Valdai Discussion Club Report

Valdai | Discussion Club

Global Environmental Ideologies: Can the Conflict between Humans and Nature Be Overcome?

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Ideological Conceptualization of Global Commons

A gradual shift is occurring in modern world politics away from pure geopolitics and hard and soft power of sovereign states towards tackling global environmental, resource, demographic, and social challenges. Over the past decade, the very term 'global challenges' has crystallized into a new concept of Global Commons understood both in its narrow environmental meaning and a broader social sense. It is discussed both at the UN in the context of the Millennium Development Goals and on various international platforms. A series of panel sessions were held at the 14th Annual Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club in October 2017 to discuss these issues (Conflict between Humans and Nature, Conflict between Rich and Poor, Conflict between Progress and Humanism).

Notably, the term 'Global Commons' was interpreted in more than one way from day one. In the narrow sense, Global Commons imply issues related to the environment, including air (and climate), drinking water, arable land, biodiversity, etc. In the broader sense, Global Commons also include social global commons of planetary human society such as access to healthcare, the basic (followed by advanced protein-based) food basket, quality urban and social environment, etc. The most radical and expansive interpretation of the Global Commons includes planetary (that is, transboundary) unity of the human race. The dynamics of the development of the global human society in the 21st century places the approach towards considering these universal commons at the forefront. Since they are global and universal, they will inevitably challenge state sovereignty and may lead to a fundamentally new type of conflicts in the future. Their rudiments can be seen already now in the disputes around hydrocarbon quotas, water wars, migration conflicts, etc. In the future, the problems in this area will only exacerbate.

Importantly, the concept of Global Commons and everyone's right of access to them is not just part of a political programme. It has become very quickly a valuable and ideologically rich subject. A new environmental ideology is being actively formed, which in its moderate interpretation (sustainable development, the Millennium Development Goals, etc.) has already become an almost value-based mainstream on the global level. Beyond that, it also provides many radical alternatives (environmental anarchism, environmental authoritarianism, ecofeminism, etc.), which can challenge the global mainstream and the status quo no less than non-systemic left-wing and right-wing protests now present a challenge to the established global geopolitical and economic order. At the same time,

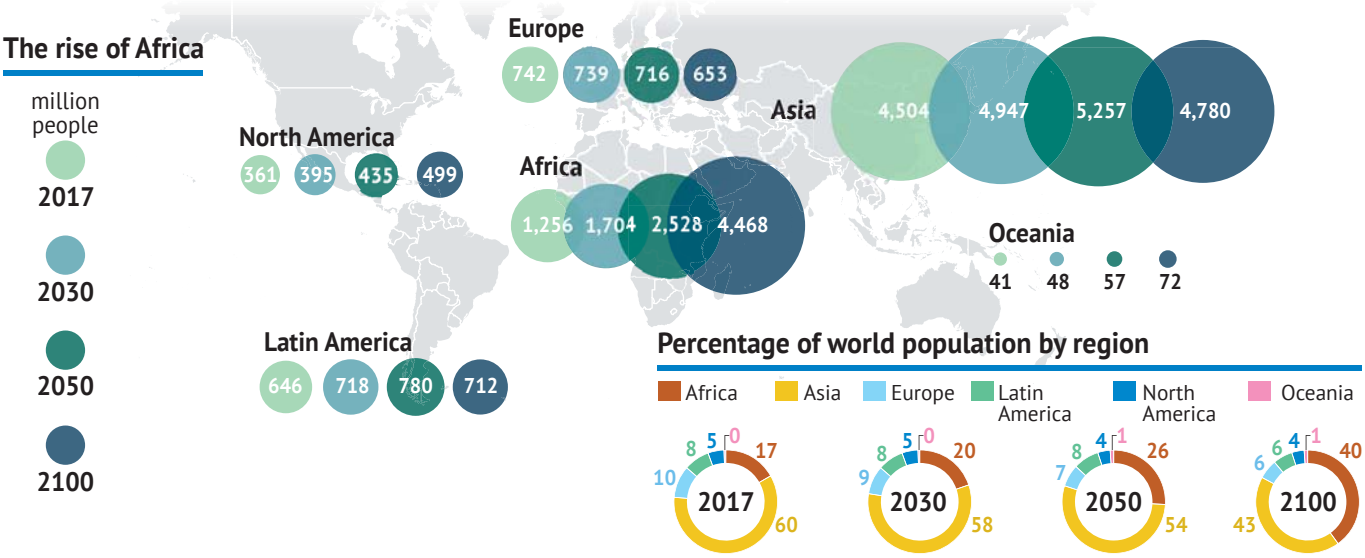
together with radical environmental alternatives, the anti-ecology concepts that are in direct opposition to them are emerging at an increasing rate. They are based on negativism and opposition to the primacy of anthropogenic factors underlying the modern climate change (opponents of the scientific validity of the foundations of the Montreal and Kyoto protocols, etc.). This environmental negativism often interlocks with non-systemic right-wing movements in the general political Alt-Right context.

The ever-tightening environmental constraints of the world's poorest countries' right to development is another key (and conflict-generating) aspect of the Global Commons. They claim that the developed world's environmental policy is, in fact, a new form of neocolonialism (environmental neocolonialism), because during the West's industrial development in the 19th–20th centuries nobody was thinking about environment, whereas now strict environmental (and other) restrictive rules (formally associated with taking care of the Global Commons) actually constitute barriers to the future development of Third World countries, thereby perpetuating the inequality gap between the 'golden billion' and the rest of the planet's population. Again, while in moderate interpretations, these concerns are taken into account (for example, the Kyoto Protocol does not impose quantitative restrictions on emissions with regard to the developing countries), radical alternative varieties of this environmental anti-colonialism and developmentalism can also challenge the existing status quo and global order.

