Disputed Subjects of Paris Climate Agreement, 2015

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Evolution and effectiveness of an international climate change regime to address impacts of global climate change demand understanding complexity of the underlying political and economic underpinnings of the problem. This article explores disputed subjects of Paris Climate Agreement, 2015 that largely restrain cooperation among sovereign states from devising effective internationally determined and legally binding commitments. Rich states are understood historically responsible for the problem for their earlier industrialization; poor developing states are significantly suffering from the worst negative consequences of climate change. Similarly, climate actions in terms of mitigation demand reduced use of fossil fuels, an economic threat to primarily fossil fuels based economies, a compromise on the highly consumptive societies and a constrain on growing developing economies. On the other hand, climate inaction in terms of mitigation and adaptation poses grave repercussion to developing states, rather existential threat to vulnerable small islands and low-lying states.

Keywords: global climate change, North-South, structural inequality, fossil fuel based economy, small Island states, right to development, CBDR-RC

Global climate change is an enormously complex global issue with catastrophic adverse implications, significantly for developing states and largely for the entire world. Weather influences man's system of transportation, production, supply and demands (Casper, 2009). Climate is in fact the greatest "natural resource" whose favorability makes life possible (Borroughs, 2003), earning Earth the title of "Goldilocks planet": neither too hot nor too cold, (Desonie, 2006). Current rapid climate changes in the Earth system because of the human induced heat trapping greenhouse gases, an outcome of excessive use of fossil and modern civilization since industrialization, offer little time for adaptation. Starting with global warming, these climate changes involve disruption of global water cycles, and extensively result in unpredictable socio-economic and political impacts: reduced agriculture yields, biodiversity loss, energy crises, environmental refugees, various diseases and chaos of governance specifically in developing world (Desonie, 2006; Silver, 2008; Dessler, 2012).However, this understanding is not shared with equal gravity because of global actors' preference for relative gains and different levels of vulnerability to climate changes. Climate change actions, meaning policy response, involve reducing greenhouse emissions, primarily an outcome of fossil fuel run civilization. Therefore, effective solutions to global climate change consequently restrict use of fossil fuels. Extensive dependence on fossil fuels to make our mechanized world function and grow is attributed to its abundance and man's technical expertise for its exploitation (Judkins, Fulkerson, & Sanghvi, n.d.), thus linking carbon emissions and fossil fuel run modern industrialized world. Climate change solution seeks de-linking this bond between fossil fuels and energy production and consumption. Energy system and socio-economic life patterns are having an intricate dependent relationship

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(Herbstreuth, 2011; Karl, 2004), and evolve a socio-economic culture that influence decisions of governance. This article broadly signifies relationship of international relations and environment, and particularly focuses on the issue of cooperation among states regarding provision and protection of international public good, global climate, and equally essential common interest of securing development in an anarchic international system. Understanding obstacles to evolution of an effective collective policy frame on a common issue highlights conflicting preferences for relative and collective gains in presence of different socio-political and economic outcomes of response towards the issue. The degree of different levels and kinds of vulnerability to impending climate threats, a significant factor shaping formation of an international climate regime, makes this study incumbent as developing states suffer excessively from the negative climate impacts because of their insufficient adaptive capacity. Nine out of ten natural disasters of the last 40 years is attributed to climate variations with an annual cost of $14billion to Pakistan's economy (Khan, 2013). Repercussions of rapidly changing climate that are undermining shared natural resources like water and agriculture productivity could create interstate and intrastate conflicts, specifically in conflict prone regions of South Asia and Middle East. These new challenges to the nation state are redefining the traditional understanding of national security (Khan, 2012). Understanding contested political dynamics of international climate regime is significant for it helps in drawing symbiotic policy coordination between the energy and environment sectors.

