Fulbright University Việt Nam

Development Policy 2019

Session (16): Environment and Climate Change

Schedule

- How to balance economic growth and environment? What are typical concerns on environmental damage? What are potential threats of climate change?

- What are most pressing environmental issues in Vietnam and the region?

Range of Environmental Policies

- Air | water pollution
- Marine (ocean) pollution
- Acid Rain: e.g. Sulphur dioxide (related to air pollution, Great Smog of London).
- Wildlife conservation (& management) & Endangered species
- Recycling and conservation
- Energy policy (fossil energy, nuclear, solar, wind, etc.) | Waste disposal
- Toxic substance
- Land use
- Mineral resources
- Deforestation

Late Development

- Relatively late development of environmental studies – post hoc measures.

- Earlier focused on cases (DDT (pesticide), Population Bomb, food-chain, etc.) → Clean Air and Water Acts (1970s), increased attention → International organizations (Rio Conference, 1992) → Concerns on sustainability, climate change, independent environmental studies programs in universities.

- A few notable environmental disasters awoke people – (e.g.) Cadmium poisoning due to mining in Toyama Prefecture (Itai Itai Disease) | Love Canal (1953), dumping of toxic waste on the ground | Tsunami in Indonesia | Chernobyl (1986)

- Risk Assessment | Risk Management | Cost-benefit Analysis etc. have been developed.

Precautionary Principles

- First, do no harm.
- In the face of possible harm, exercise caution.
- When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment – precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.
- Potential harm, scientific uncertainty, precautionary action
- (e.g.) Vaccination prior to outbreak, reducing greenhouse gases, avoiding genetically modified foods (GMOs).

Major Actors (Stakeholders)

- General citizens

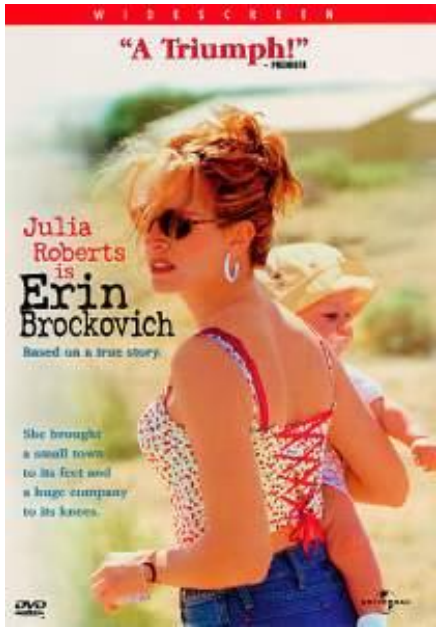
- Organized interest groups, governmental institutions (e.g. environmental protection agency, politicians, government ministries).

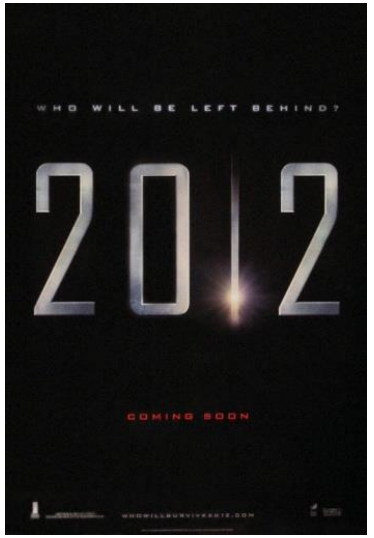
- Peter Haas (1992): "**Epistemic community**" concept (scientists continue to study, debate, meet at conference, and eventually they move to consensus (most likely) – agenda-setting take place → adopted.

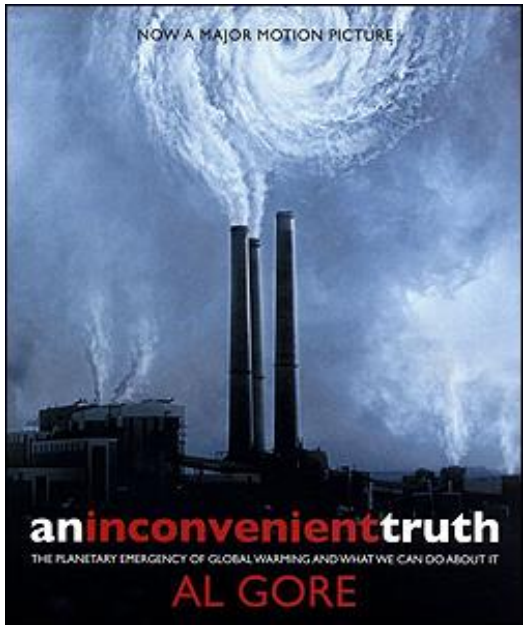
- K. T. Lifin: "**knowledge brokers"** (scientists) influence on policymaking process.

