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THE EMERGENCE OF GREEN THEORY AND A RETHINKING OF THE ASSUMPTIONS THAT UNDERLIE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Ta Thi Oanh

Abstract

Environmental issues have not usually been paid due attention in the discipline of International Relations. The main tradition of International Relations centres on concepts of state sovereignty and that states are the main actors in international affairs. The dominant idea is that international politics are largely driven by states pursuing their interests or state-based actors pursuing their preference-based interests, in the perspectives of Realism and Liberalism, respectively. However, these premises do not sit well with environmental problems which are global and not restricted within the borders of any one state. The increase in transboundary ecological problems from the 1970s onwards witnessed the emergence of a sub-field of International Relations concerned with international environmental cooperation. This article focuses on analysing the emergence of green theory and how environmental concerns have influenced International Relations theories. It

Prof. Ta Thi Oanh

Faculty of International Studies, Hanoi University, Vietnam

Email: oanhtqth@hanu.edu.vn

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provides an introduction to the ecological crisis and how mainstream International Relations theories are challenged in a world with more environmental challenges. It also explains the reasons why environmental problems have not been a central theme in International Relations.

Keywords

ecology, environmental concerns, green theory, international relations, interests.

I. Introduction

In the field of International Relations (IR), environmental issues have never been paid due attention. Traditionally, IR puts emphasis on questions of “high politics” where the matters regarding the survival of states, such as national and international conventional security concerns, wars, and peace are vital (Eckersley, 2013). Other “low politics” issues such as economic, cultural, social, and ecological issues have long been overlooked. It was obvious that since the establishment of this field of study until the end of World War II, IR mainstream theories, including Realism and Liberalism, dominated the discipline. However, the late 1960s and the early 1970s witnessed the emergence of the transboundary ecological crisis which arose from the overuse of shared resources, such as major river systems, the oceans and the atmosphere, the depletion of the ozone layer, the erosion of the Earth’s biodiversity, or the increasingly adverse impacts of climate change. Together with the emergence of an environmental movement which sought to highlight the environmental costs, International Relations recognised the natural environmental issues as an increasingly remarkable source of questions for the discipline, which requires both theoretical and practical attention from the international community (Dyer, 2018). Green theory emerged accordingly as a sub-field of International Relations theories to challenge traditional theories and emphasize the importance of protecting the environment and

incorporating the relationship between humans and ecology into IR studies.

In the twentieth century, green IR theory started to criticize and call into question some of the basic assumptions, frameworks of analysis, and implicit values of the discipline of IR. Along with other critical theories, green IR theory was born to challenge the basic principles of mainstream theories. Like many critical theories, green theory tries to figure out the blindness of conventional theories. Its goal is to shed light on an area that usually goes unrecognized or ignored by mainstream IR theories. The area is the environment. Green theorists argue that “as our global ecological crisis grows and becomes more interdependent, there is a greater need for interdisciplinary scholarship to help solve environmental issues” (Eckersley, 2013).

This IR sub-field theory has gained attention since the early 1970s with the first United Nations conference being held to discuss the environmental crisis arising from the “tragedy of the common” in the 1960s. The environmental issues and the green theory received even greater attention when green political parties and public policy emerged in the 1980s and when the discipline recognised the environmental questions in IR in the 1990s. Since the industrial revolution, environmental issues have been raised with abundant evidence of ecological disasters and climate change due to the adverse effects of human activities. These issues, however, received scant attention from mainstream IR scholars and theories. Therefore, the key questions are posed in this paper: (1) Why have environmental issues been neglected in the discipline of IR? and (2) Does concern for global environmental degradation require a rethinking of the assumptions that underlie International Relations?

To answer the aforementioned questions, this article is organised into five main parts: The first part gives a general introduction to the research; the second part mentions mainstream theories in International Relations and their problems; the third part discusses the emergence of Green Theory as an important theory in International Relations; the fourth part gives some recommendations from a green perspective; and the last part concludes the key ideas of the article.