Setting out a 2°C target for the earth surface temperature and realizing it through "controlled implosion of fossil industry instigated by a technological explosion related to renewable energy system and other innovation" are the most significant aspects of Paris agreement, 2015 (Schellnhuber, Rahmstorf & Winkelmann, 2016). The prescribed target would be achieved through Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC): self-determined plans of states to curb greenhouse emissions (Ramady & Mahdi, 2015). Failure to materialize internationally binding targets is attributed to following major factors. Developed and developing states are legally standing equal despite their factually disparate economic and political position in international system. Developed powerful states, however, with their enriched resources and earlier industrialization are the main perpetrators and less powerful states are victims to global climate change despite negligible role in creation of this problem. Moreover, developed rich states are advanced in their adaptive capacity to adverse climate changes than developing states with meager resources. International climate change regime has three main contentious dynamics: international political economy or influence of wealth and power in international relations that distinguishes developed North from developing South; nature of dependence on non-renewable energy resources like oil, coal and gas; and understanding of the climate impact and associated reduction costs.

The Global North and South Divide: Environmental Problems and Structural Inequality

International political economy, broadly concerned with the question of wealth, poverty and entailing relationship of dependence, is an important determinant of climate change policy making. The poor developing south desires that responsibilities for solution should be accorded in light of contribution to the problem and respective capacity for its solution: relative contribution and ability to address the problem decide relative obligation of states (Agarwal, 2002). Principally accepting responsibility for the problem of global climate change, the North lacks political will and determined unified approach to subject itself to internationally determined commitments in terms of emission reduction and directing the required financial resources and technology to South (Paterson, 1996).

Apprehensions exist on both sides. The issue is further compounded in presence of pre-existing trust deficit and structural inequality.

Despite analytical ambiguity, the extensively used concept of "South" and contested idea of "sustainable development" underpin politics of global environment (Najam, 2005). The global South, a term with profound political essence, symbolically gives collective identity to poor developing states signifying their poverty in economics and influence that excludes them from mainstream international politics. Najam further notices that politically disempowered South considers itself vulnerable to external manipulations threatening its "functional sovereignty" The economic disparity and pervasive poverty in the Southern countries attributed to structural exploitation created the necessary conditions for these states to collectively assert themselves for actualizing desired changes. The global North is distinguished as economically developed countries lying north to the equator with higher GNP and living standards with diverse economic foundations (Rourke, 2003). It commands higher export capacity of manufactured goods and provides refined sophisticated technologies and services. South, the collective identity of developing states lying south to the equator, is vulnerable as its 34% export base is relying on primary goods (Rourke, 2003). Rich states harnessing opportunities of Victorian industrial revolution with cheap but harmful coal resources develop themselves at the expense of others' share of the environmental space (Agarwal, 2002).

International environmental negotiations, influenced of these macro-economic conflicts, are considered by the North part of a "larger game" to rectify prevalent systemic disempowerment and imbalance of wealth and influence (Najam, 2005). North fears climate convention as South's justification for a changed economic order to access global market and achieve modern scientific technology, and demands a comprehensive mitigation policy as emission reduction in North is understandably futile if it remains unchecked in South, especially in case of growing emissions in countries such as China and India (Paterson, 1996). The global South, however, is unable to effectively counter overweening influence of powerful states in determining agenda and policy process in formation of climate change regime (Depledge, 2005). It demands financial and technological resources to enhance its adaptive capacity against adverse repercussions of climate change and achieve clean energy development. The South fears binding quantified emission targets as'eco-colonialism', an attempt to restrain its growth, not unjustified in light of historical responsibility and least per capita emissions at present (Harrison & Melville, 2010). The North raises apprehensions that South's unchecked emissions on the ground of availing their share of development would triple current level of CO_2 (Agarwal, 2002). Agarwal states that the most effective solution rendered to avert such a catastrophe is the South leapfrogging of western development pattern— avoiding its "historical inefficiencies" and potential "environmental threats". However, the process of leapfrogging is limited by structural and domestic limitations: Northern states especially U.S reluctance for technology transfer, South's mounting and crippling debt, its dependence on external resources, unequal terms of trade limiting its access to global market, and domestic political and institutional instability (Paterson, 1996). The rationalist logic of consequentiality is at the root of this behaviour guided by fear of relative gains.

