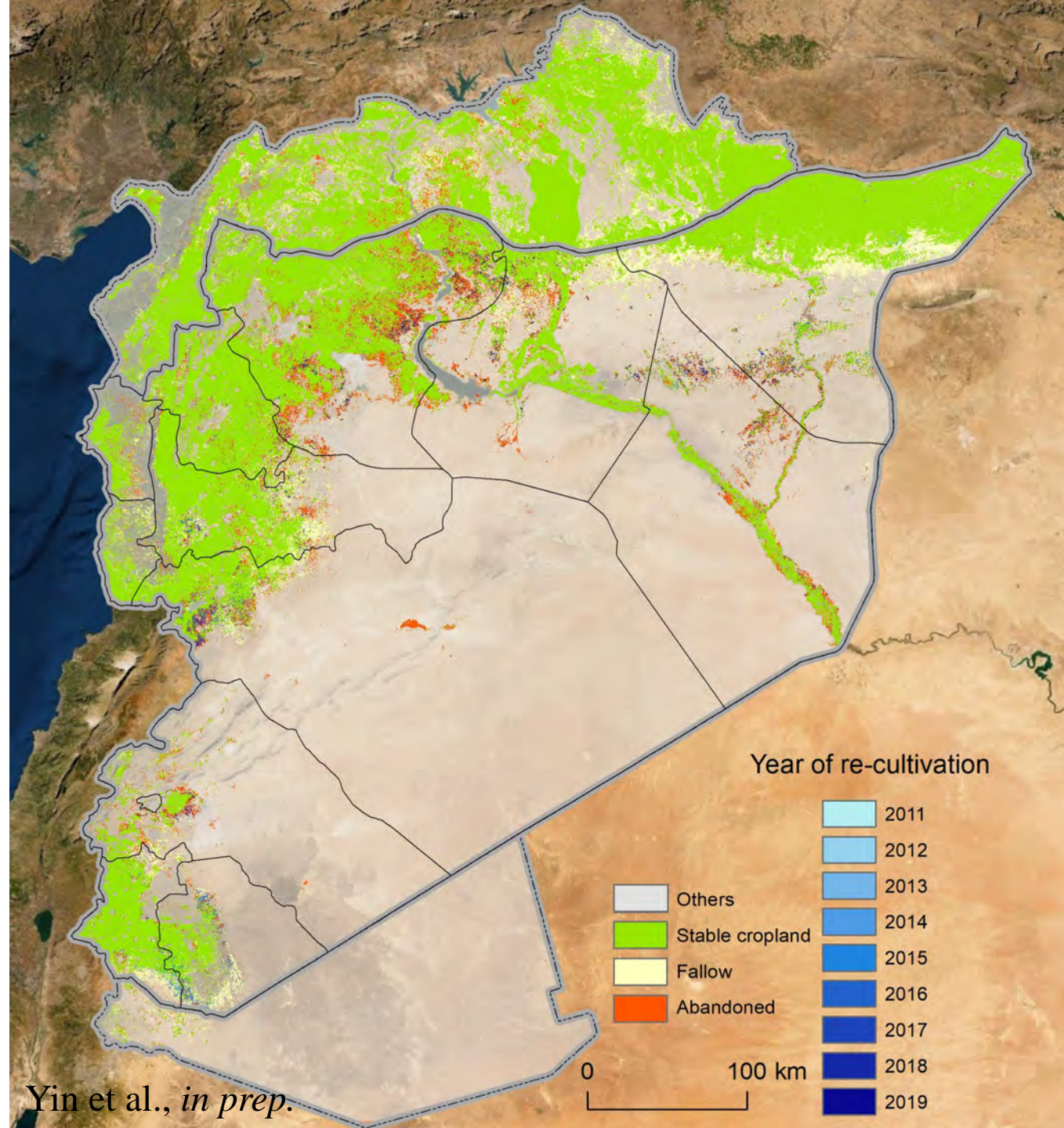
Feature importance



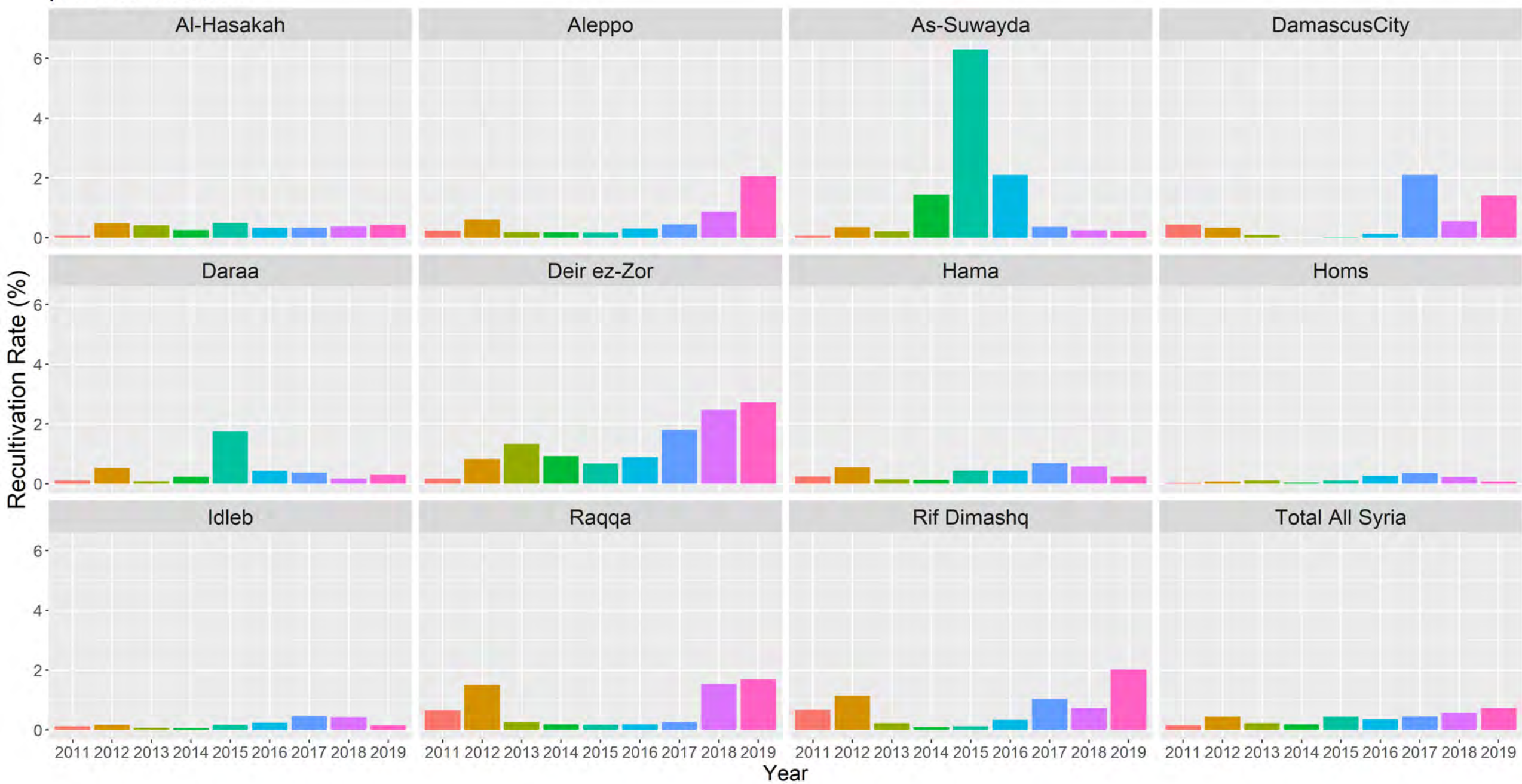


