

Unraveling the Intricacies of the Relationship between Global Politics and the Environment

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ABSTRACT

The world has made significant progress in environmental diplomacy and produced many environmental agreements. However, these agreements have not been proven to be effective in controlling environmental degradation, as global warming is rising, flooding has increased, and the elevation of the sea level, etc. This research paper explores the relationship between global politics and environmental crises and how the global politics, mainly between major powers like the United States and China, are having repercussions for the implementation of international environmental agreements. Global politics is one of the key challenges in the successful management of environmental crises and contributes to the failure of environmental diplomacy. The strategic contest is undermining the energy transition, manufacturing, and supply chain of renewable products, joint research and development. It is important to separate power politics from the shared goal of protecting the environment and sustainability.

Key Words: UNDP, Sustainability, Environmental Treaties, Climate Change, Power Politics

INTRODUCTION

Environmental sustainability is one of the prominent agendas of global development politics because almost every country of the globe has been experiencing the wrath of environmental degradation in the form of increased average temperature, rising sea level, flooding, etc. Various small and large agreements are being made to ensure the protection of the natural environment for the survival of humans and other living things. In the past three decades, over 500 environmental agreements have been signed by the global leaders to curtail the growing global temperature, pollution, fossil fuel etc. The global environmental governance system comprises of global environmental agencies like the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Conference of the Parties, and environmental agreements. And now non-state actors also play an important role in establishing an effective and resilient environmental governance system. There are various types of conventions and protocols, for instance some conventions needs additional negotiations and protocols for the execution i.e UNFCCC, while other are direct and don't require additional negotiations and third type is Unbrella agreements, under which various other agreements and accords are made, and fourth category is, agreements that are open to state and non-state actors as well. Just signing the agreement, does not obligate states to comply unless it is officially ratified. Nevertheless, it signifies that signatory states will not impede the treaty's progress.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and other agencies working for environmental sustainability. These organizations are responsible for coordinating policy at the international level; they are also responsible for developing agendas, strategies, and policies to protect and promote environmental

sustainability. This element also includes the international environmental laws and agreements, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Earth Summit, Kyoto Protocol, Conference of the Parties, Copenhagen Agreement, and other bilateral agreements between countries. These agreements are the tools and policy guides for the member countries to contribute to global environmental sustainability. Some of the agreements are binding and ask member states to take action to comply with the provisions of the agreements. However, on the other hand, some multilateral treaties are non-binding and allow parties to take voluntary actions within or outside their national boundaries.

Moreover, implementation, compliance, and monitoring of the environmental agreement are also an important part of environmental governance. States are responsible for making strategies, plans, and laws to fulfill the agreed environmental commitments, and treaties have monitoring, enforcement, and reporting mechanisms. However, lacking enforcement is one of the key gaps in most of the agreements because organizations responsible for implementing the agreement lack the legitimacy, capacity, and resources issues and tools for enforcement are limited to some sort of sanctions and name and shame. Environmental financing is also a key part of the environmental governance system because many developing countries do not have the required resources and capacity for moving to sustainable development approaches. Through different financial instruments, the developing countries are supported to acquire the required technology, commodities, and other supplies to fulfill their agreed commitments.

It is important to adopt a systematic and well-coordinated plan and foster collaboration among states to achieve global environmental sustainability. However, power politics and divergent interests, and the prominence of parochial interests over global objectives, make it hard to achieve environmental policy objectives. Environmental sustainability is facing a myriad of challenges from environmental agreements to the enforcement of environmental obligations.