Demographics are another acute challenge associated with the Global Commons, including, in particular, the debate (which is far from politically correct) about the lack of planetary resources for the Earth's growing population. It entails the Malthusian 'horror stories' about the imminent overpopulation of the Earth and calls for restricting consumption (including barriers to the transition from poverty to global middle class and again to the consolidation of global inequality). This also involves a similarly politically incorrect assumption that healthcare improvements in the poorest countries directly entail a sharp increase in population, which, accordingly, aggravates all the above problems. The conflict potential of this range of problems is also clearly obvious.

No less important is the fact that the Global Commons (primarily, their environmental aspect, but not only) has quickly gained a theoretical dimension. Its development followed several paths. On the one hand, attempts are being made to link environmental concerns with traditional political theories (such as neoliberalism, structural realism, neo-Marxism, etc.). On the other hand, theories of environmental reorganization of the global society and political systems have taken root in this area. Sometimes they exist as part of the constructivist paradigm,

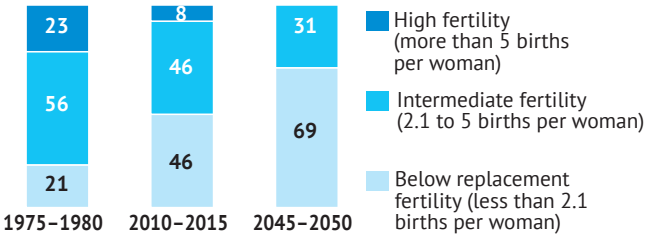
WORLD POPULATION TRENDS



Percentage of world population by region

Decline in fertility rate

(Percentage of world population)



Burdens and dividends (Percentage of population in age groups)

	0–14	15–24	25–59	60+
World	26	16	46	12
Africa	41	19	35	5
Asia	24	16	48	12
Europe	16	11	49	24
Latin America	25	17	46	12
North America	19	13	46	22
Oceania	23	15	45	17

New leaders to emerge? (million people)

1950		2017		2050		2100	
China	554	China	1,410	India	1,659	India	1,517
India	376	India	1,339	China	1,364	China	1,021
USA	159	USA	324	Nigeria	411	Nigeria	794
Russia	103	Indonesia	264	USA	390	USA	447
Japan	83	Brazil	209	Indonesia	322	DR Congo	379
Germany	70	Pakistan	197	Pakistan	307	Pakistan	352
Indonesia	70	Nigeria	191	Brazil	233	Indonesia	306
Brazil	54	Bangladesh	165	Bangladesh	202	Tanzania	304
Great Britain	51	Russia	144	DR Congo	197	Ethiopia	250
Italy	47	Mexico	129	Ethiopia	191	Uganda	214

Source: UN World Population Prospects 2017.

but often go beyond it. Due to the known breadth of their perspective, some of these theories have clearly futurological and occasionally even utopian nature.

The environmental debates have quickly acquired a political dimension, which is another characteristic aspect of this process. The Green parties have been formed and become a significant factor in the electoral process in many countries. They are represented in parliaments and have a significant impact on the policies of these states. Naturally, the programmes and strategies of these parties place the environmental problems at the forefront, thus transforming various environmental theories into political ideologies. This process is no less clearly manifested on the global level. Moreover, whereas on the state level environmental issues are often tied to a particular local aspect (such as, environmental protection in infrastructure projects, priority construction of green energy facilities, development of nature reserves, etc.) and are, in this sense, down-to-earth, on the global level the ideologies of reorganizing society and the world based on environmental principles, which are painted in broad strokes, are becoming fairly widespread. In turn, these environmental alternatives shape global public opinion and gradually change the international political agenda. In many ways, this forms the global environmental system, which is used to raise questions about the global environmental responsibility of individual states and corporations, the advisability of the supranational nature of political decision-making in the sphere of environment, and the justification of the right to intervene in the internal affairs of states on environmental issues.

Therefore, the analysis of various environmental theories and ideologies, including radical and alternative theories, has a clear political dimension, since they will increasingly influence future global policy and the place of particular states in it.

The Ideologies of Environmentalism: 50 Shades of Green

Concerns about the planet's environmental wellbeing gave rise to a number of philosophical and ideological schools of thought, as well as social movements, all of which can be described by the general term '**environmentalism**'. The proponents of this school of thought seek to improve the environment and to protect it by changing the nature of the relationship between humans and the environment

through the introduction of new political, economic, and social practices or changing and rescinding the old ones.

As an ideology, environmentalism was born in the 1960s–1970s and was influenced by a number of environmental studies, in particular, *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson[1], *A Blueprint for Survival* edited by Edward Goldsmith[2], and the *Limits to Growth*[3] report to the Club of Rome. The latter focused on limited natural resources and the imminent global collapse if the policy of progress continues. In an extremely provocative manner, the report raised the concern that in order for the humankind to survive, it must abandon its belief in progress and adopt a policy of self-restraint. After that, environmentalism became an indicator of the 'post-material' stage of development of society in developed countries and was shaping in parallel with the movement for peace and disarmament, which allowed the environmentalists to enlist support of a fairly large number of proponents.

The issue of ***sustainability*** has become the central theme for both existing environmental discourse and the problem of Global Commons. The concept of sustainability itself is quite complex and blurry, includes an entire range of mixed tasks and, as a rule, is the qualitative side of the concept of development. Moreover, for development to be considered sustainable, it must meet 'the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.[4] This definition given by the UN back in 1987 formed the basis for the vision of the concept of sustainable development on the international level and was adopted by the majority of countries after the 1992 summit in Rio de Janeiro, and was later incorporated in national legislations. To a certain extent, this concept was an answer to the *Limits to Growth* alarmism and made it clear that development and progress are still possible, and predictions of a resource collapse are not *fait accompli*.