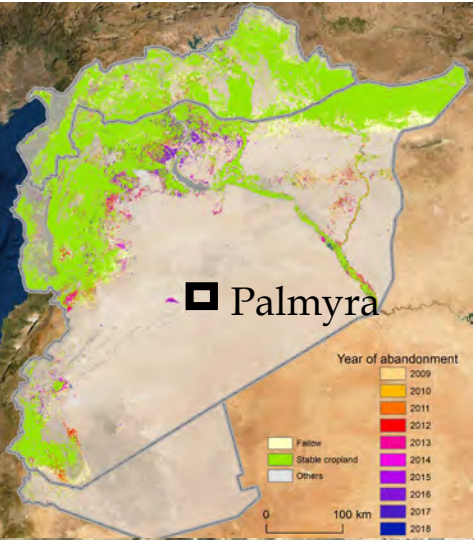
Annual Abandonment Rate per Governorate



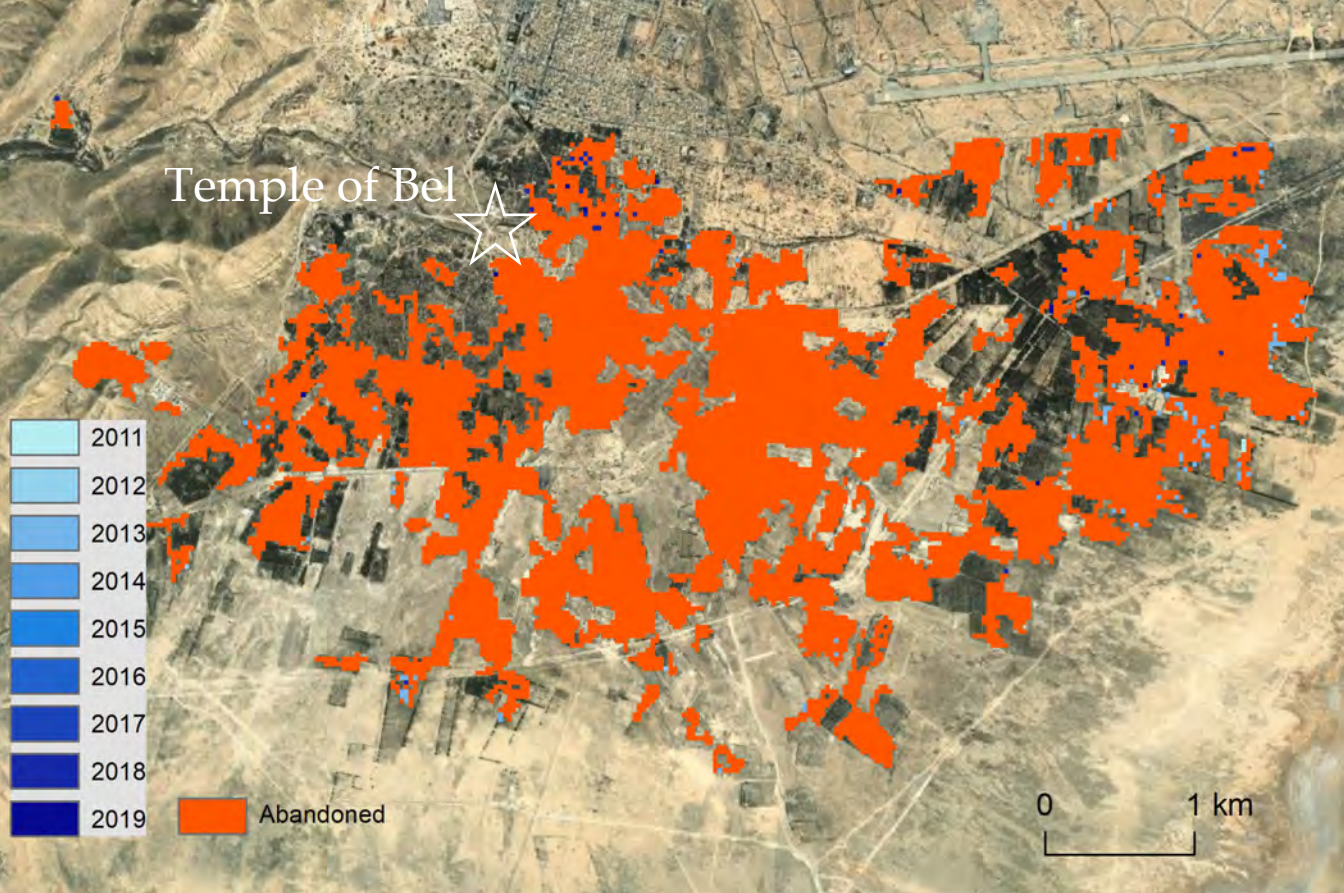


Annual Recultivation Rate per Governorate





- UNESCO World Heritage