History of International Environmental Governance

The United Nations Conference on Human Environment was held in 1972, was the first ever global event organized to discuss the growing environmental concerns. At this conference, the impact of human activities on the environment was discussed. The environmental movement got more attention when the scientists discovered the depletion of the ozone layer, which protects the Earth from the ultraviolet radiation of the earth. This led to greater awareness and sensitization on the protection of the environment among the global leaders. Subsequently, various international conferences were organized, like the World Commission on Development and Environmental Degradation in 1983, the Commission under the Brundtland report 1987, the conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Montreal Protocol 1987, and many others. The Conference of the Parties is being regularly organized under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. An increase in environmental awareness and diplomacy led to a greater number of environmental agreements. Leaders have realized that environmental challenges are not limited to a single state, but it's a transnational threat and will only be managed with greater coordination and joint global policies. Approximately, more than 1000 international environmental agreements are in place that include treaties, protocols, and amendments.

Transformation in International Environmental Agreements

Environmental treaties have been successively transforming since the 1970s. Treaties developed in the 1970s and 1980s dealt dealing each environmental challenge separately and dedicatedly. Such as pollution control, conservation of species, prevention, etc. Some of the important agreements of this timeframe are the Convention on International Trade in Endangered.

Species (CITES) aimed at the protection of vulnerable species from depletion through illegal trade. Likewise, the Ramsar Convention protects migrating birds, Convention on Long-Range Transboundary

Air Pollution for air pollution. Later scope of treaties was broadened and provided “frameworks” to grapple with the variety of issues climate change, deforestation, biodiversity etc. The Rio Summit 1992 was the beginning of such a type of MEAs and framework.

The environment agreements after the 2000s became more targeted and pragmatic, as mechanisms for implementation, compliance, monitoring, and funding became part of the agreements and were followed by all parties to the agreements. Unlike the past, where the primary focus was to develop the normative space for environmental stewardship and mainstreaming the definition of sustainable development, this is the era of implementation and compliance.

The changing nature of the environmental agreement is also evolving the change in process of crafting the agreements. In the past, the multilateral agreement was developed through negotiation and discussion among the representatives of the country; however, now the environmental discussions are open and influenced by international environmental organizations. These organizations also provide advisory support to governments and the UN in target setting and formulation of MEAs. For instance, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification asks states to use a participatory approach to combat desertification. (United Nations 1994). Civil society has also become an important part in environmental treaty discussions, development, and refinement of the treaty action plan. Civil society has great influence on the Conference of the Parties (COP), which is meant to identify the implementation challenges and how to improve compliance, and how it can be refined through additional provisions and protocols. Environmental diplomacy has evolved over time and continues to include non-state actors in the discussion. Initially, only a limited number of non-state actors were allowed to participate in the conference; only 134 NGOs were allowed to participate in in 1972 Stockholm Conference. while the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg 2002 witnessed the presence of 3000 organizations with 8000 individuals from these organizations. Civil society involvement is not limited to these big summits; its presence is also increased at other small meetings convened on various environmental issues.

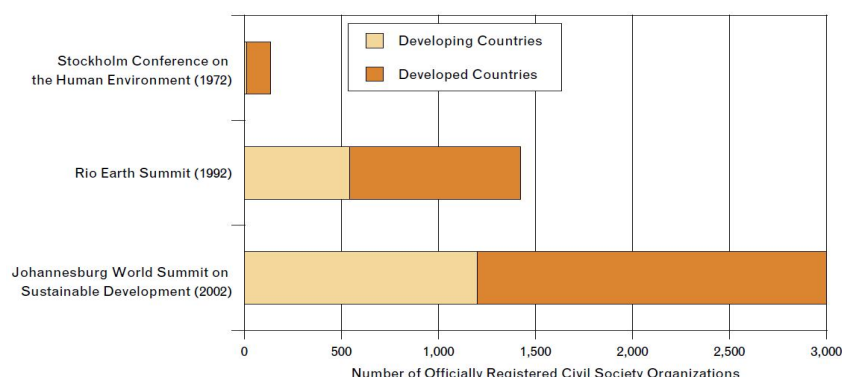
At the start of the environmental movement, the civil society organizations attending environmental big summits were mostly from the North and associated with environmental groups such as the World Wide Fund for Nature or Friends of the Earth. At the Stockholm conference, only 10 civil society organizations were from developing countries; however, at the Earth Summit 1992, it rose to about one third. it further increased in the 2002 Rio plus Ten Summit, 40% organizations that registered for preparatory sessions were from the developing world.