II. International Relations mainstream theories and their problems

There are different theories in International Relations that provide theoretical frameworks for understanding International Relations from different perspectives with a multidimensional view. The focus of International Relations is a state and its interest, mostly state sovereignty and that states are the primary actors in international affairs. Therefore, in two mainstream theories of the discipline of IR, including Realism and Liberalism, the key theme is that international politics is largely driven by states pursuing their national interests. These premises do not sit well with environmental problems, which are global and not restricted to any one state. By looking at two mainstream IR theories, Realism and Liberalism, we can understand the problems of dominant IR theories when it comes to environmental issues.

1. Realism

As one of the most prominent theories in IR theory, Realism or political realism claims to explain the behaviour of states in world affairs. There are four main core assumptions of Realism. First, from a realist perspective, sovereign states are the main actors in international relations as states are the decision makers who can decide the policies for what happens outside their borders. Other non-state actors, on the other hand, play minor roles in decision-making on foreign affairs. Hence, Realism is a state-centric approach. Second, states are egoistic so they act according to their national interests. Self-interest drives the political behaviour of states. Even though there are certain conditions in which altruistic behaviour is facilitated, egoism is rooted in human nature. When push comes to ultimate trade-offs between collective and self-interest, egoism tends to prevail. States have an inclination to choose their national interests. What Realists put stress on is mostly security interests. From a realist perspective, a state has policies to safeguard its national security which is traditionally threatened by other states in terms of military attacks. Third, states operate under the anarchical condition where there is no international government protecting states if they are in need. Therefore, states have to help themselves by strengthening their military or making alliances

with other states. Fourth, under an anarchical situation, states need to help themselves by attaining as much power as possible. For realists, global politics is, first and last, about the power and self-interests of each state (Lebow, 2013).

The central idea of Realism is state's national security. The survival of the state is considered to be essential for the good life of its citizens: without it, the people's life is bound to be, according to Thomas Hobbes (1946), "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". Therefore, the state is considered as the guardian of its population. In Realism, the focus of states is conventional security issues, not the environment or environmental issues. These ecological issues are not from any specific actors and their impacts are in a long-term way, so according to Realism, they do not constitute ever-present threats.

2. Liberalism

Liberalism is also another mainstream theory of IR that shapes Western political thought. It is usually considered the ideology of the Western countries. Liberal ideas and theories had a remarkable influence on IR field of study when it emerged as a key IR theory after the first world war though the original ideas could be found in the works of some Western philosophers such as, Immanuel Kant's belief in "universal and perpetual peace" or Thomas Aquinas' notion of "just war" (Heywood, 2011). Liberalism in the discipline of IR is built based on some core assumptions. First, the starting point of Liberalism is the positive view of human nature that human beings are peace-loving and rational creatures. Instead of making decisions based on emotion, leaders of the state make decisions based on cost-benefit calculations. For Liberalist, the state tries to make progress in its community in the international community. The state finds cooperation more lucrative and beneficial than wars. Second, according to Liberalists, states also operate and interact with each other in an anarchical world order. However, the concept of anarchy is rendered differently compared to that of Realism. Anarchical conditions, from a liberalist perspective, can be changed with the existence of international organisations in which tensions and conflicts can be reduced among adversaries. Liberalism puts great emphasis on the possibility of peace and

cooperation. Third, unlike realism, states are not the only actors taking part in the decision-making process. Other non-state actors are also of importance in IR, such as international organisations, international non-governmental organisations, transnational corporations, individuals or groups of individuals. Fourth, states operate in the international sphere in accordance with international laws. The goal is to promote universal norms, ideas and values through international institutions so that rules-based behaviours can be fostered (Russett, 2013).

Liberalism gives the answers to the questions of how wars and conflicts can be mitigated. Though Liberalism recognises the importance of non-state actors in international relations, it still puts emphasis on the relationship between and among human beings, searching for how to deal with war and peace on a global scale. The connections between human beings and the environment are not of importance for Liberalists.