- Destroyed May 2015
- Return of the IS in 2017



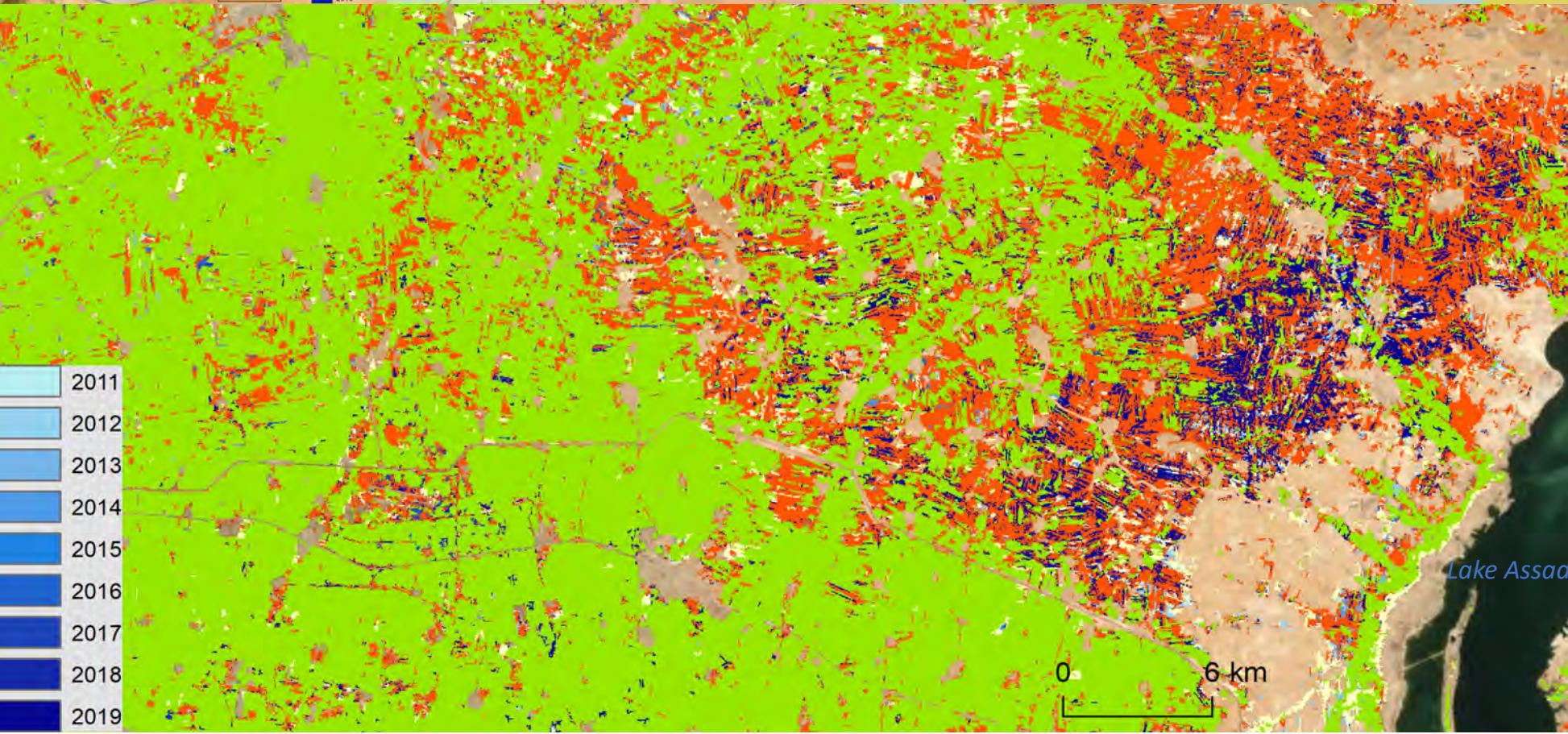