These trends in global public opinion also led to transformation of environmental ideas into political strategies. One specific feature has become quite clear in this regard. The fact is that many environmentalist schools of thought include a partial or complete rejection of anthropocentrism, which is based on the notion of the value of all living things, not just humans, whereas traditional political ideologies proceeded from the anthropocentric idea of the relationship

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[1] *Carson, R, 1962, 'Silent Spring', Boston: Houghton Mifflin.*

[2] *Goldsmith, E, 1972, 'A Blueprint for Survival', The Ecologist, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 1–44.*

[3] *Meadows, D., Meadows, DH, Randers, J & Behrens, W, 1972, Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind, NY: Universe Books.*

[4] *'Our Common Future. Report', 1987, World Commission on Environment and Development, UN Documents: Gathering a Body of Global Agreements. Available from: http://www.undocuments.net/our-common-future.pdf*

between man and nature, where nature is perceived only as material resources for the development of humankind.

Adopting such an approach inevitably took the environmentalists outside of their classical political spectrum (liberals, conservatives, socialists, etc.). However, the objective need to represent one's own interests and the lack of a real alternative forced the Greens to get involved in the political processes despite the fact that traditional political parties were the epitome of everything that the environmentalists opposed, namely, a system in which the key role is played by actors seeking power and economic benefits and who want to satisfy their own vested interests through political pressure. The environmentalists positioned themselves 'neither left nor right but ahead' of the classic political spectrum.

Nonetheless, it is possible to single out the attempts to bring together environmentalism with traditional political ideologies. So, neoliberalism found its 'shade of green' with the ***environmental free market*** concept. For this neoliberal school, which was represented by, among others, Terry Anderson and Donald Leal,[5] environmental issues are a consequence of the lack of clearly defined property rights and pricing mechanisms. The solution to this problem requires expanding the role of the market and inculcating in its participants the need for environmentally safe goods and services.

As for ***conservatism***, notably, many Green theories include such key constructs as stability, continuity, concern about the future generations, and priority of public over individual. In addition, the similarity between conservatism and environmentalism also lies in the often-sceptical approach to the postulate of the inevitability or desirability of progress and industrialization. Notably, environmental movements are often based on a conservative and romantic vision of nature. A certain environmental conservatism can also be seen in an effort to keep a lid on an excessive sprawl of urban areas.

In turn, ***socialist ideologies*** are close to environmentalism in terms of focus on overcoming poverty, fair distribution of resources, and social equality. In the sphere of political economy, the socialist school of thought indicates the depth of the destructive impact of capitalism on various aspects of society, making it possible to take the discussion about the state of the environment into the mainstream criticism of capitalist production and economy. It is not accidental that this combination of environmental and socialist views was widespread among ***antiglobalists***.

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[5] *Anderson, TL & Leal, RL, 2001, 'Free Market Environmentalism', New York: Palgrave.*

In this context, it is important to note that certain environmental movements are not limited to finding points of contact with systemic political ideologies, but consciously go beyond them. Notably, the classification offered by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess distinguished between **'deep'** and **'shallow'** (or humanist) **ecology**.[6] The idea of 'shallow ecology' stems from human needs and their concern for environmental matters and does not extend ethical standards to the world around. Within this school of thought, the discussion mainly revolves around the need to maintain the environment in a state which will allow us to meet the needs and sustain decent existence of the present and future generations (this is primarily what the Green parties are involved in and the concept of sustainable development is based upon). 'Deep ecology', on the contrary, applies ethical standards to all living things and rejects ideas about human uniqueness. The proponents of this trend do not accept classical ideologies, and recognise only their own philosophy, basing their values on environmental and holistic principles and the belief that humans must preserve the delicate balance of the environment.

It is quite natural that the supporters of 'deep' and 'shallow' ecology have certain claims against each other. The proponents of 'deep ecology' often say that covert anthropocentrism of the 'shallow ecology' is designed to maintain the wellbeing of people in developed countries. The supporters of 'shallow ecology' tend to believe that the ideas of 'deep ecology' imply unrealistic approaches to addressing existing environmental problems, as they are often based on irrational and mystical views.

In this vein, environmentalism and a radical rejection of anthropocentrism are closely associated with spirituality (the term ***ecospirituality*** has already spread widely). Hence, some critics of the environmentalism position it as a quasi-religion or religion of the future. For example, Bron Taylor published a monograph *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*.[7] In this context, animal rights – and wider, the rights of nature – are perceived as more significant than these of humans. This can already be seen in practice. Kenya authorities limit the rights of the local cattle-breeding Maasai people to use traditional pastures in order to expand protected areas around the Maasai Mara National Reserve. This trend can fairly soon create a kind of new ideological frontier or cleavage.

The radical human impact on nature and the need to understand and limit it has led to the emergence of another concept, the concept of **anthropocene**. According to its postulates, humans have graduated from a biological species into a geological

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[6] *Naess, A, 1973, 'The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary, Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy, vol. 16, pp. 96–100.*

[7] *Bron, T, 2009, 'Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future', Berkeley: UC Berkeley Press.*

force and are capable of changing not only the biosphere, but also the entire planet Earth. In the modern geological era, human influence on the Earth's evolution exceeds those natural processes that have been underway for millions of years and constitutes its determining factor. Australian expert Clive Hamilton[8] is a proponent of this hypothesis.

The concept of **ecosemiotics** currently being developed by a semiotic school at the University of Tartu builds on efforts to oppose such anthropocentrism in changing nature and is close in spirit to the 'deep ecology' postulates. On the one hand, it builds on the general tenets of semiotics as a sign system theory (which Yury Lotman was developing earlier as it applied to culture at the University of Tartu). On the other hand, it is based on the biosemiotics tenets, i.e. sign and communication system in the animal world.[9] However, not only individual animals, but also environmental systems in general are endowed with sign and communication capabilities (locally, individual biocenoses, and in extended and radical interpretations, the Earth's ecosystem as a whole). With the help of ecosemiotics, nature provides feedback to humans and responds to their intervention. Here, too, ecospirituality is just one step away. It is worth noting that many such concepts are very close to the ideas of the so-called school of **Russian Cosmism** dating back to early 20th century (e.g. Vladimir Vernadsky and others).