- But, who are the most influential actors in environmental politics? (in general) _____

Watch these movies







Reflects stages of environmental activism

Anthropocentric Conservationism (efficient use of resources)	Anthropocentric Environmentalism (Protection of environment)	Eco-centric Ecologism (Maintenance of ecology)

Environment as a Security Problem

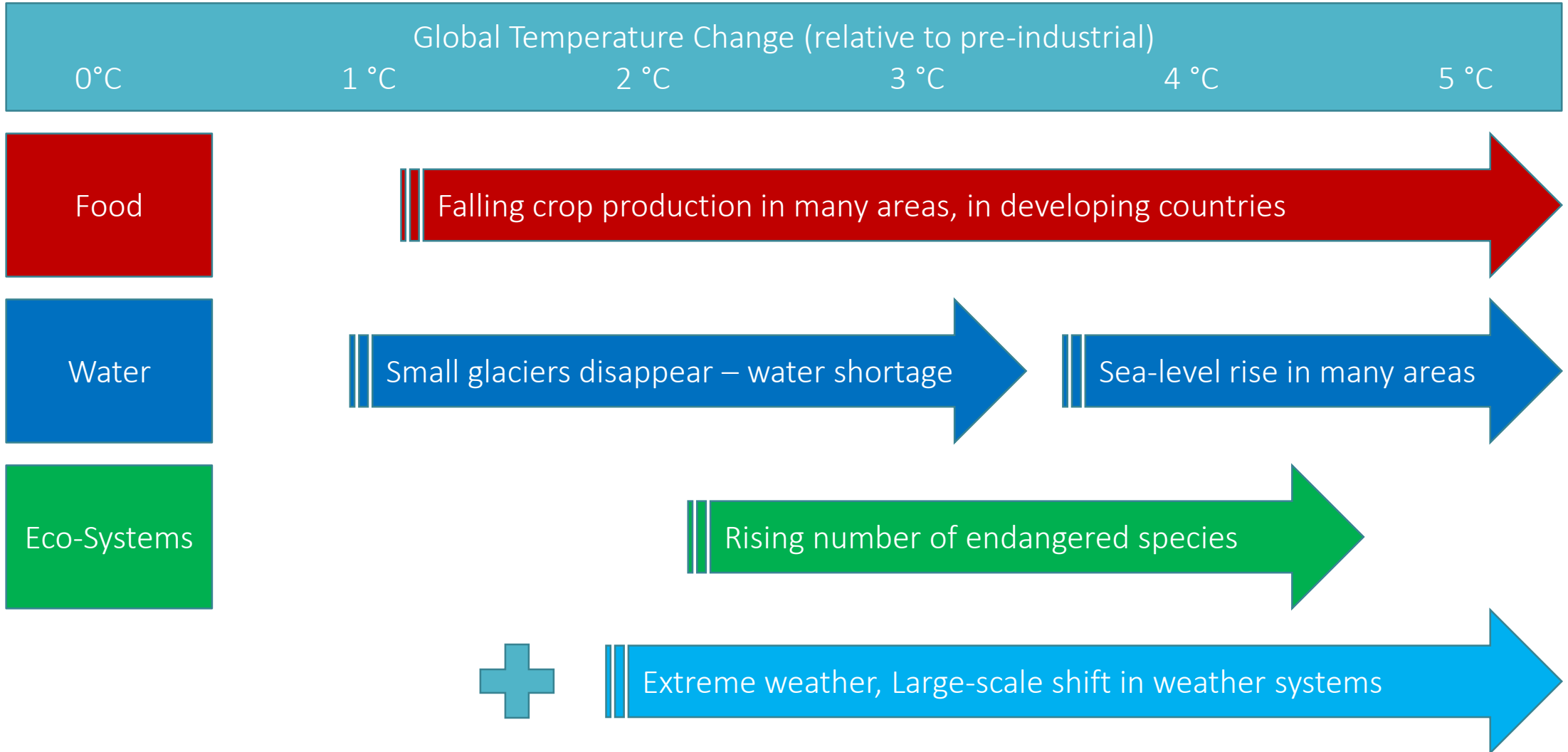
- Growing concerns about environment is redefining the concept of 'security' – **environmental security** was proposed to encompass a wide array of threats, ranging from earthquakes to environmental degradation (late 1980s, early 1990s).

- Growing controversies over environmental security
  - Type of threats: wide range of harms – aesthetics, disease, natural integrity
  - Sources of threats: individuals, corporations, states.
  - Degree of intentionality: largely unintentional.
  - Requires international cooperation
  - Environmental degradation as a cause of violent conflict and interstate war (e.g. resource scarcity, water, oil, global commons, declining living standards)

Climate Change (Link)

- Climate change is the defining issue of our time and we are at defining moment.
- From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale.
- Require immediate action: without drastic action plan, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly.
- Origin: the human fingerprint on greenhouse gases (GHGs) – concentration of GHGs in the earth's atmosphere is directly linked to the average global temperature on earth → rising steadily since the industrial revolution.
- Why is it important? Vietnam is one of the few most vulnerable countries to climate change.