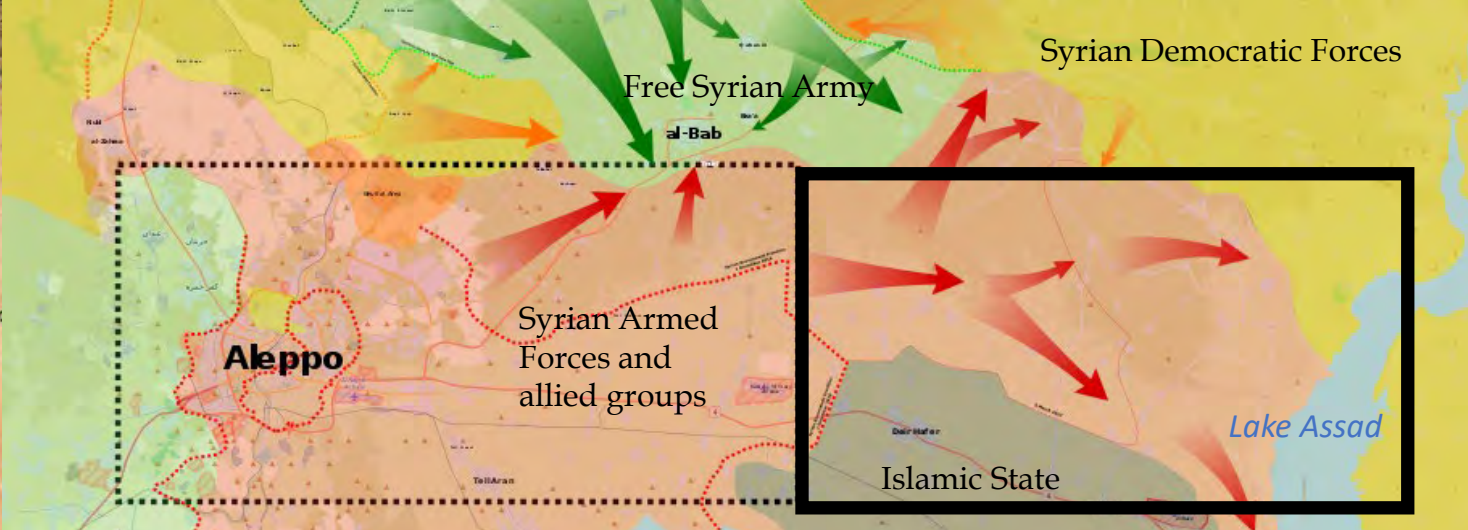
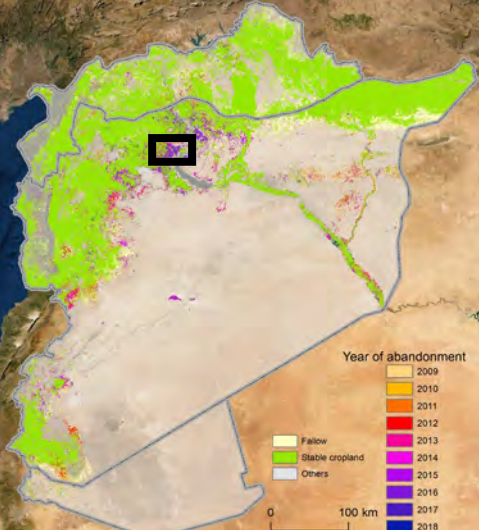
The Ancient World #BLM
@TheAncientWorld