In change in the number, but the nature of civil society participation at environmental summits has also changed. Unlike past, where the participation by civil society organizations was only of environmental groups, participation has become more inclusive with the attendance of development, poverty NGOs, industrial and business groups, rights-based groups etc. civil society and NGOs' participation has been transformed from passive to active by greater involvement negotiations, environmental target setting and observation of treaty implementation. In sum, civil society organizations have been playing an important role in the knowledge management of environmental treaties and frameworks. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan once said, *“The United Nations once dealt only with governments. By now, we know that peace and prosperity cannot be achieved without partnerships involving governments, international organizations, the business community, and civil society. In today’s world, we depend on each other”*.

Non-state actors are very important in developing and disseminating new ideas and pushing governments to adopt and implement a concrete action plan to meet the treaty obligations. Reducing greenhouse gases to prevent climate change is the core objective of major agreements, which were just introduced by the

Toronto Targets, advocated by an environmental organization in the 1980s and early 1990s. During the first Convention of Biological Diversity in 1995, safe use of genetically modified organisms in the Biosafety Protocol was strongly lobbied by non-government organizations.

Civil Society Participation in Environmental Summits



Source: Haas et al. 1992:32 (2002), WRI calculations

The growing activism of civil society in the international environmental discussion has led to the institutionalization of the multistakeholder process, as it has been done in the case of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). The multistakeholder process provided an opportunity to develop a constructive and useful interaction between the government and civil society on environmental and other associated topics. The multistakeholder process has been a permanent part of environmental diplomacy. In the Convention on Biological Diversity, MSP was integrated into the official agenda and part of intergovernmental discussions.

Non-state actors played a dominant role in providing scientific knowledge and resources to government officials, thereby influencing international environmental conventions. The United Nations engages non-government organizations through its Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) wing for technical and scientific services, policy inputs, and research and information.

However, states are primary actors and are responsible for making any final decisions. So, the non-state actors like civil society organizations play on marginal role in the negotiations. According to the theory of realism, the state serves as the principal actors in international diplomacy and states are the ones who can take the final decision. While actors other than states only have advisory, monitoring, and supportive roles in global politics. States are the signatories and sole actors in finalizing the environmental treaties, and states are bound to follow the treaty obligations and implement them in their territorial jurisdiction.

Only state representatives have the right to agree or disapprove of any legislation or protocol. States are the only sovereign actors and have the capacity to enact laws to comply with environmental obligations and enforce their citizens to follow those laws and obligations. And states have all the required resources, including economic resources, military power, and social and political legitimacy, to accelerate the implementation of environmental commitments. The U.S. refrained from ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, even pressurized from environmental movements and the international community.

The international environmental governance has three core components, namely process, followed by architecture, and implementation. All these components are interdependent and work in a coordinated manner. The process of environmental governance often starts with the realization of growing environmental vulnerabilities, which might become a challenge for human survival. The process led to the

construction of environmental treaties and agreements. Recurrent environmental conferences and frameworks are also part of the process of environmental governance. The major environmental meetings and conferences are preceded by a myriad of preparatory meetings sponsored by scientists and other interests that inform the negotiations.

The management of environmental agreements is done through a variety of formal and informal committees, i.e., subsidiary bodies, bureaus, panels, etc. Commissions, Secretariats, Programmes are also part of the environmental governance architecture, for instance United Nations Environmental Programme facilitates the implementation of environmental frameworks, treaties, and multilateral agreements. The horizontal and vertical expansion in global environmental governance led to the establishment of a specialized bureaucracy at the international level assigned with the execution and monitoring of agreements. The Brundtland Report suggested developing an experimental facility to provide technical and financial support to those with inadequate resources. Agreements are a set of statements and declarations that are finalized after discussions, mediations, and negotiations. Multiple names are being used for environmental agreements, such as conventions, treaties, protocols, frameworks etc. This set of rules, laws, and commitments binds the signing parties together to achieve a unified set of objectives and provide different levels of authority.

