

To Foster a Community of Life for Man and Nature

-- Bringing Medical Health into the Framework of the Philosophy of Climate Governance

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Abstract

This article sorts out how global warming has gone from research in the field of climate science to attention to the field of medical and health. As a major risk to mankind, some traditional propaganda on climate change and climate governance have failed to gain the understanding and support of some people. The non-urgency, negative externality, and tragedy of the commons contained in climate ethics and intergenerational justice make climate governance gradually enter the condition of Giddens Paradox. Meanwhile, as countries attach great importance to the medical health of the people and individuals, the potential threats to human medical health brought by climate change have gradually attracted new attention. For instance, the spirit of anti-epidemics displayed after the outbreak of the COVID-19 shows how people value their lives and health and their strong ability to fight against it. The threat towards medical health brought by climate change and its urgency is not only important reasons for building a community of human and nature, but also a source that motivates the people to actively participate in climate governance. It helps improve the philosophical framework of climate governance and plays an important role in building a community of human and natural life.

Keywords

Climate change; Medical health; Climate governance; The community of human and natural life.

1. Introduction

The word "Climate" originates from the ancient Greek word "Klima". It could be seen from this that the ancients paid attention to climate change and the impact of climate change for a long time, and produced one of the famous theory climate determinism in history. The theory of Climate Determinism believes that climate is an extremely important and widely distributed environmental factor that plays an important role in shaping human society and natural systems. For instance, Ptolemy believed that the nature of climate would affect the survival ability of creatures on the earth, and ancient medicine also paid attention to the relationship between climate and human health [1]. Nowadays, on the one hand, climate governance and the community of human and natural life have been put on an important agenda. On the other hand, it has shown that measures advocated and propagandized by climate ethics and intergenerational justice have not attracted high attention from the public since many citizens didn't understand, take it seriously, and also take little action on it [2]. Due to the spread of the COVID-19, the public has recently become more concerned about potential disease threats brought about by climate change, such as the recurrence of a large number of glaciers due to the melting of the Arctic ice caused by global warming and then the impact on the health of urban residents. Adhering to the supremacy of people's lives and attaching great importance to

people's health are also important reasons for China to actively respond to and participate in climate change governance and practice building a community of human and natural life.

In 1988, James Hansen, the father of global warming research, first and formally sounded the warning of global warming and climate change immediately caused a lot of attention [3]. After 1988, books on the history of climate change gradually emerged like Spencer Weart published the book "The Discovery of Global Warming" in 2003, which sorted out the history of global warming. Moreover, this is the first book about the history of global warming, and Weart has also become the first philosopher and historian of science to write a comprehensive book on the history of global warming discovery [4]. This article systematically sorts out the history of how climate change arouses the attention of the medical and healthy field, and reproduces the historical relationship between climate change and medical health. Focusing on the new themes of climate change and medical health, it is hoped that with climate threats near the people take an active role in climate governance.

2. Climate Change: Went through Two Hundred Years in Scientific Debate

It has been nearly 200 years for the history of natural science research on climate change since the physicist Fourier first proposed the concept of the greenhouse effect in 1824. In 1861, Tyndall confirmed that CO₂ and other gases have the greenhouse effect. In 1895, a Nobel prize winner Arrhenius proposed that the temperature rise may be caused by the increase of greenhouse gases caused by human activities. In 1938, Callander proposed that climate warming was caused by the increase of CO₂ concentration. In 1960 Keeling measured the change in CO₂ concentration further [5]. Since the 1980s, climate change has received a lot of attention from scientists. The IPCC report pointed out that climate warming would cause sea level rise, cryosphere melting, frequent extreme weather and other hazards [6]. Climate change has become the first global political issue raised by scientists in history, and is considered the biggest environmental disaster in human history, and climate research is in the ascendant [7, 8, 9].

Among the scientific controversy of climate change, the author believes that there are internal scientific controversies such as disputes over uncertainty and research perspectives. Meteorologist Quansheng Ge believes that divergence is inevitable due to the complexity of the climate system, and that there are no research conclusions such as the understanding of the 2°C threshold and the greenhouse effect, whether the climate model is reliable, and the history of climate change in 2000 [10]. Moreover, in addition to the earth and atmospheric science, paleoclimatology in climate research also provides interesting research perspectives for the construction of climate itself [11]. Dendrochronologists, by studying tree rings, believe that the regularity of climate dryness and wetness is closely related to the sunspot cycle, as well as the climate cycle and the ability to predict the future. Through research on fossil pollen, Sears believes that the climatic law is very complicated and does not agree with the cycle theory and its predictability. By paying attention to two unique paleoecological methods of climate research, it demonstrates the different understandings of natural scientists on climate change and how the different understandings are formed. This also reflects that the scientific puzzle of climate change is similar to the fable about a blind man feeling an elephant, and scientists have different understandings based on different studies. Therefore, by carding the process of constructing climate itself, it is found that some scientists' views on climate change do not come from interests, but from the understanding brought about by the research of science itself.