Different schools of **eco-anarchism** are also close to 'deep ecology' and ecospirituality. They emphasize the point that states, which are concerned about the consolidation of resources in their hands, are *a priori* unable to be effective in resolving global environmental problems and should, therefore, give way to a global society's self-organization on environmental basis. These include the concept of eco-communalism,[10] as well as, to a certain extent, social ecology.[11]

Another radical environmentalism trend is associated with **eco-authoritarianism** as a necessary, from the point of view of its supporters, response to environmental alarmism and the exhaustion of Earth's resources. Here, we can highlight the Tragedy of the Commons concept advanced by American ecologist Garrett Hardin.[12] He believes that the necessary restrictions on the level of production and consumption cannot be achieved through self-restriction of individuals or

[8] *See Hamilton, C, 2017, 'Defiant Earth: The Fate of Humans in the Antropocene', Sydney-London: Allen & Unwin.*

[9] *Hoffmeyer, J, 2008, 'Biosemiotics. An Examination into the Signs of Life and the Life of Signs', Scranton-London: University of Scranton Press.*

[10] *Sale, K, 1985, 'Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision', San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.*

[11] *Bookchin, M, 1980, 'Towards an Ecological Society', Montreal: Black Rose Books.*

[12] *Hardin, G, 1968, 'The Tragedy of the Commons', Science. New Series, vol. 162, no. 3859, pp. 1243–1248.*

democratic procedures. In this regard, it is proposed to temporarily restrict individual rights and freedoms for the sake of the general ecological good.[13] There will also be a need for an artificial slowdown to prevent an environmental crisis, which will inevitably lead to internal conflicts around the remaining resources, with which democratic regimes will not be able to cope effectively and quickly enough. In his latter work, *Living on a Lifeboat*, Garrett Hardin put forward an even more radical idea that developed countries must stop helping developing countries in order to ensure their own survival.[14] Notably, eco-authoritarian ideas are often reflected in the proposals concerning the allocation of resources and migration control. Occasionally, the term 'ecofascism' is used in this theory's critique.

Ecology and the 'Risk Society'

The concepts discussed above put environmental issues at the forefront. They all have a kind of 'ecocentrism' inherent to them. Perhaps, it would not be an overstatement to say that in many 'general' social and political theories, the matters of ecology and climate change occupy only a subordinate place, if at all. They briefly mention sustainable development and other environmental postulates that have already become mainstream, and the main focus goes to traditional (non-ecological) aspects of the development of societies and political systems. Thus, environmental concepts were often cut off from the main subject field of social sciences and only to find themselves in a kind of a niche of their own. There is an invisible border between the environmentalists, on the one hand, and sociologists and political theorists, on the other, which the latter often do not even think about crossing. However, there are several exceptions.

The key exception is related to the theories of the **'risk society'**. They emphasize that the increased level of risks and threats characterize the modern society. They are of a diverse nature – terrorist, military, man-made, migration, identity, information, economic, and others. And they include environmental risks as well. In his 2016 paper, Ulrich Beck formulates the concept of a 'world metamorphosis'. According to his line of thinking, nature today has become a product of human history, and its destruction is closely integrated into social dynamics. Thus, the societalization of nature and the societalization of its destruction occur.[15] The articulation of the Giddens Paradox[16] is another aspect

[13] *Ophuls, W, 1973, 'Leviathan or Oblivion?', in H. Daly (Ed.) 'Toward a Steady-State Economy', San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, pp. 215–230.*

[14] *Hardin, G, 1974, 'Living on a Lifeboat', BioScience, vol. 24, no. 10, pp. 561–568.*

[15] *Beck, U, 2016, 'The Metamorphosis of the World: How Climate Change Is Transforming Our Concept of the World', Cambridge: Polity Press.*

[16] *Giddens, A, 2009, 'The Politics of Climate Change', Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 69–72.*

of this approach, which says that a significant portion of society does not take the risks of climate change seriously as they do not have a direct and immediate impact on people's life today. However, soon it will be too late.

Various concepts of **catastrophism** are closely related to the 'risk society' in sociopolitical theories. They became especially widespread after the Fukushima accident, when a natural disaster (tsunami) led to an anthropogenic accident.[17] In this connection, Ulrich Beck has been developing the concept of the 'emancipating' and unifying role of disasters, when the traumatic experience shocks and unites the highly individualized world 'risk society'.[18] In this regard, Charles Perrow and John Urry further developed the theory of 'normal accidents', where disasters are not an exception but a rule for the 'risk society'.[19] Urry has also advanced the 'theory of collapse' of a global society in the post-oil era, applying the second law of thermodynamics with its inevitable increase in entropy to society and reviving the old pessimistic predictions of the *Limits to Growth*.[20]

Econegativism

Finally, a kind of **econegativism** stands apart with respect to ecological ideologies. It is distinguished by the rejection of arguments underlying various trends of environmentalism and practical international policies to combat climate change. The econegativists' debate became particularly acute in connection with the development of international mechanisms to control emissions into the atmosphere (such as the Montreal Protocol, the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement, the corresponding EU programmes, etc.). The econegativists' counterarguments largely include a thesis on the non-man-made nature of the growth of greenhouse gas emissions and the destruction of the ozone layer. The 'hydrogen hypothesis' which is being developed by Vladimir Syvorotkin[21] in Russia is a case in point. It is based on the assumption that the ongoing changes are caused not by human activity, but rather by deep degassing of hydrogen from the bowels of the Earth. There are other hypotheses of non-anthropogenic nature of the climate change.

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[17] Gill, T, Steger, B & Slater, DH (Eds.), 2013, 'Japan Copes with Calamity: Ethnograhics of the Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disaster of March 2011', Bern: Peter Long AG.

[18] Beck, U, 2009, 'World at Risk', Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 70–71.

[19] Perrow, C, 2007, 'The Next Catastrophe: Reducing Our Vulnerability to Natural, Industrial and Terrorist Disasters', Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 14; Urry, J, 2011, 'Climate Change and Society', Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 36–47.

[20] Urry, J, 2013, 'Societies Beyond Oil ', London: Zed Books, pp. 225–231.