Major Environmental Agreements

The Montreal Protocol is a landmark agreement in the history of environmental diplomacy. It was aimed at limiting the release of chlorofluorocarbons to prevent ozone layer. The protocol was concluded and came to force in 1989, and 197 countries became part of it. Under the protocol, all party states were under binding targets of eliminating the production and consumption of ozone-damaging substances such as chlorofluorocarbons, hydrochlorofluorocarbons, halons, etc. All the member countries phase out these substances by 2000. To support the developing countries in meeting the protocol targets, a financial instrument named the Multilateral Fund was formed in 1987, and through this financial instrument, around 8600 projects were supported, worth US\$3.9 billion. The progress on phasing out ozone-depleting substances is on track, and the absolute phase-out will be reached by 2040. And if the current rate of phasing out continues, then ozone will reach its pre-1980 shape between 2060 to 2075.

So far, the Montreal Protocol is considered to be one of the most successful environmental treaties because it was ratified by almost all countries, and most countries have made significant progress towards phasing out ozone-depleting substances. And scientists have witnessed the regeneration of the ozone layer. Former Secretary General of the United Nations said, *"Perhaps the single most successful international agreement to date has been the Montreal Protocol"*.

The second major agreement in the history of the environmental movement is the Kyoto Protocol. This agreement was drafted at the United Nations Conference in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997. The target of the agreement was to reduce the carbon emissions from the industrialized nations and keep the global average temperature below the 1990 level from 2008 to 2012. The party countries were divided into two categories, Annex 1 and Annex 2 countries. Targets for the former category were binding; however, Annex 2 countries were given additional responsibility of providing financial and technical support to developing states to reduce their carbon emission. To facilitate the reduction of carbon emissions, three mechanisms were also introduced: the Emission Trading System-buy and sell of emission rights, Joint Implementation, and Clean Development Mechanism. The second phase of the agreement was organized in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2009 to discuss the post-2012 carbon emission targets. During this conference a few more initiatives were taken to expedite the reduction of carbon emissions, such as the Green Climate Fund.

The Paris Agreement is the third major international agreement aimed at reducing carbon emissions and the adoption of renewable energy sources. This agreement was adopted in December 2015 during the Climate Conference in Paris. The overall target of the agreement was to restrict the rise of the global average temperature to below 2° Celsius. This agreement was unique because the allocation of emission reduction targets to each party country was based on their contribution to carbon emissions. Party countries are obliged to develop their reduction plans, called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), to the secretariat and share progress and reporting against the submitted plans. Moreover, developed countries vowed to provide financial and technical support to the developing countries to meet their climate emission reduction targets and energy transition.

Despite the presence of hundreds of international environmental agreements, the world is still confronted with all sorts of environmental crises, such as flooding, deforestation, global warming, air pollution, and water pollution. According to the World Meteorological Organization report, the record-breaking climatic changes were recorded in the year 2015, such as rising global temperature, droughts, irregular rainfall, cyclones, heatwaves, etc. In the same WMO report, its Secretary General, Petteri Taalas, said, *“The alarming rate of change we are now witnessing in our climate as a result of greenhouse gas emissions is unprecedented in modern records.”* The average temperature rise in 2015 was about 0.76 °C above the average between 1961-1990. Previously, 2014 was recorded as the hottest year, but 2015 was even more intense. Since we entered this millennium, the world has recorded 14 record-breaking hottest years. This shows, the environmental diplomacy and mitigation efforts are not producing the desired results. This might be because of a lack of implementation, power politics, supremacy of economic growth, and other related issues.