South questioned and resisted North's intended environmental agenda at Stockholm conference, 1972, for its overemphasis on environment was feared to arrest South's development (Najam, 2005; Reuveny & Thompson, 2008)—aneo-imperialism (Laferriere, 2006). The underlying roots of disagreement on environmental policy are global inequality and injustice (Redcliff & Sage, 2002**;** Miller, 2002), with South vying to address its perennial issues of neglect and exploitation (Reuveny & Thompson, 2008; Najam, 2005). The developing South lauded the concept of sustainable

development, a "defining moniker" for all future environmental and political forums (Najam, 2005), for it knitted environment and development ate Rio Conference, 1992 (Laferrie, 2006).

The North and South have different understandings of environmental degradation and equally divergent order of priorities and solutions (Roberts & Parks, 2007; Redcilff & Sage, 2002; Najam, 2005). North historical contribution to the problem of climate change, South argues, demands for it to take massive emission curtailing measures(Redcliff & Sage, 2002),. It considers North's development pattern responsible for the global environmental degradation and systemic increase of global inequality (Gupta, 2006; Najam, 2005), and idealized development in terms of empowerment seeking production that could ameliorate people living conditions. Gupta (2006) also terms problem of development, global poverty and environmental degradation as "*social ecological crises",* attributed to North unsustainable economic models, excessively unwise consumption, and unfair global economic system. North's technical and economic superiority as well as its ability to shape ideological context, preferences, and conception of favorable development process limit choices of developing states (Agarwal, 2002). There are no same solutions for the problems with different understandings and interpretations. The global South, without invalidating the North's environmental ideal, significantly seeks improving state of global politics to actualize a much fair and just international order (Najam, 2005). Equalizing per capita emission of one US citizen to 30 Pakistanis, Agarwal (2002) argues that the developed North as "holders of natural debt" has limited environmental capacity to carbon emissions at the expense of South's share of development. Therefore, financial and technological assistance to the global South should not be understood as an economic burden and threat, but repayment of debt and ecological necessity.

Fossil Export Based Economies/ OPEC Fear Economic Vulnerability

Environmental scientists and the world at large are growing conscious and concerned about two things: depleting fossil fuels and rising concentration of greenhouse gases. Alday, Baron and Tubiana (n.d.) drawing relationship of fossil fuel led economy and climate change highlight that greenhouse emission is a corollary of every economic activity. Therefore, one major task before the stakeholders of the global economy and environment is to "manage cost" of the international climate regime to accommodate states having fossil fuel dependent economy for ensuring their participation (Alday, Baron & Tubiana, n.d.). These fossil fuel dependent economies avoid imposing public cost for distant benefits, for fear of losing political clout and favourability., Climate policy making is equally compromised in presence of uncertainty regarding its adverse impacts and cost of climate actions like shift from fossil fuel energy to other forms of energy resulting in less export and less production for fossils export economies. Apprehensions that impacts of climate change are "irreversible", thus, cost on action would be "irrecoverable" limit effective policy making (Alday, Baron & Tubiana, n.d.).

State's political culture, citizens' orientation towards political system, its decision making process and corresponding responses (Powell, Jr., Dalton, & Strom, 2014), is evolved and shaped by the nature of its energy dependence (Wilpert, 2003).Energy exporter countries, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), are dependent on export of oil and gas for revenue and thus resist strong climate convention. With 87% of its revenue dependent on oil export (Trading economics, n.d.), Saudi Arabia demanded to be treated as special as vulnerable small island states with an understanding that rigid climate rules could seriously undermine its economy and development (Wynn, 2009). Russell (2011) after highlighting intensity of climate change implications for the oil exporting rich Middle Eastern states elaborates the evolved political culture dominating decision making structure. The oil producing states maintains their highly consumptive man-made

artificial world and continued spending on mitigation and adaptation measures with revenue earned from international energy market. Paradoxically, revenue generation through increased production, export and global consumption of fossil fuel further increase greenhouse emissions, aggravating global climate change. Therefore, mitigation and adaptation efforts require regulating global exploitation of fossil fuels, a fundamental revenue source to Gulf States, threatening their existing socio-political and economic infrastructure (Russell, 2011).