3. Problems with IR mainstream theories

From the two aforementioned mainstream theories, Realism and Liberalism, international relations among states are more to give answers to the relations among states and human beings, rather than the relationship between human beings and the environment. It is also obvious that international politics is normally considered to be an exclusive activity for human. Its root can be found in the idea of anthropocentrism – human centeredness. This view puts strong focus on the importance of human beings compared to other non-human entities. Human-centred thought stresses the idea that humans are the apex of evolution, the source of all moral worth, and the centre of value and meaning in the universe (Eckersley, 2013). Therefore, human beings alone possess intrinsic values and all other beings hold values only in their ability to serve humans or in their instrumental values (Chadwick, 2012). This is a basic belief which is embedded in many Western religions and philosophies. It views human beings as separate from and superior to nature and holds that human life is more important than other lives which may be used for the benefits of human beings (Boslaugh, n.d). Anthropocentrism, therefore, permits and facilitates the increasing consumption of natural resources. Human activities have

degraded the environment through a number of activities such as, polluting the environment, excessive consumption of limited fossil fuels and destroying the forests. These activities have caused and accelerated ongoing problems, from environmental degradation to climate change, which directly affects human beings.

Despite numerous concrete and scientific evidence of environmental issues which should be given much attention, green concepts continue to be ignored in most of the international agenda. Human activities lead to species extinction, deforestation, destruction of ecosystems, and commodification of nature at a more alarming rate. Human beings assume, from the idea of Anthropocentrism, that only human matters, other non-human entities should only meet the needs of humans.

There is a fact that environmental problems have not been a central theme in International Relations since the establishment of this discipline after WWI. Three reasons can be mentioned to answer the question why environmental issues have yet to receive the attention they should have had. Firstly, traditional political science and international relations approaches have limits when applied to problems as complex as global environmental change. It is related to economic factors in each country. There are anti-ecological inclinations of the capitalist system, on both national and global scales. Profit-maximising corporations will always find the cheapest source of energy, normally fossil fuels to maximize their economic interests. Therefore, temporary benefits will dominate their thinking and actions rather than the issues of environmental sustainability. Above all, policies of any country are usually driven by economic benefits, or simply speaking, the voices of big companies and corporations always have a certain influence on a country's decision-making process. The international commitments of each country partly demonstrate the desire of their businesses to continue using cheap energy, which brings about high economic benefits despite environmental degradation. Along with that, ensuring social security and people's livelihoods are always vital goals of most countries. In many developing countries, when people's lives are not guaranteed, international commitments to climate change or other

environmental issues are not the top and immediate priority of those countries. Secondly, the environment and its issues are not “high politics” of security or nuclear warheads as Realists are usually concerned about, or economic growth as Liberalists normally pay attention to. IR is mainly concerned with states’ individual interests. Both IR mainstream theories agree with the concept of anarchy in which states operate under an anarchical world, so states have to help themselves by either collective security such as establishing military alliance like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the balance of power or cooperation in international organisations. The effort to survive and to save their people from traditional security threats, wars and conflicts, has dominated the international agenda. Non-traditional security issues such as environmental problems have been ignored. Thirdly, IR focuses on power connected to the national interests of each country. However, the environment is transnational and so not a problem of any one state. States have the inclination to blame each other for the causes of environmental issues. Besides, there are tensions between developed and developing countries in taking responsibility for tackling the issues. For instance, from the perspective of the Global South, developed countries are the key emitters of CO₂, and developing and underdeveloped countries are victims of too many economic activities in the North. Therefore, developed countries in the Global North must take responsibilities and deal with the current situation of the environment.

In addition, IR thinking is also restricted by borders. There is an escalation in borderless environmental problems at an alarming rate. These issues need a concerted effort and cooperation among states to be dealt with. States, however, externalise national environmental effects because according to them, the atmosphere belongs to all, rivers run through many countries, oceans are common resources to all countries, winds displace pollution, etc. Because all states are facing environmental issues, they fail to have motivation to address environmental problems that are shared by all countries. In the discipline of International Relations, transnational environmental problems challenge IR’s focus on state sovereignty and borders. IR

normally looks at inter-state relations but the environment is the whole globe. IR scholars are, for that reason, analytically weak in thinking about transnational issues that go beyond state borders. Only in the 1970s did the existence of a sub-field of IR concern with environmental cooperation on a global scale.