[21] Syvorotkin, VL, 1998, 'Ekologicheskie Aspekty Degazatsii Zemli' [Ecological Aspects of Earth Degassing], Moscow; Syvorotkin, VL, 2002, 'Glubinnaia Degazatsiia i Global'nye Katastrofy' [Deep Degassing of the Earth and Global Disasters], Moscow.

It is also notable that in the context of heated political discussions about the accession of certain countries to the Kyoto Protocol and other agreements of this kind, the arguments of econegativists began to take on not only a natural science aspect, but a political nature as well. In the most radical interpretations, they occasionally merged with conspiracy theory on behalf of corporations, the globalists, the West, etc.

To a certain extent, the rejection of restrictive measures as part of global environmental policy in a number of concepts that have sprung up in the developing countries is also connected with political aspects of econegativism. They are often based on the tenets of **developmentalism**, namely, in its interpretations that rich countries (West, North, 'golden billion') deny the so-called Third World countries the right to develop. The essence of this line of thinking, in particular, is that when developed countries carried out their industrialization during the 19th–20th centuries, they never thought about the environment (and they are the ones who are responsible for the environmental pollution and climate change). Now, using environment as a pretext, the West/North is trying to restrain the industrial and other economic development of the South, based on considerations primarily of the global economic competition. Thus, these interpretations form the concept of **ecological neocolonialism**.

Tools for Implementing Environmental Ideologies

The implementation of environmental ideologies in political practice is following several paths. On the one hand, the sustainable development concept formed the basis of the UN environmental policy and that of other intergovernmental organizations, as well as the environmental policies of numerous states. This is connected with the implementation of various innovations in the economy: a focus on renewable energy sources, quotas for greenhouse gas emissions and the ideas of a 'carbon-free economy', environmental fuel standards, etc. On the other hand, with regard to civil society, on the domestic level, the development and electoral success of a new type of political parties – the ***Green Party*** – in a number of countries should be noted. On the transnational, global level, the development of a network of the planet-wide ***environmental NGOs***, such as Greenpeace, the World Wildlife Fund, etc. is notable as well. In general (despite the exceptions), on the national level we should talk primarily about the implementation of the 'shallow ecology' strategies (in the aforementioned understanding of Arne Naess), and on the global

level, besides this, there are more opportunities for implementing 'deep ecology' concepts.

Again, we should keep in mind in this regard the above tenet that the environmentalists should not be either to the left or to the right but rather ahead of the traditional political party spectrum. In other words, the Green party was to become a kind of coordinating body shaping the agenda based on the actual needs of its supporters, not abstract ideological views. However, as we know from practice, in reality a significant part of existing and relatively successful Green political parties and international NGOs turned out to be centre-left or leftist.

For example, within the framework of the factional structure of the European Parliament, the environmental parties of the Nordic countries have united with the extreme left and communist forces into one group – the European United Left/Nordic Green Left. As a result, their pro-environmental approaches are closely intertwined with the demands of radical social transformations, social equality, and the 'phantom of communism' ironically have become a means for achieving environmental goals. In general, the historical roots of many Green movements in Western Europe originated in the social and student protests of 1968 and were also linked to the movement for disarmament and a nuclear-free world. For instance, the leader of the German Green Party, Joschka Fischer, began his political activity as a protest activist in the late 1960s. The Dutch GreenLeft Party, which gained more than 9% of the votes in the parliamentary elections in 2017, has historically also represented an association of local communist, pacifist and evangelical groups. Nevertheless, clearly all countries are too diverse and the success of Green parties in them is far from uniform. The examples of Germany, Holland, Iceland and a number of other countries with the greatest electoral success of Green parties are exceptions at the backdrop of the opposite results in other Western countries and the non-Western world, where states often prefer to pursue environmental policies without the mediation of Green parties (ideology-free environmental protection).

In addition to those Green movements that hailed from general social protests, another means to formulate the activity of Green social movements and/or state environmental policy has emerged and can be linked to occurrences of major natural and man-made disasters or a sharp deterioration of the environmental situation in a particular country. In the first instance, the Fukushima-1 accident is a case in point. It stoked the discussion about the environmental safety of nuclear power plants, which had just calmed down after Chernobyl, and not only in Japan but in Germany and France as well. In the second instance, the case of China comes to mind, where the operations of the 'world's factory' have gradually led to deterioration of the environment. As a result, according to a law on environmental

protection adopted in 2015 for the first time in the history of China, this issue has obtained the status of basic national policy.

Apart from that, **country-specific aspects of environmental ideologies** are of considerable importance. In a number of countries where environmental policies are being formulated, it is easy to note the close ties between a country's articulated environmental ideologies and its national identity as well as historical and cultural traditions. On the one hand, this approach has a consolidating effect on the population of a particular country, drawing its attention to the environment and making environmental issues a natural and more understandable concern for its citizens, while, on the other hand, it often positions this particular country and the way it approaches environmentalism as a model for the others.

India is one of the most striking examples of such national environmental ideologies. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi disclosed his country's programme at the Davos Forum in 2018. Quite unexpectedly for a pragmatic economic forum, his speech was interspersed with quotations from ancient Indian philosophy, the Upanishads and other texts. They emphasized the unity of man and nature, our connections with Mother Earth, the concept of the 'children of the Sun' (*suryaputra*) and so on. The political implications of this were presented in the context of the recent Indian initiative to create the International Solar Alliance, which brings together the countries located between the Northern and Southern Tropics, and whose goals include more active use of solar energy in these countries as one of the Global Commons. At the same time, the Indian prime minister elaborated on the divided world. According to him, the gap between the rich and the poor countries is the main barrier to achieving planetary human unity. Narendra Modi touched upon this subject in relation to the climate change. He noted that developed countries, even though they are calling for limiting greenhouse gas emissions and a carbon-free economy, are reluctant to share the corresponding technology with the developing world. In fact, the Indian prime minister outwardly stated that high-tech is also part of the Global Commons and should, therefore, be available to all countries and nations. Otherwise, we will see an even greater divide between the rich and the poor.