In addition OPEC countries are considered accursed with 'resource curse' defined as elite undemocratic decision making structure securing political acquiescence through luxurious public welfare services (Karl, 2011) with the help of revenue accrued from the international energy markets. Most of the fossil fuel export economies in Middle East lack effective democratic norms, structures and accountability mechanisms (Waterbury, 2013). Explaining this political culture and state-society relationship, the reinter state theory postulates that states relying on income of oil and gas imports levy no taxes on their subjects (Gray, 2011; Machowski, 2010) that result in “fewer political demands” from the subjects (Levins, 2013). Similarly, state's profuse societal distribution of this revenue, understandably, makes it less obliged to its subjects in terms of democratic values and developmental foundations. Gray (2011) concludes that rents and rentierism remain fundamental to the understanding of the gulf OPEC states, despite presence of many other determinants and problems.

Even impending climate impacts followed by exacerbation of socio-economic problems are perceived less threatening than the divergence between required climate change mitigation actions and national interests. Babiker (2003) argues that in view of the oil exporting countries dependence on oil industries, economic implications of response measures to climate change are the most important adverse effects. Economic vulnerability is prioritized in comparison to physical vulnerabilities. OPEC's solution to climate change problem is technological evolution and development, as propounded by Saudi oil minister, rather than substitute of fossil fuels (Rusell, 2011). Dependence of the governments and governed in fossil fuel exporting economies on revenue generated from this resource—an interaction “inexorably intertwined” (Rusell, 2011)—helps understand resistance to international binding climate actions.

Gas Guzzling Culture and Right to Development Feel Threatened

Developed states with rich energy resources and corresponding high consumption societies and developing states with available cheap fossil fuels and leaping ambitions to rapid development equally consider internationally legally binding climate actions disadvantageous. The United States having second largest production in oil and gas and first in coal stands significant among states having gas guzzling culture because of its political, economic and military superiority (Carten, 2007). Equally strong resistance is provided by countries having potential to become developed and industrialized with available capped fossil fuel resources like India, Brazil, and China. Following fossil-fuel model of development, an excessive rise is witnessed in their carbon emission (Schreuder, 2009).

Although China has replaced US position as the world highest emission, the latter still has the largest per capita emissions (Schreuder, 2009), for it high consumptive society offers rich lifestyle. US refuses subjecting itself to international binding emission reduction that would compromise its existing life standards as argued by former US President George H.W. Bush, “the American lifestyle is not negotiable” (P.R. Ehrlich & A.H. Ehrlich, 2004). Sachs (2014) terms this extravagant American lifestyle an “outsized damage” to world because of the massive wastage it produces. John Perkins, author of the book “*Confession of an Economic Hit Man* (2004), is cited by Diaz (2008) in his famous

documentary, The End of poverty" about this dismal global impact of US. Perkins contends that despite comprising below 5% of the world's population, United States consume 25% of its resources and produce more than 30% of its pollution. Effective climate change regime, therefore, requires United States contribution, for it leads the rest in fossil fuel consumption [largest per capita emission] and political and economic superiority (Bolin, 2007). However, US in particular among industrialized states resist hard line industrially restrictive agreements (Jaggard, 2007) to ensure continued energy security: "sufficient quantities of supplies at affordable price" (Sauter & Mackerron, 2008), and its non-negotiable lavish way of life.

Differences exist in response to climate change actions based on different economic and physical implication of climate change. Common but Differentiated Responsibility and Respective Capacity (CBDR-RC) principle, though contested, acknowledges vulnerable conditions as well as historical non-responsibility for the climate change. Based on this principle, developing states are absolved of binding commitments. However, US resists what Handl (2012) terms diminution of responsibilities on behalf of developing states. US emphasises that without compliance of the growing economies such as India and China, specifically the latter, to global emission reduction, international climate change policy would remain ineffective (Weissmann, 2013). Developing states consider themselves entitled to development through fossil fuels, and therefore their proposed solutions to climate change prioritized their economic development (Roberts & Parks, 2007). India and China, Roberts and Parks argue, seek large emission space to actualize their development justifying it on their comparatively far less per capita emissions. China as a leaping economy with its burgeoning population, massive exports and rising carbon emissions has resisted pressure for emission reduction justifying it in light of right to development. Impending domestic climate threats and mounting international pressure, however, are transforming political milieu in China (Lewis, 2011). Domestically, climate change, as Werrelland Femia (2013) argue , acts as a life constraining factor, a "threat multiplier" or a "stresser" compounding complexity of the existing problems. With cataclysmic changes in water circle threatened coastal areas, reduced watershed and rivers, China could face mass forced migration potentially undermining its social and political cohesion (Lewis, 2011).