III. The emergence of Green Theory in International Relations

1. The environmental crisis as a global issue

Environmental degradation resulting from human activities has a long and complex history (Taqwadin, n.d). Although the use of natural resources could be traced back to the age of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century, the environment has become a global issue since the 1960s and the early 1970s with the rise of a number of environmental movements which underlined the environmental costs of increased human industrial activities and the growing divide between humankind and nature, especially in the developed countries. In the United States, for example, the destructive impacts of the excessive use of pesticides, emissions from factories consuming fossil fuels, oil spills, industrial wastes, X-rays, and food additives causing human illnesses, including cancers were introduced to American people with the introduction of Rachel Carson's bestselling book *Silent Spring* in 1962 and Murray Bookchin's *Our Synthetic Environment* in 1962. This period also witnessed the emergence of many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which fought against environmental issues as well as movements calling for preserving the ecosystem (Heywood, 2011). The environment movement of this time focused on addressing three general problems, including: (1) resource problems – efforts to preserve natural resources through limiting the consumption of fossil fuels, promoting the use of clean energy, and reducing resource consumption by human beings; (2) sink problems- efforts to reduce the damage done by industrial wastes from industrial activities and to promote greener technologies in production processes; (3) ethical problems – efforts to restore the balance between human beings and nature through natural conservation of plants and animals and application of organic farming in agricultural practices (Heywood, 2011).

It took about ten years of continuous political agitation against environmental threats from pesticides, nuclear power plants, industrial wastes, hazardous waste dumps, and pollution before the environmental issue was considered as a matter of public concern at all levels. It was illustrated via concrete activities. Earth Day was first and officially celebrated in 1970 to raise people's awareness of the environment and of the need to preserve natural resources for future generations. Environmental laws were also passed in the United States and most of Western countries. The first international environmental conference, the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, was held in Stockholm, marking the starting point of environmental problems being widely recognised as a global matter that needs more attention (Eckersley, 1992). In the 1980s, many green organisations emerged in many parts of the world to address environmental problems, especially in Europe and America. These presented a need for a theoretical framework that would provide a clear explanation for those problems. Furthermore, in the 1990s, there was an emergence of environmental studies programmes in higher education institutes. The discipline of IR started to consider the natural environment as a source of questions, so it required theoretical and practical attention (Dyer, 2017).

2. Green IR theory and its main tenets

Green theory is a critical, problem-oriented and interdisciplinary approach to the discipline of IR. It is a critical theory as it challenges the positions of mainstream theories by evoking questions about the connections between human and non-human beings or by asking for global solutions for non-traditional matters of war or peace - the environment. It is problem-oriented because green theory focuses on ecological issues and it is also related to many other fields of studies. Green IR theory is more radical than most other IR theories. Green theory points to increasing awareness of the ecological blindness of mainstream IR theories. The basic tenets of green theory can be mentioned with the following main points.

Firstly, according to Dyer (2017), the first distinctive feature of green theory is its major focus on ecology and its effort to raise

people's awareness of protecting the environment and non-human beings. Green theorists suggest an approach of putting nature on par with human beings, or even before human beings. For this reason, green theory is more eco-centric than anthropocentric. Ecology-centred thought of ecocentrism is fundamentally different from human-centred thought of anthropocentrism. Ecocentrism of green theory does not neglect the needs and desires of human beings when it comes to their daily demands to ensure their survival. Ecocentrism puts emphasis on healthy ecosystems for the reason that they play a role as a prerequisite to and a favourable condition for human wellbeing. In reality, human beings, however, always consider themselves as the top of evolution. Due to their arrogant posture, human beings are negatively exploiting non-human nature at an alarming rate. To human beings, nature only plays as a short-term instrumental value. Eco-centric green theory criticizes this instrumental relationship of humans with nature. Green theorists support a more critical approach to human beings when dealing with the environment.