Projected Impacts of Climate Change



Impact on Vietnam

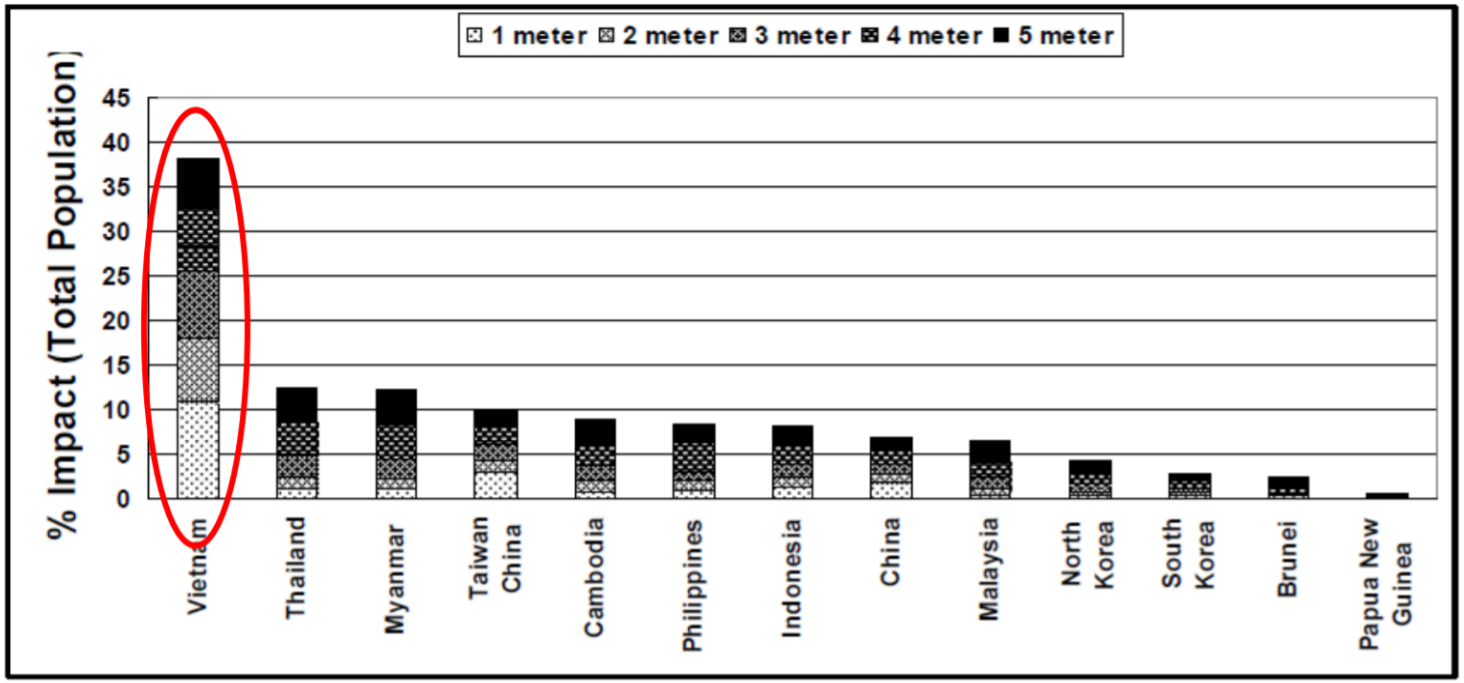
- Arguably Vietnam is the world's most vulnerable country to the effects of climate change → threatens long-term economic growth, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development.

- Vietnam's vulnerability is increased – **Q. What condition Vietnam has? Why is Vietnam so vulnerable to climate change (compared to others)?**

- Less predictable weather patterns and bigger consequences:

  (e.g.) 1m rise of sea level → possible lost of 12% of national land | possibly affect 23% of entire population (17 million people).

  (e.g.) Rising temperatures and changed rainfall – food security, water resource



Rising Sea Level Scenarios and Its impact

- World Bank Scenario (2007)
- Vietnam is one of the most dangerous country
- Possible GDP damage from 10% to maximum more than 35%

Government's Response

- Vietnam passed Resolution 24/NQ/TW (2013) on Responding to Climate Change by the Communist Party.

- National Climate Change Strategy (2011), National Green Growth Strategy (2013), National Action Plan on Climate Change for 2012-2020 (2012), National Action Plan on Green Growth (2014).

- Collaboration with | Support from international organizations, USAID, JICA, UNDP, Asian Development Bank, etc.

- Gaps: Lack of trained human resource, big data, effective cooperation mechanism, regulatory institutions, etc.

Yet, possibly this is most serious

- The Vietnamese government and international organizations has crafted a range of policies to fight against climate change in Vietnamese and global perspective.

- Real challenge is 'growth-oriented' mindset: (e.g.) Vietnam is rapidly industrializing economy and has to rely on technology for economic growth using fossil fuels → environmental damage is mainly responsibility of the developed world, and equal burden is not fair.

- **Environmental Justice** theory – environmentally hazardous, toxic, and responsibility is **unequally & intentionally** distributed to political, economic, and social (ethnic) minorities. Environmental 'injustice' between the developed and developing countries. Q. **Do you agree?**