Thus, the old contention that the rich countries are denying development to the poor ones under the pretext of environmental barriers and restrictions is again becoming relevant. Another related problem, according to Modi, is the actual underrepresentation of the developing countries in many international organizations, primarily, financial and economic. They command much less clout in the global arena than the developed countries. As a result, one of Narendra Modi's main messages was that finding an effective solution to environmental problems is possible only if global social and economic inequality is overcome.

Japan, after the tsunami and the 2011 Fukushima accident, is another example of this kind of national ecological ideology. It closely links the articulation of society's response to the disaster with the tenets of traditional Japanese ethics, such as *shikataganai*, which means that nothing can be done about it, and disasters are just a part of life. A number of interpretations use the more radical concept of *tenbatsu*, a heavenly punishment.[22] Clearly, such an approach was underpinned by a refusal to concentrate on finding someone to lay the blame on them for the Fukushima accident. However, at the same time, it helped to consolidate and reassure the society, and start the relief work quickly. On the conceptual level, the Fukushima case has taken up a large place in the environmental aspects of the 'risk society' theory.

At the same time, due to the weighted environmental policies of a number of governments, a sharp deterioration in the environmental situation was avoided. However, there are not so many examples of this kind in the Third World and we are again, primarily, talking about the EU member states. However, to a certain extent, large-scale transfer of production to the developing countries has resulted in such a reduction in the industrial burden on the environment in Western countries.

Environmental Ideologies and Global Practical Politics

The First Report to the Club of Rome, *Limits to Growth*, in 1972 was released at the same time as the first large-scale UN Conference on the Environment was held. Thus, the development of environmental ideologies and the efforts of the international community to put them into practice on the global level went hand in hand from the outset. Moreover, the UN format as a highly prestigious international platform for environmental discussions has itself become a stimulus for further development and discussion of various parameters of both current environmental policy and broad prospects for the future reorganization of the global order on ecological principles. This synergy of environmental ideologies and practical actions has led to an effective formation of global public opinion in favour of resolving environmental problems. The growing popularity of environmental ideologies has, in turn, influenced the adoption of meaningful political decisions, such as the Montreal Protocol, the Kyoto Protocol, the Millennium Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, etc. Ideologies and public opinion have led to the spread

[22] *See Perova, AE, 2017, 'Lokal'nye Narrativy «Novoi» Katastrofy na Primere Avarii na AES Fukusima-1 v Iaponii' [Local Narratives of the "New" Disaster Using the Example of the Accident at the Fukushima-1 Nuclear Power Plant in Japan], Vestnik Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo lingvisticheskogo universiteta. Obschestvennye nauki, Issue 2, pp. 226-234.*

of environmental ethics, which carry both the character of individual choice (refusal to wear fur clothes, vegetarianism as a conscious choice rather than a medical prescription, support for stray dogs, etc.) and corporate policies (starting from the hotels encouraging their guests to cut down on washing towels to major environmental projects by the world's leading economic companies).

At the same time, major differences between the 'world with ecology' and the 'world before ecology' have become, as noted above, a challenge for many states, and are sometimes perceived as a direct threat to their sovereignty. Rising costs in a country's economy caused by increased environmental expenses (at least in the short term) also serve as a deterrent. Nonconformism of certain Green movements has led to collisions with states and corporations. All this in aggregate has led to the fact that the spread of environmental ideologies began to run into tacit opposition on behalf of a fairly large number of states and corporations. Naturally, in words alone, everyone was supportive of nature conservation (environmental ethics had become an imperative by that time), but, in fact, the situation was often quite different. This also led to states having a need to use political aspects of a number of econegative theories supporting the position that environmental ideologies are just a tool in global competition. This approach became particularly popular in the non-Western world.

This, in turn, has led to the emergence of the **'sovereign ecology'** doctrines, when a state takes care of nature conservation, but perceives it as its sovereign right (or, at best, a duty, but only with regard to its citizens), but 'not amenable to directives' from the outside regarding these issues. Thus, a barrier began to form between the global aspects of environmental ideologies (which are quite natural due to the planetary nature of environmental problems) and the local environmental policies of individual states. The US policy regarding the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement shows that this ideological doctrine of 'sovereign ecology' is in demand not only in the non-Western world, but also within the West itself. Thus, global environmental ideologies are often perceived not only (and not so much) as a chance to build a more sustainable world of the future but also as a challenge and a threat to the current stability of states. And this applies not only to the radical concepts of 'deep ecology', but also to the down-to-earth and practically realizable postulates of 'shallow ecology'.

Another issue (besides sovereignty and competition) that has had a deterring effect on the implementation of environmental ideologies, relates to the close link between global ecology and demography. However, the fact that these discussions are not always politically correct adds complexity (and delicacy) to this situation. One can fight climate change on one's own, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, introduce

quotas, etc., but this will not resolve the global strategic problem of a long-term (a century-long) and guaranteed supply of food and water for the growing population of the Earth. This, in turn, entails the issue of global demographic planning – an extremely politically incorrect task. It is not accidental that UN forums on demography are usually much less efficient and cause many more conflicts than similar forums on ecology and climate change.

Here, we are talking about not only the population growth. The problem lies with ensuring that the entire population of the Earth enjoys the consumption standards of the Western middle class (even lower middle class) when it comes to food, water, and other natural resources. Yet, in order to achieve that, it would require three planets like Earth. Since the population of the Earth is expected to grow by a billion each decade, providing for 9–10 billion humans according to the Western standards in the near future would require not three but already four planets, then five and so on. However, since we do not have any new planets at hand, then a dynamically growing population will have to be content with one. The biosphere can provide only so much arable land, fresh water, and the like, and is already operating at its maximum capacity. It is not accidental that in many environmental theories, starting with the *Limits to Growth*, the main postulate is that humanity is pushing beyond the limits of renewable natural resources; therefore, a turn to environmental planning and self-restraint is needed.