Secondly, from a green perspective, environmental issues have truly global impacts, they, thus, require global solutions. Non-traditional security threats such as environmental issues are trans-boundary, they affect all states, and they go beyond the borders of an individual state. In international politics, states' responses are limited by borders due to the basic principle of non-intervention and sovereignty. A state has no right and authority to act outside its territory to deal with or prevent the issues that directly affect it. For instance, climate change crosses the borders and has impacts on all countries and populations. A country may be adversely affected by climate change but it cannot address this challenge individually as it is related to others. Separate actions of one single country would fail to completely solve the problems. As human beings from all countries are ecologically interconnected, states are required to act collectively and have a holistic approach to cope with these issues. This perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of the ecological system, highlighting that environmental issues cannot be effectively addressed in isolation from each other or social and political factors.

Thirdly, as an international system of states, a core feature of the Peace of Westphalia (1648), is a key barrier to global solutions to environmental issues, Dyer (2017) supports the establishment of international organisations or international government that could check the behaviour of states and make sure that no countries are “free riders” or face the “tragedy of the commons”. Green IR theory calls for effective global environmental governance through international cooperation, multilateral agreements, and international institutions. It also recognizes the need for the participation of non-state actors, such as civil society organisations, indigenous communities, or even influential individuals.

Fourthly, green IR theory upholds the ideas of collective efforts among states and international institutions to address cross-border challenges. It also emphasizes the importance of decentralisation which involves giving more decision-making power and control to local government rather than the central authority. Decentralisation in handling unconventional security issues has several benefits. One of the main advantages is that it allows local bodies to have greater self-determination and ensure democratic accountability. Additionally, decentralisation can have positive ecological effects by encouraging smaller communities to protect the environment in their area as they are reliant on local resources. Local communities often think of the natural world as their home, rather than just a resource. This perspective helps them better understand the importance of protecting the environment. By seeing nature this way, they are more likely to take actions that prevent environmental issues. This shift in mindset can play a significant role in addressing the environmental crisis we face today (Dyer, 2017).

Last but not least, the theory highlights the unequal distribution of environmental costs and benefits, particularly along lines of race, class, and gender. It emphasizes the need for environmental justice with more radical responses, which involves ensuring fair access to environmental resources and protection from environmental harm for all individuals and communities, especially marginalised groups (The Guardian, 2020). In reality nowadays, countries all around the world

are confronting environmental issues unequally. Advanced countries can enjoy a large number of resources and live in quite uncontaminated areas. Underdeveloped countries, on the other hand, normally have much fewer resources and their people live in much more contaminated areas. According to Oxfam (2020), “the wealthiest 1% of the world’s population was responsible for the emission of more than twice as much carbon dioxide as the poorer half of the world from 1990 to 2015” (The Guardian, 2020). The environmental costs are largely imposed on poor people. Figure 3 clearly illustrates the situation that developed countries are the main source of emissions but developing countries are suffering greater impacts related to climate change. Therefore, environmental justice is necessary for those who suffer from environmental issues. The idea of justice in the South could be comprehended as the basic survival needs being met. This means more economic growth for developing countries.

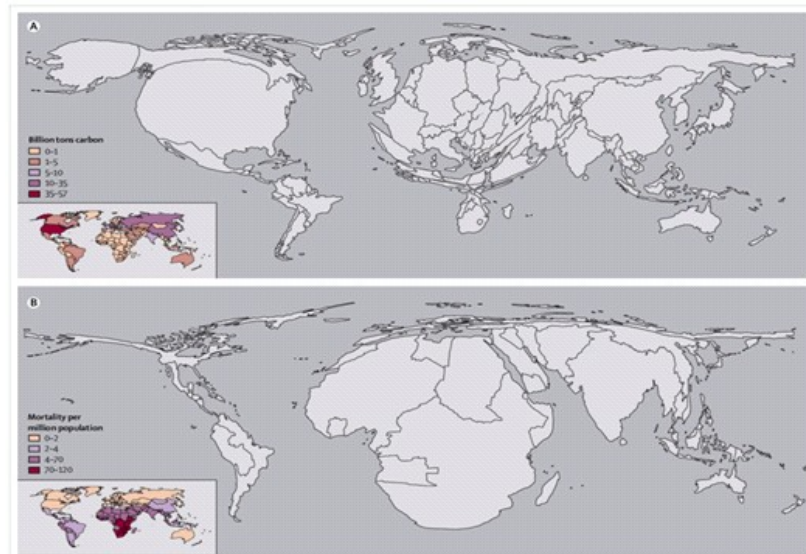


Figure 3: A/ World map in proportion of carbon emissions ; B/ world map in proportion of impacts from climate change
(Source: Lancet and University College London Institute for Global Health Commission, 2009)