International constraints of not subjecting itself to environmental standards despite categorized as world's largest emitter are equally intimidating for China (Lewis, 2011). Climate change inactions could compound China's international interests and conflicts. Apart from financial and trade wars between China and other states particularly US (Hughes, 2005; Bracken, 2007; Evenett, 2010; Otero-Iglesias, 2011), China's resolute efforts for rapid development and growing consumption of its populous society understandably have pulled the war for foreign resources and their transportation to the ambit of US and China embittered relationship (Wiggin, 2013; Zweig & Jianhai, 2005). Zweig and Jianhai contend that China's drive for access to world's resource, most of which lie in Middle East and Africa, is forcing it to take an adversarial position to the US against states declared by the latter as pariah or axis of evil such as Iran. These broad conflicting financial issues could envelop disagreements about international climate policy, for China's position as a world major carbon emitter and non-compliance to the expected environmental standards is unacceptable to the developed West. Quoting French President Sarkozi's proposal for restricting imports from countries in violation of the global environmental protection, Lewis (2011) argues that China could face economic sanctions from the US as well as EU.

In addition, G77 forum, China's secured platform, is divided since Brazil and Mexico's signalled decision to subject themselves to international climate actions. Most importantly, China's options to growth are not limited in presence of its rising capabilities in Nuclear as well as renewable energy like Solar. It current extensive reliance, however, on coal for rapid growth will gradually change in consideration of the impending environmental threats and international political and economic pressure (Lewis, 2011).

Though lagging behind China, India undoubtedly tries to match its zest for economic development (Cohen, 2001). Climate change is also posing formidable challenges to India. Effective countering of the adverse implications of climate change requires viable state capacity: ability of its institutions and political elite of a proficient response against societal disruptions in case of climate challenges (Paul, 2011). Paul contends that climate change would aggravate existing socio-economic and political threats in India. Negative climate changes such as reduced availability of water in South Asia could compound sharing of this shared resource a major reason for interstates and intrastate conflicts (Ray, 2008). Likewise, climate change would have serious negative implications for crop yields, forest cover and human health in a developing state like India (Mittal, 2003; Paul, 2011). These environmental constraints could hinder development pathways in the Indian society, rifted with various armed resistance movements (Sharma & Behera, 2014). China and India with their burgeoning population pursue economic development relying largely on their fossil fuels resources. They share same aspirations like access to the global energy resources (Rajan, 2007) and almost equally encountered with grave climate threats. This scenario augurs well for transformation of their climate policies, especially India reactive foreign policy to China’s decisions could substantially change with China’s favourable stance on international climate actions. This makes it fundamentally incumbent to understand China’s climate policy and its halting response to global climate policy making process.