However, according to the above logic, self-restraint is inseparable from the gap between the North and the South. At the aforementioned Valdai Club meetings, projections were made that in the next few decades not only the total population of the Earth will grow to 9–10 billion, but, equally important, the global middle class will grow to at least 3 billion, which will cause food consumption growth by at least 50%, electricity by 45%, and water by 30%. All of that will take place at a time where threshold indicators of the state of the environment will impose more and more restrictions, while climate change and other processes will increasingly affect all aspects of human wellbeing and nature. That means, putting it in politically incorrect terms, there will not be enough food for the growing population of the Earth. Strictly speaking, the planet's resources will indeed be enough to provide everyone with the proverbial bowl of rice with humanity growing by a billion every decade (taking into account the inevitable global acceptance of the genetically modified products). But planet Earth will, most likely, run out of resources if it were to provide food and other consumer baskets for the global middle class (which will also grow by a billion every decade).

From this follows a very simple and exceptionally politically incorrect conclusion. The key problem in the future is not only the uncontrolled growth

of the population of the Earth, but the uncontrolled growth of the middle class. Therefore, to prevent a neo-Malthusian apocalypse, there is no need to control the general population growth in the poorest countries of the world – which is now a stereotype of global demographic planning and is already causing heated debates and protests, including religious ones. The problem (or the goal – in the non-politically correct Malthusian paradigm) is to prevent the global transition of the inhabitants of today's undeveloped countries to the middle class. That is, the poor must stay poor. Otherwise, nature will break down. The price of admission to the global middle class should be absolutely prohibitive.

This means the conscious containment on the global scale of development of both Third World countries and individuals and their households living in them. Clearly, the conflicts of the future that will stem from this can become much bigger than today's geopolitical disputes. Unlike geopolitics, there is no readily available roadmap. There is either a Malthusian horror or shifting the problem to the next generation. And complete undermining of faith in progress. Thus, the eschatological ideology of the *Limits to Growth* report will be revived, but this time in a more cynical version. The limits to growth are not for everyone, just for the poor. According to this logic, no sustainable development in its current form will help.

This is connected with another important problem arising from global inequality – global migration. It is extremely acute now (just think about migrant flows to Germany and other EU countries in 2015–2016 and the lack of consensus between EU members in addressing this problem). However, according to the above logic, this is only the beginning, and the multimillion-strong migration pressure on the developed world as a whole will only increase in the future. Moreover, in the context of these forecasts for the demographic and social development of the world for the next two decades, the ideological background of the global migration process will be transforming at an ever-increasing pace. The **issue about the right to migrate** can become extremely acute as part of the neo-Malthusian ideology of restraining the development of the middle class in Third World countries. Completely different global values may appear which will be very much unlike the currently accepted ones.

Everyone is entitled to a better life, and there is no arguing this point. The officially adopted by the UN concept of sustainable development emphasizes this precisely. If someone cannot live a better life in his or her country of birth due to global development inequality then, according to the logic of the global planetary unity of human society, the individual is entitled to move to a better place. Especially in the context of the above restrictions on the growth of the middle class in the Third World, which may become part of the agenda of the coming decades.

Such logic (and new values) constitutes a completely different and fundamentally more powerful challenge to the sovereignty of states than all the current geopolitical games with their inherent interference in internal affairs of other countries.

Since, according to this new planetary value, everyone is entitled to not only a better life, but also to a life in a better place, this begs a completely different way to frame the question. After all, if life in a hypothetical Germany is better than in a hypothetical Eritrea, then the Eritreans have the right to migrate to Germany. Here, the slogan 'Germany for the citizens of Germany' which underlies sovereignty, is becoming obsolete and comes into conflict with the value of the right to development. Then, a prosperous Germany becomes a province of not only its citizens, but of the Global Commons for all the mankind, and everyone is entitled to a piece of it. A new slogan (and a new value) 'Germany for all' then comes to the forefront.

Indeed, in the context of depleting natural resources to provide for the growing population of the Earth, the situation where hunger will increase in a hypothetical Eritrea and its citizens will dream of having a bowl of rice a day, whereas in a hypothetical Germany people will continue to prosper, will increasingly contradict the values of the global unity of the human race and humanism in its highest original meaning. Based on this value of the global unity of humankind, everyone has the right to live in places that offer better access to the Global Commons. From here, we see a direct challenge to the inviolability of the state borders of the countries belonging to the 'golden billion'. Then, the attempt of the rich countries to fence themselves off from the poor countries with sovereign borders will increasingly be perceived as a kind of planetary apartheid between the rich and the poor. Which, clearly, will need to be addressed in one way or another.

Thus, the not-yet-articulated global values of the right to development and equal development contradict the values of sovereignty and the politically incorrect task of restricting the development of poor countries and fencing off the developed world from the rest of humanity (Fortress Europe). The conflicts of the future that may arise from this contradiction will be of quite a different nature than traditional geopolitical wars of today, but it is already necessary now to develop the best global strategy to prevent them.

The next issue that may conflict with environmental doctrines is of a technological nature. More precisely, it is about the regular production of new types of household appliances ideologically designed to be used over a short period, after which they should be replaced with new ones. A new smartphone becomes 'old' one or two years after it was bought, and consumer fashion requires that customers

replace it with a newer one. The same happens with a new car, etc. Of course, ***constant overproduction for the sake of consumption*** takes its toll on the environment and, in the case of large-sized equipment (like vehicles) aggravates the global problem of waste and waste disposal. The manufacturers of technology under global brands, even though they support environmental initiatives (again, the imperative of environmental ethics), are not going to abandon their strategies and will keep upgrading their model range and focus on overproduction.