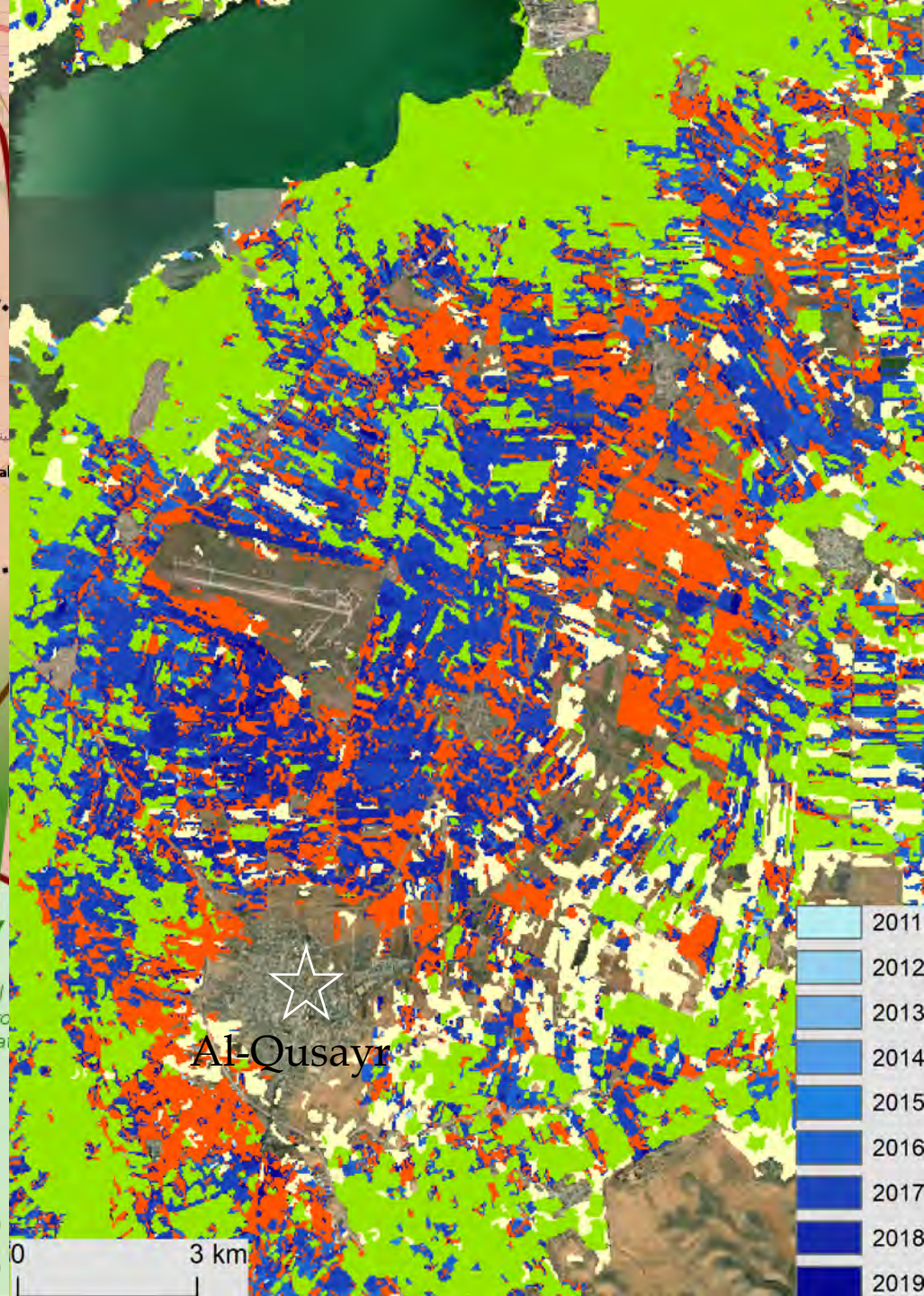
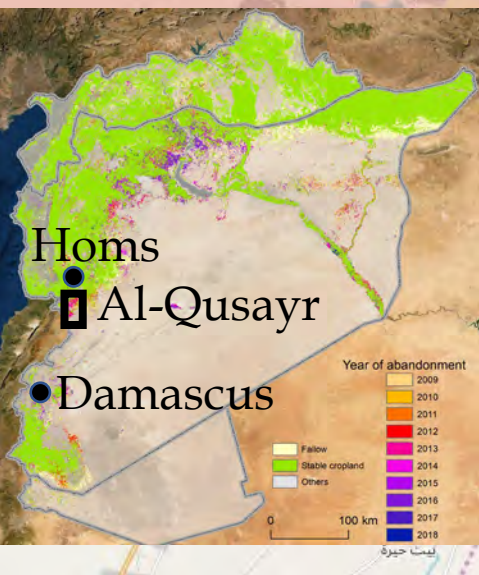
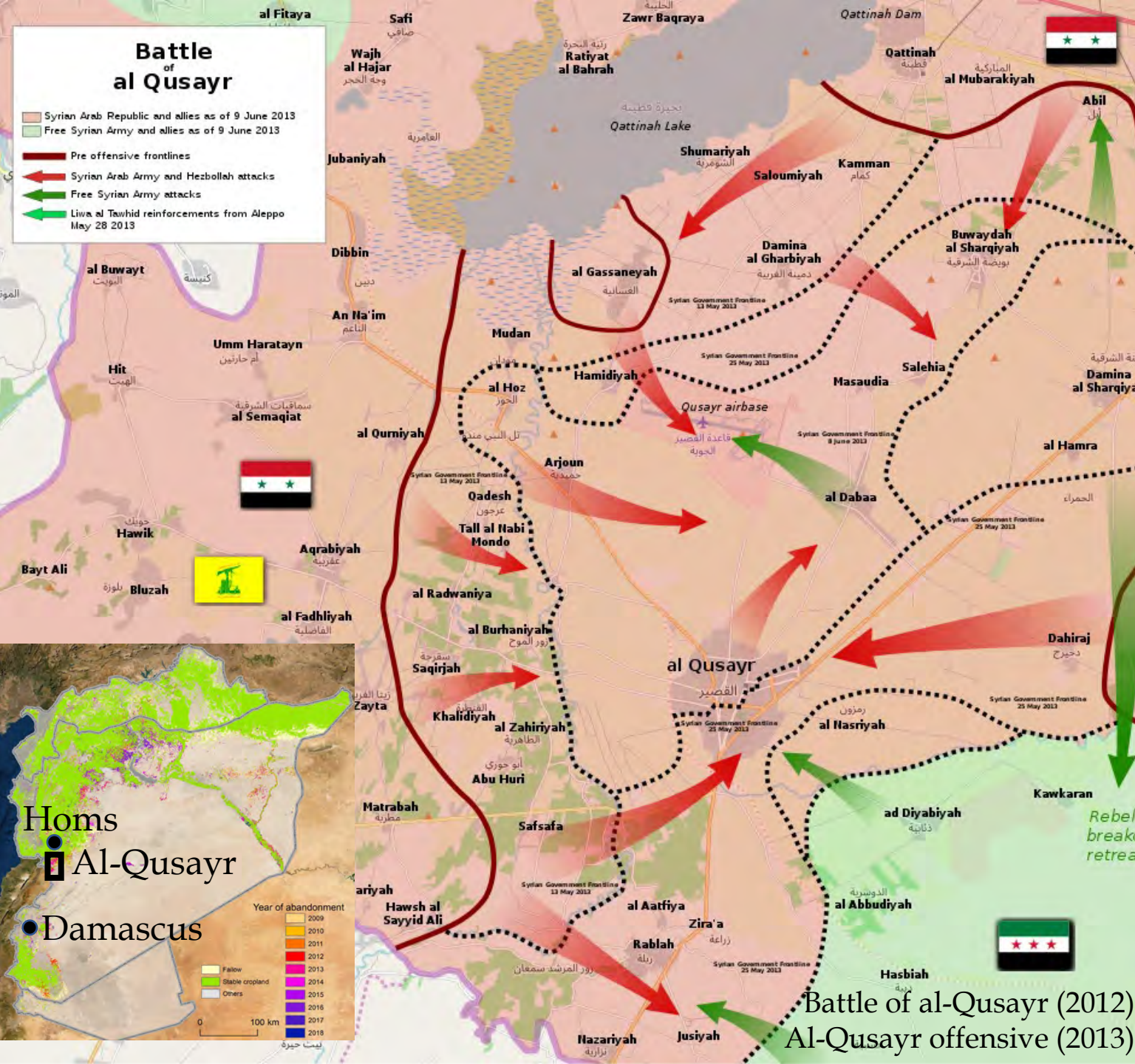
One of the most powerful photos I've ever seen (if anyone knows who took it, please let me know). The Temple of Bel in Palmyra, Syria before and after its destruction by Daesh/ISIS (2015).