According to NASA data, there is a perpetual increase in the average global temperature coupled with other climate-damaging drivers, it is resulting in continuous warming of the climate, and such a rapid change in climate conditions has never been experienced in the last 100 years. February 2016 was the most unseasonably hot month. To control the growing increase in global average temperatures, it is necessary to reduce carbon emissions at a massive level and also curtail other environmental crises. Pakistan has been experiencing the worst environmental crises, as recently there has been a massive increase in flooding, heatwaves, droughts, and other environmental challenges. According to the World Wildlife Fund of Nature, Pakistan is experiencing a huge level of deforestation, and it's the highest annual deforestation in Asia. In addition, over 150 thousand acres of forest land are transformed into non-forest land. Cleaning of carbon sinks contributes to rising temperature, rising sea level, melting glaciers, seasonal changes, etc.

Environmental Sustainability and Global Politics

After trade, the environment is the second major agenda of international diplomacy, but when environmental obligations collide with other strategic interests, the environment inevitably moves back to the priority list. After years of negotiations, governments lack the intent to implement the agreements, especially when they affect other national interests. Large-scale private firms move their manufacturing to the developing and underdeveloped countries, because of loss of environmental safeguards, i.e, in Nigeria, the oil companies are producing environmental consequences without any impunity.

Compliance and attaining the environmental goals are only possible with close cooperation, joint action, and mutual trust among states. However, in the presence of geostrategic politics, it often becomes hard for states to sustain their cooperation for a long time. States prefer their national interest over the global and common interests. The primary reason for the failure of international environmental agreements is the collective action problem, wherein states, being the primary actor, have divergent and varied national interests, which compel states to invest resources in areas that directly benefit their national interest. In most instances, the national interest is all about economic growth and strengthening national security.

In the recent past, there has been a change in international relations. Currently, non-traditional security threats are also involved in the composition of global politics. Environmental degradation, particularly climate change, is a dominant debate in global affairs. The environment has become so important to international relations that environmental politics has become a complete subfield in international relations. Globalization has dismantled many justifications to keep global environmental governance separated from the IR mainstream study. In contemporary global affairs, the conventional separation of low and high politics, which kept global environmental sustainability out of the IR context, has completely disappeared and is no longer relevant as both parts of politics have emerged so well that the distinction between them is nearly impossible.

The environment is a part of high politics now, for instance, during military operations climate factor is given equal importance and calculated strategically. Security departments and agencies keenly monitor the environmental implications for security. This is validated by a number of research studies that the environment has a significant impact on security and military operations. A debate on 'relative gains' is also being organized in the climate politics realm. Strategic planners at the Pentagon were the pioneers in integrating environmental crises in security planning and risk calculation. Climate-induced crises like migration, food security, drought, etc, are being studied by the security paradigm. Interstate conflicts oriented by the water distribution can transform into a full security crisis. For instance, India and Pakistan dispute over the Indus Water.

The convergence of environmental politics in the international relations domain started in the late 1990s when the neoliberal approach started studying the subject in the context of complex interdependence in system sovereign states and the absence of an international authoritative body to provide order and regulation to states. International environmental politics is seen as a global environmental negotiation to achieve international cooperation. Apart from security studies, climate change is being discussed in the international domain as a global common problem, and this needs to be resolved with multilateral cooperation and agreements.

International relations are full of contesting discourses that look at the climate and environmental problem in general from the indigenous lens. For instance, Social Darwinism clearly supports laissez-faire economics in a climate change regime. This preposition is with the pretext that the free market is crucial and can provide resources, incentives, and establish the required technological base to deal with environmental challenges. In sum, the argument is that, in a free market system, the market can fix all the problems automatically. REDD and REDD+ carbon trading, etc, are examples of free market solutions to environmental problems. However, these programmes are strongly criticized as a new method of commodification of resources.