Therefore, the emphasis on long-term consumption of goods has become an integral part of many environmental doctrines. To this end (in addition to consumer's individual ethical responsibility), certain measures are proposed – such as high taxes on equipment ownership, state regulation of changes in product lines, the promotion of equipment rental as opposed to ownership, the banning of artificial limits on the service life of equipment (such as printer chips that limit the number of printed pages, smartphone operating systems designed to slow performance after two years of functioning, etc.), and so on. Back in 1999, Paul Hawken and co-authors systematized these proposals in a concept they called 'natural capitalism'.[23] Bill Clinton liked to quote it, but nothing of substance happened in the two decades since. Calls for long-term consumption proved to be as unrealizable as the most utopian concepts of 'deep ecology'. The reason for that is not only the opposition of corporations, but also the ideology of consumerism, which turned out to be much stronger than the environmental ideology.

The appeals by a number of environmental programmes to reform the World Trade Organization (WTO) are largely connected with the same issues. According to this logic, the global free trade system is in conflict with ecological goals for long-term consumption, because, if we follow it, it *de facto* encourages constant upgrading of a model range for the sake of increased consumption. Therefore, environmental discourse often contains calls for abandoning the WTO principles and switching to a kind of **environmental protectionism**, where states would protect their markets with barriers not for the sake of competition, but to ensure long-term consumption. Ironically, the environmentalists' calls for environmental protectionism merge, in fact, with the concept of 'sovereign ecology' promoted by a number of states, which is designed to limit the impact of global environmental ideologies. Also, as we witness the extremely complex and inefficient process of even a minor quota reform at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with which everyone agreed in words, it is difficult to expect that these proposals by environmentalists, for which there is no consensus, will be quickly implemented. However, trade wars initiated by Donald Trump against the EU and China, which cast doubt on WTO's basic principles, give new hope to the proponents of the environmental protectionism.

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[23] *Hawken, P, Lovins, A & Lovins, LH, 1999, 'Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution', Boston: Little, Brown & Co.*

Another difficulty involved in implementing environmental doctrines is that the ***source of environmental pollution is shifting from the poor to the rich***. In 1972, Indira Gandhi, addressing the first UN Conference on the Human Environment, said that poverty and destitution were the main polluters worldwide. Back then, the poor were unable to cope with their problems on their own. Now, it has become a problem of the rich. A report to the Club of Rome was released in 2017, which was dubbed 'Come On!'[24] It says that, including through increased concentration of capital, the upper quadrant of the rich, who are responsible for more than half of the total environmental impact, has expanded. Therefore, it is necessary to work with the millionaires rather than the poor in order to reduce the burden on nature. Since it is impossible to find proper mechanisms to deal with this issue, it is one of the reasons why environmental problems remain unresolved.

The emphasis on 'rich' polluters is postulated in relation to individuals and states as well. It uses statistics on ecological footprints,[25] which are usually more pronounced in rich countries than in underdeveloped ones. Moreover, the higher the human development index, the greater the ecological footprint. No country has yet shown a high human development index with a low ecological footprint. In this regard, there are proposals for introducing taxation of states (or goods made by the producers headquartered in such states) that is proportionate to the size of the ecological footprint. Clearly, this also runs into obstacles preventing its implementation. Following the same logic, but as a more feasible idea, the introduction of a ***carbon tax*** on products from countries with a high ecological footprint and which did not join the Paris Agreement is also being discussed. Another proposal is to diversify countries' contributions to global environmental funds in proportion to their ecological footprint. These ideas have become part of a wider discussion about feasibility of a fair redistribution of financial resources worldwide. Just like any redistribution, its environmental variations also lead to the emergence of a significant number of opponents of such initiatives. Here again, the question arises about the erosion of state sovereignty, the supra-state global nature of the decisions taken, etc. Everyone still remembers anti-globalist street rallies, which demanded, among other things, a fair redistribution of global wealth through the Tobin tax. This global campaign resulted in the above-mentioned minor quota reform at the IMF, which was not easy to accomplish, either.

The key problem in the future is not only the uncontrolled growth of the population of the Earth, but the uncontrolled growth of the middle class

[24] *Von Weizsacker, E & Wijkman, A, 2017, 'Come On! Capitalism, Short-Terminism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet', Report to the Club of Rome.*

[25] *Ecological footprint is an integrated indicator of the load on the environment, which has been measured for 20 years in the Living Planet reports compiled by the World Wildlife Fund and is expressed in global hectares. This is the area of land necessary for providing resources for humans and processing waste generated by them. With the exception of small island nations, the most significant ecological footprint per capita is usually found in the developed countries.*

Conclusion

Overall, environmentalism as a global ecological ideology in all its varieties has had a major impact on international politics. It resulted in the signing of large-scale international agreements and efforts to get them implemented. Environmental ethics has become a practical imperative (at least in words). However, the implementation of many provisions of environmental doctrines encounters occasionally tacit but tangible resistance caused by the fact that global environmental ideologies are often perceived as a challenge to the sovereignty of states and the competitiveness of corporations. In this situation, the postulate of the environment as a Global Common often does not work.

However, the most acute problems arise in the context of the interrelation between global ecology and demography. Here, the contradiction between the natural and social aspects of the Global Commons is becoming increasingly clear. In particular, the call for limiting consumption due to the exhaustible nature of the Earth's natural resources conflicts with countries' right to development (including the right to develop its middle class) in the countries of the Global South. The emerging value of planetary unity and equality of human society as a social element of the Global Commons transforms into the right of equal access to global benefits arising from it. In the *de facto* absence of the right to the development in the Global South, another right is postulated on this basis: the right to migrate from the 'poor' South to the 'rich' North. The frequent lack of solidarity with migrants in host societies already makes this issue prone to conflict and in the future this will only get worse.

Thus, the ideology of the Global Commons, albeit based on good intentions, may, in fact, lead to clashes between environmental regulations and social development goals of the global society. Therefore, the international community is faced with the challenge of maintaining a delicate balance between these areas to prevent possible conflicts in the future. At the heart of these conflicts are, first, the contradiction between state sovereignty and the Global Commons and, second, the challenge presented to the whole concept of the Global Commons by the gap between the North and the South. The conflict between humans and nature stems from the conflict between the rich and the poor.

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