1. Current scientific evidence about climate change

Climate change is one of the most serious environmental issues of our time, resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels. Although climate change is happening at a rapid rate, this issue fails to receive attention in terms of both theoretical aspects and cooperation among states. Climate change is one of the non-traditional and cross-border security challenges that have impacts on individuals, countries, and their relationships within the international system. This is a non-traditional security challenge because even if climate change is not related to military issues, such as wars or hot armed conflicts, it still poses vital security challenges for countries. Some island nations can be considered as typical examples when facing the reality that they will sink in the near future due to rising sea levels. According to the US Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), island nations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans are at the highest risk. Some island nations such as Maldives or Tuvalu will be uninhabitable by 2050, and the island of Kiribati is forecast to be completely submerged below sea level by 2100. In addition, many cities are also threatened by the negative impacts of climate change and rising sea levels, typically Venice (Italy), Amsterdam (the Netherlands), Hamburg (Germany), or cities in the Mekong Delta (Vietnam) (Brennan, 2016). Moreover, climate change is also related to many other issues that directly threaten the security of countries, such as temperature increases or decreases at record levels, unpredictable temperature changes, and unusual natural disasters, causing heavy damage to both people and property in many areas in recent years. According to United Nations data, 90% of current natural disasters have a connection with climate change, causing \$520 billion in damage to the world economy and pushing about 26 million people into poverty (The United Nations, 2020). Climate change not only affects individual countries but also poses threats to world peace, security and international relations. United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres (2019) assesses the negative impacts of climate change on international security and international relations by saying that climate change provokes conflicts, especially conflicts over non-renewable resources that are gradually running out (United Nations Secretary General, 2019). The United Nations Security Council

(UNSC) has repeatedly held open debates on whether or not climate change should be recognised as a security challenge for world peace. During these debates, the UNSC acknowledged the impacts of climate change, but failed to reach a consensus and failed to introduce a resolution recognizing the threats associated with climate change that pose a security threat to global security due to the veto of some major countries such as Russia, China and India (United Nations Security Council, 2007).

Regarding the latest evidence on climate change, according to the 6th Assessment Report (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), recent climate changes have been widespread, quick and unprecedented for thousands of years (The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022). Figure 1 shows that human activities have made the climate warmer at the fastest rate during the last 2000 years. Temperatures have increased more than one degree Celsius compared to 1850 – a pre-industrial era. The World Meteorological Organisation’s previous report (WMO, 2023) also gave numbers indicating that global average sea surface temperatures kept rising since April 2023, hitting a record high. The WMO also states that humans are experiencing record levels of heat compared to the pre-industrial levels and the temperatures are approaching a level that human beings “cannot endure” (The World Meteorological Organisation, 2019).