Global environmental politics has been so amalgamated into international relations that a new form of state has been introduced in all other types of states, that is green state. It's a state that integrates environmental protection into its national and international policies. Moreover, some scholars explain green states in contrast to welfare states, which always look for social production, health, education, and economy to actively monitor the environment, invest in environmental protection, assess risk, and deploy effective policies.

Many research studies have been organized to revamp the environmental policy formation by strengthening the presence of state and non-state actors. The relationship between conflicts and climate change is also being studied in international relations. Recognition of Climate Change as a public concern is pervasive, and various political and public programmes are centered on environmental crises. In contrast, some people refute the anthropocentric approach to climate change and believe that climate change is a natural phenomenon, it's not a threat to survival, and should be dealt with accordingly. A

Gallup poll in 2019 reveals, 13 percent of people deny the anthropocentric approach to climate change and don't consider climate change as a threat.

Environmental politics has a direct impact on global politics and transforms state to state and state and state-to-society relations. Climate change minimizes state sovereignty and territorial integrity and catalyzes changes in territories and marine boundaries. Such as, the melting of ice on Greenland increases the sea level by 6 meters, and the melting of Antarctica's ice will lead to a 60-meter sea level rise. The South Pacific Islands are completely vanishing while countries like Bangladesh, India, China, and other littoral states would need to shift thousands of people to safe areas due to the rise in level and marine territorial changes. Research studies are being carried out, and discussions among IR scholars have been geared up to discuss the concept of sovereignty under the Anthropocene context, especially where climate changes alter the territorial boundaries and where the assumption of territorial control is challenged by climate change.

Environmental Implications of the U.S. and China Strategic Competition

The United States and China are two major states of the international system and are also two large economies. Hence, their cooperation and compliance are critically important for the success of environmental diplomacy and the protection of the environment. However, power competition between the United States and China has an impact on environmental policy and compliance. The United States and China are having competition in the areas of economy, ideology, policy making, and military and power politics, of which the two countries have positive and negative consequences for environmental sustainability. The United States and China have two different ideological systems and values; hence, their policy preferences also vary. The environmental management model that China follows is Authoritarian Environmentalism, which means all environmental affairs are regulated by the CCP, and a top-down approach is used for environmental policy and compliance. It's an exclusive model where only the government has decided on climate change policies and response, and no other actor or institution is involved and doesn't have the authority to question the state's decision. The directions are trickling down to the downstream institutions and the community. On the other hand, the United States follows democratic environmentalism, which involves a participatory and bottom-up approach. All the relevant stakeholders are engaged in designing the environmental policies and response. Media and civil society organizations monitor the progress of the government on its climate commitments. Likewise, intellectual property, human rights, and other related issues are also major obstructions in the developing climate cooperation between the United States and China. Due to the human rights abuses, the United States has banned the solar panel imports from China, it ultimately hurting the pace of energy transition in the United States. Furthermore, various joint projects between the United States and China on clean energy, such as the U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center (CERC), have been halted due to theft of intellectual property. In addition, technology sharing and transfer have completely stopped.

Likewise, the power politics of the United States and China are damaging environmental policymaking. Non-ratification of the Kyoto Protocol was sabotaged by the balance of power and relative advantages issues for China. As the United States leader of the world, it has not ratified the protocol, it has triggered other developed and developing countries to non-compliance. The Copenhagen Conference of 2009 also failed to achieve the concrete objective because of Chinese disapproval of the various discussion points. The Paris Agreement is also facing huge implementation challenges, and scientists are skeptical that it will be very hard to achieve the objectives of the agreement with current policies and practices by the given timeline. The United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement also hampered the credibility and broke the momentum. The power contest between the U.S. and China blocked the bilateral cooperation for technological advancement and innovation in renewable energy.