Vulnerable Low Lying and Small Island Developing States Seek Climate Actions

John Kerry, United States Secretary of State, in view of the unequivocal rising certainty of climate change and its impending adverse impacts, declared climate change as the “fearsome weapon of mass destruction”(Harvey, 2014). Taking into account special needs, circumstances and capacities of the states, CBDR-RC principle emphasize obligation of developed states to address climate change problem through leading measures of emission reduction and financial and technological assistance to developing states for their effective adaptation and clean development. Despite this emphasis, developing states are not given free ride but asked to seek sustainable development (Aginam, 2011). Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and low lying states like Bangladesh are vulnerable to rising sea level because of climate change and are threatened with extinction in case of global climate inactions (Dessler & Parson, 2006; Houghton, 2009). Paradoxically, with less than 1% contribution to the problem of climate change (Lopes, 2013), SIDS struggles against the vanguard of the marching forces of climate destruction. The President of Maldives symbolized and highlighted this crucial threat to his state's existence by holding an underwater cabinet meeting (Harvey, 2014). Reduced freshwater sources, rising temperature, devastation of the resource base and infrastructure, and most importantly feared inundation are some of the most adverse impacts of climate change. Likewise, topographically vulnerable, Bangladesh is declared one of the world's twelve states with highest risk of climate disasters (Riaz, 2011).

The SIDS prioritizes adaptation demanding financial and technological assistance for enhanced adaptive capacity against climate impacts. Moreover, it seeks strong international binding emission reduction commitments from the developed industrialized states in light of their historical

contribution to the problem. Developing South at large and vulnerable small island states in particular seek redirection of global climate funding to their desperate adaptation requirements (Barnett & Campbell, 2010). Consistent appeal for the desired restructuring of financial mechanisms under Global Environmental Facility(GEF) to accommodate considerations of developing states is still unaddressed (Streck, 2011). The SIDS despite its collective voice under the clout of Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) is "overwhelmed" diplomatically and politically, for it lacks required skill and expertise to actualize its preferred climate deal (Aginam, 2011; Roberts & Parks, 2007). SIDS in presence of existential threats advocate climate change insurance fund; however, developed states like UK rejects terming it early enough to commit such financial allocation (Gray, 2010). These environmental catastrophes are feared enhancing socio-political disruptions such as environmental refugees with Bangladesh preparing 'migration with dignity' for its people (McAdam & Saul, 2010). Wisdom and justice demand actualizing sustainable existence and growth of the vulnerable communities to climate changes.

Conclusion

The Paris Climate Agreement, 2015 attempts to channel these conflicting aspirations and interests towards a collective goal. It relies on nationally determined emission and adaptation goals expressed in the respective INDCs of every country to achieve the collective goal of keeping the earth surface temperature below 2°C. Evaluation of the factors responsible for constraining an internationally determined binding commitment from each state could be understood in light of contested and contentious political and economic determinants, states' preferred relative gains to collective goals and different levels of vulnerability to climate changes. Global climate change problem is historically contextualized with respect to assigning responsibility. The global South holds the early industrialized global North responsible for excessive emissions and using their share of atmosphere for development. The proposed solution, it offers, is a binding emission for the developed North and their financial and technological assistance to the global South in leapfrogging inefficiencies of the North development model. Moreover, the global South resists binding emissions terming it a denial of their right to development and unjustified in light CBRC-RC principle. The global North acknowledges principle of CBDR-RC and right to development of the global South. However, it regards binding emissions on its part a comprehensive failure without emission reduction from the rising economies of the global South.

Fossil fuel export economies equally resist internationally binding emission reduction targets. Vitally relying on revenue from the energy markets, these states unwisely spend much on man-made artificial world and provide luxurious life style to their citizens to secure their political acquiescence for the elitist regime. Emission reductions understandably slow down fossil fuel markets that consequently undermine these single commodity export economies. Economic vulnerability is feared much than impending climate threats like water scarcity. Likewise, rich industrialized states particularly US having substantial energy resource base has cultivated a highly consumptive society with highest per capita emissions. Considerable political and economic forces vehemently resist compromising this rich American way of life and equally resist climate regime not involving emission reduction from the rapidly growing economies like China and India. These economies with available fossil resources justify their emissions in terms of less per capita to US and principle of CBDR-RC and Right to development. Apart from the international actors that resist climate mitigation measures for economic or political reasons, low lying and small island states with grave threat from the rising sea level vociferously seek climate mitigation and adaptation measures. The schism between the two

sides, those resisting and supporting climate actions is much wide, for one is motivated by powering its machines and ensuring a luxurious life; the other, by its vulnerability and survival. However, with growing technological innovation in the field of renewable energy and financial assistance to vulnerable states, convergence of interests among these actors could be actualized.

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