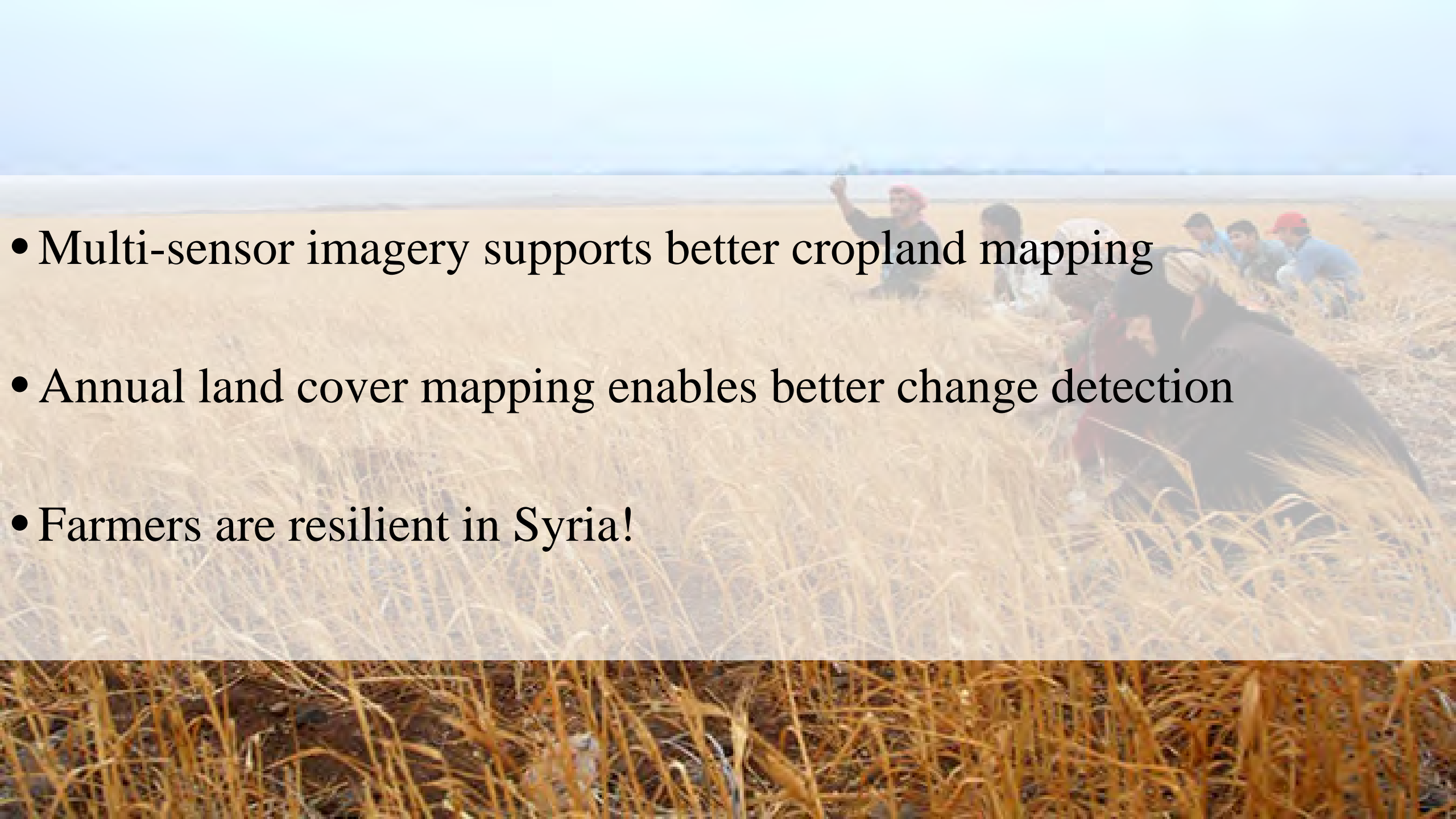


4:17 PM · Jul 10, 2020 · Twitter Web App

734 Retweets 74 Quote Tweets 2,054 Likes





- 
- Multi-sensor imagery supports better cropland mapping
 - Annual land cover mapping enables better change detection
 - Farmers are resilient in Syria!

Summary & Outlook



Effects of armed conflicts on land system

- The effects of armed conflicts are diverse
- The direct effects of armed conflicts are mostly local
- Yet, the indirect effects are far-reaching and long-lasting
- Population movement and policies matter

Outlook

- Future directions of using RS in studying armed conflicts
 - Changes in land use management
 - Dense time series enables real-time monitoring
 - Potential of fusing multi-sensor imagery
- Building a causal inference using RS
 - Econometric models and field surveys
 - Baseline need to be carefully examined

- NASA Impacts of Regional Conflicts on LCLUC - Webinar Series 2021



- Science of Remote Sensing special issue: Armed conflicts and land use change (*tba*)





Thank you!

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@hyinhe

SENS
LAND

Remote Sensing and
Land Science Lab

www.senslandlab.com