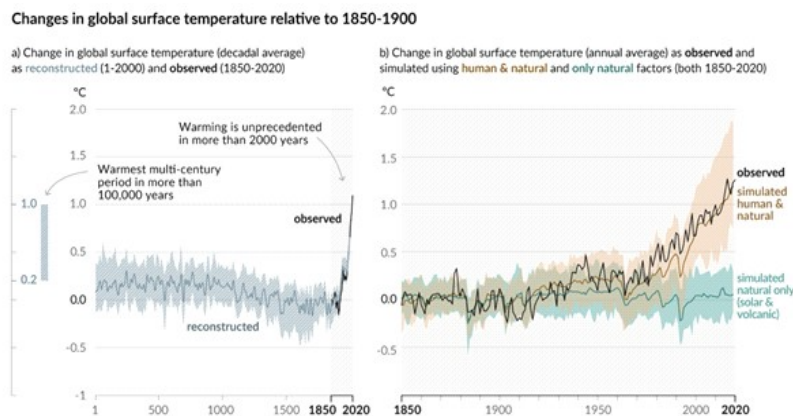
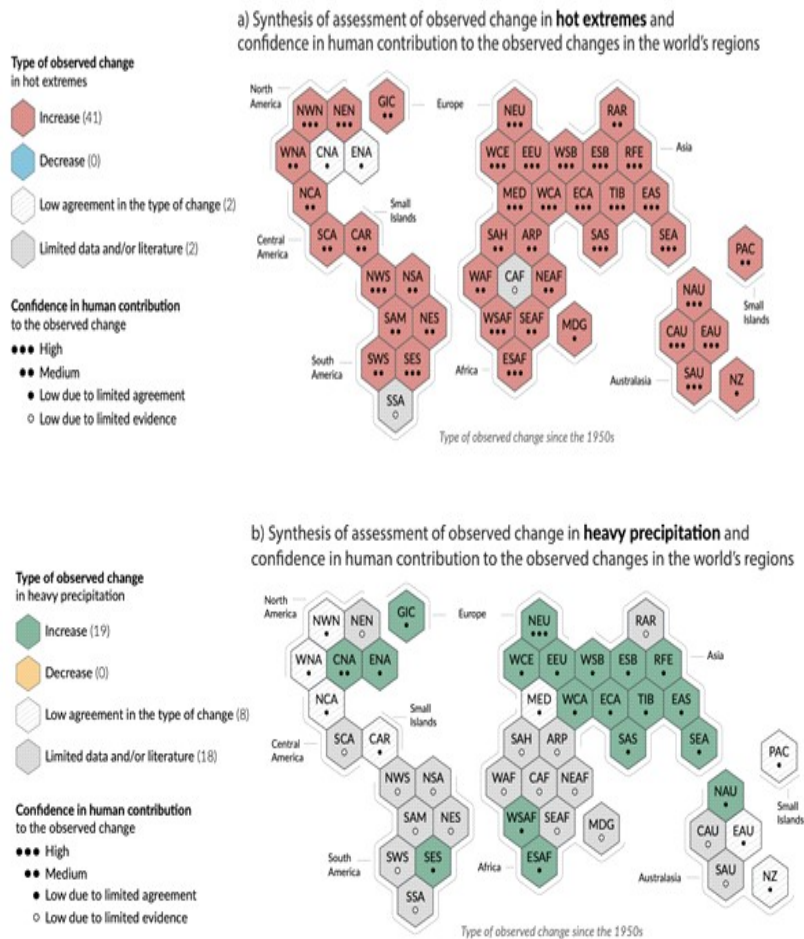
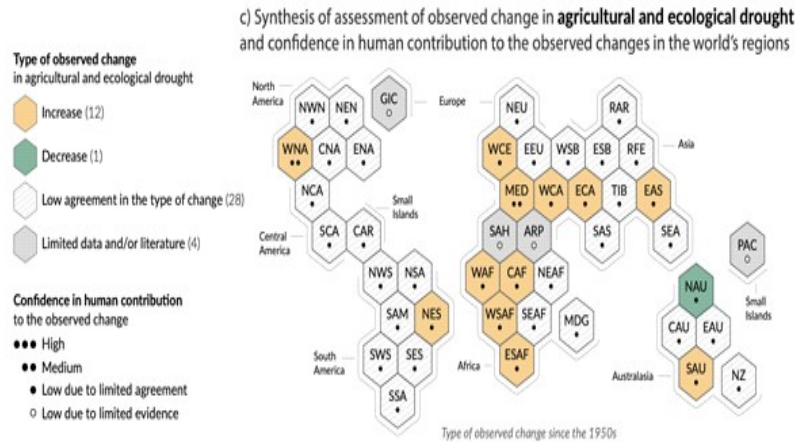


Figure 1: Changes in global surface temperature from 1 to 2020. (Source, AR6, IPCC, 2021)

According to the IPCC report, climate change affects all regions with a number of observed extreme events on a global scale. Figures 2 a), b) and c) show an increase in extreme weather events, such as hot extreme, heavy precipitation, agricultural and ecological drought as well as confidence in human contribution to these changes since 1950. While hot extremes are observed in all regions of the world, heavy precipitation is seen more frequently in Europe, Asia and North America, agricultural and ecological droughts are common in the African region and some parts of the Eurasian continent.