The economic competition and trade war between the United States and China have disrupted the supply chain of renewable technology and products like solar panels, wind turbines, electric cars, etc. China has the greatest reserves of rare earth elements, which are required for the manufacturing of solar panels and other renewable commodities. Due to trade barriers and overall strategic contest, China inhibited the export of these elements to the United States, which affected the manufacturing of renewable energy products. Moreover, the international economic projects such as China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are also producing a large amount of carbon dioxide by the coal power plants installed under this project. Furthermore, both the United States and China are working to strengthen their military power as well through building new weapons and arsenal, developing overseas bases, and military training. These military-related activities are also becoming sources of environmental degradation by releasing carbon dioxide, damaging water species, deforestation, etc. The environmental implications of the U.S. and China strategic competition are not only having direct environmental damages but also highly compromising the achievement of the Paris Agreement objectives.

CONCLUSION

Climate change is becoming a serious threat to human security. Vietnam, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nigeria, and other developing countries are prone to elevated dangers of climate change in the form of rising sea levels, changing territorial and marine boundaries, which in the end, destabilize them internally by having millions of IDPs and developing resettlements for them. Migrant flow may also develop irritants in relations with neighboring countries. Climate change is not the only catalyst of these events; however, it has multiplied the chances of the scope of these events.

Geopolitics is not an exception to be left without the influence of Climate Change. Fossil fuels have been a primary energy source and are also driving the geopolitical economy. The transformation to carbon carbon-efficient energy supply will certainly have an impact on geopolitics and will also change the position of states in global affairs. There will be a permanent change in global economic balance, as the wealth and resources concentrated with oil and gas-rich countries will shift to countries with huge renewable energy production and supplies. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Russia, Norway, and Venezuela would face new realities of the global shift to renewable energy. The strategic importance of the military would also be affected because most of the oil-producing countries have shaped their military and foreign policy based on their oil and gas resources. For Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, military strategy is directly linked with their fossil fuel strength; hence, these states must reorient their military and strategic strategies. *"The international community finds it very difficult to sign any international agreements that provide for tough commitments on reducing pollution because of the strong resistance of the states and companies that will be the hardest hit by regulation,"* says Igor Makarov, head of Laboratory for Economics of Climate Change, Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs at the Moscow-based Higher School of Economics.

The environmental activism and integration of climate change in global affairs and the shift to non-fossil fuel resources will generate reputational challenges for oil-producing countries. Norway's state-controlled energy company "Equinor" is being criticized around the world for its offshore drilling and for spreading misinformation about "Gas as a low carbon". Tougher regulations and reputational factors attributed to carbon footprints and fossil fuel production are prompting oil-producing corporations to change their conduct and put their share in renewable energy. Super active environmental activism and jumping of the environment on the international agenda has a definitive role in changing the corporation's attitude towards energy production and investment.

There will also be a change in regional and global alliance-building; states with a drive towards climate-efficient energy sources will possibly come together to support and learn from each other. Unlike past, when joining environmental alliances was only on a voluntary and non-binding nature of environmental

commitments, the new environmental alliance, monitoring mechanism, sanctions for non-compliance, nationally determined environmental commitments, etc. Non-compliant countries and non-member states are subject to global reputational damage.

Theorizing sovereignty in the climate change context requires separate conceptual tools and frameworks. Violation of sovereignty is typically done through territorial infringement and violation by specific actors, but territorial violation is equally vulnerable to or challenged by climate change and other environmental calamities. Geoengineering to deal with environmental challenges has adverse effects on sovereignty and constructs a new avenue of rivalry and conflict.

However, with all this progress, the environment is still at the margins of international relations. Most of the research studies carried out are on the core areas of IR, such as foreign policy, international and regional security, the status of sovereignty, international regimes, etc. A review of five international relations journals showed that environmental politics and policy are not prioritized for publications, and between 2015 to 2019, only 0.76 percent of articles were on environmental politics and related topics. Therefore, it is necessary to study environmental sustainability through an interdisciplinary approach to comprehensively understand the impacts of power politics on environmental sustainability and then draft appropriate solutions to mitigate the effects of power politics on environmental cooperation and compliance.

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