Figures 2 a), b) and c). Synthesis of assessment of observed changes of extreme weather (Source: IPCC 2021)

In particular, these changes will occur at a more alarming rate. The current temperature has increased by 1°C compared to the pre-1850 period, so extreme weather events will take place more frequently. With every increase in temperature, changes get bigger in regional mean temperature. It is also predicted that if the temperature rises by 1.5°C to 2°C, there will be frequency and increase in intensity of extreme temperature events that occur once in 10 years or 50 years on average in a climate without human influence.

The IPCC report also points out that it will be impossible to return to the former state of the climate system. However, some changes can be slowed down and others can be stopped by limiting the warming. Therefore, to limit global warming, it is necessary to sustainably reduce the amount of CO₂, methane, and other greenhouse gases. This not only reduces the consequences of climate change but also improves air quality. If there are no measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions immediately and on a large scale, it will be impossible to limit global warming as committed by countries (not exceeding the threshold of more than 1.5°C) will be impossible.

From all the aforementioned evidence, the green theory proposes a change in human behaviour or even in international politics

to address this thorny issue. IR theory can explain why environmental issues in general and climate change in particular are challenging matters for states to address because of economic and political disincentives to cooperate. Nevertheless, IR theory fails to offer an alternative framework to answer the question of how this might be addressed. Instead of considering other actors that might be more cooperative, such as local communities, non-governmental organisations, and green social movements, IR mainstream theories remain focused on states and their national interests.

IV. Implications for IR theory

The emergence of green theory in IR not only questions its dominant theories but also makes a contribution to the development of the discipline. It brings new perspectives and expands the theoretical frameworks within IR. Green theory puts focus on the importance of environmental considerations, non-state actors, sustainable development, justice, and complex interactions, which leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and challenges of global politics.

Firstly, green theory brings a holistic approach to the discipline of International Relations, integrating environmental concerns into the study of global politics and emphasising sustainability, cooperation, and environmental justice as key principles for addressing ecological challenges at the international level. A stronger eco-centric ethic – where the environment would be considered as an end, not just a means for human beings – would see different international politics.

Secondly, green theory recognises significant roles of non-state actors, such as international environmental organisations, local communities, individuals, etc. in shaping global environmental governance. This challenges the state-centric perspective of IR and expands the actors and institutions involved in international decision-making processes.

Thirdly, by calling for sustainable development and just distribution of environmental resources and benefits on a global scale, green theory brings attention to the issues of a broader consideration of societal well-being, intergenerational equity, and the needs of marginalised

communities in international relations. All of these matters should be included in IR theories.

Fourthly, the green theory highlights the complex and dynamic interactions between human societies and the environment. It focuses on the feedback loops between environmental degradation, resource scarcity, social conflict, and political instability. This challenges traditional linear models of causality and highlights the need for a more holistic and systems-oriented approach to understanding global politics. Besides, green theory puts forth the issue of ethical considerations in international politics.

V. Conclusion

A general idea in IR holds that the anarchic international system of competing sovereign states who are unitary, rational actors is the main focus of IR. However, this view fails to mention the fact that anarchy is within the much wider concept of the environment. All mainstream and some critical IR theories place humans at the centres, and in fact, there is almost nothing non-human in mainstream IR theories. These theories fail to effectively account for the influence on international politics of bio-spheric transformation. The emergence of green theory provides the discipline of IR with a more comprehensive approach that integrates nature into understanding IR issues. Green theorists also come up with ideas to address environmental issues by establishing a truly global governance, decentralising power to local authorities and individuals, or ensuring environmental justice in allocating benefits or resources at the global level. Abundant evidence of climate change and its impact supports the recommendations of the green theory. The evidence, together with green arguments, does require a rethinking of the assumptions that underlie International Relations.

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