3. Climate Change: From Science to Society

The first World Climate Conference held in Geneva in 1979 issued a warning to all mankind that climate warming may be caused by human activities and started the tendency to global

warming research. The author carefully adopted the literature research and found that under the promotion of international organizations, a large number of international conferences on climate change were held frequently, and the media followed up with a large number of reports. From this, climate change moved from science itself to political and social agendas. Academician Ding Zhongli believes that the right to distribute carbon emissions is related to the right to development and even human rights. President Obama urged countries to join the Paris Agreement in 2015, many aspects of which were designed and served by the United States. President Trump claimed that climate change was a deception in the 2016 general election, believing that the Paris Agreement restricted U.S. energy growth and employment opportunities, and withdrew from the agreement in 2019. From this case, climate change is not only a scientific issue, but also a political issue and development issue.

Furthermore, as political intervention have aroused full attention from society, some scientific research and social studies related to the history of climate change have emerged in large numbers. The research process of climate change includes the research of the history of scientific thought starting from the field of natural science and the research of the history of science and culture with science, technology and society as the main path. When researching and creating their theories, Naturalist does not take into account the production methods of scientific knowledge, the internal logical relationship, the relationship between science and technology and society, and the social construction of scientific knowledge, and they rarely consider the internal progress mechanism required for the development of the discipline itself. The research on the history of science and culture mainly includes environmental ethics, intergenerational justice, cultural concepts, social consensus, political and economic research, etc.

4. Climate Change: From Society to the Field of Medical Health

As an important part of the natural ecosystem, climate directly affects the survival and development of human beings. President Xi pointed out that in recent years, climate change, loss of biodiversity, increased desertification, and frequent extreme climates have brought severe challenges to human survival and development [12]. Especially, the introspection of medical humanities after the outbreak of the epidemic has once again aroused public concern that climate change may cause disasters and threats to the health of urban residents more frequently [13].

As a highly professional subject, medicine has a certain delay in its attention to climate change and medicine has fewer medical personnel with interdisciplinary backgrounds such as climatology, there exist some borders of subjects between climate change and medical health. But at the same time, climate change and medicine are interrelated in medical practice. So how does the topic of climate change enter the field of medical health? First, the author concluded and found several of these important forces that promote the medical field to pay attention to climate change such as the promotion of international organizations, the environmental movement in the United States in the 20th century, political games in some countries, and extensive media coverage. Then, the rapid development of the environmental movement in the 1970s and 1980s aroused public concern about various new diseases caused by air pollution. Besides, some Western countries exaggerate the potential disease threats brought about by climate change in order to suppress certain countries with weaker climate change adaptability and emission reduction capabilities. The media continuously propagandas that the frequent occurrence of various diseases is caused by exhaust emissions and climate change, which in turn affects the health of urban residents. All the above factors have promoted the medical field and medical scientists' attention and research on the impact of climate change on human health.

5. Medical Health: Building a New Force for Climate Governance and a Community of Human and Natural Life

Global climate change is the greatest risk that mankind is facing in the 21st century. Many citizens do not understand or engage in public policies to deal with this major risk [14]. When analyzing London smog management, American environmental movement, sulfuric acid rain treatment, and ozone layer treatment in history, as we can see, it is precisely the direct harm, urgency and immediacy that forced the people to urge the government to take active measures, and then good governance results were achieved at the same time. Particularly, because of its regional hazards, local governments are more willing to take active measures. However, although some responsible governments have done a lot of work on publicity and regulations, the people have not actively participated in climate governance. Certain irresponsible governments and interest groups openly oppose climate warming for their benefit, but the people are indifferent to it. Environmental problems such as London smog, acid rain, destruction of the ozone layer, and environmental pollution in the United States have resulted in a large number of public demonstrations. On the contrary, climate change, as the biggest environmental problem in human history, has not been supported by the people's environmental protection movement. Regarding the two kinds of reflection of the public and government, at present, the public only sees the negative externalities of climate change. The dangers are only potential and remote.

It can be seen that the call for environmental ethics has failed to make people actively participate in the governance of climate change. Declarations such as intergenerational justice and leaving a beautiful planet for future generations make people feel the harm brought by climate change more distant, not as direct and effective as climate change is related to personal health. For example, the currently popular topic "levying carbon tax", "carbon emission" and "total control and trading" have triggered dissatisfaction and resistance from some people. Certain individual carbon emissions will bring "negative externalities" to global residents, and "carbon tax" is the collection of carbon dioxide emissions taxes from the society. British economist Pigou first proposed this kind of external taxation, so it is also called "Pigou tax". Due to the characteristics of "negative externalities", the issue of climate change is deeply trapped by the theoretical model of the "tragedy of the commons" and has become a difficult political problem to solve. As Professor Harding said, "In a society that believes in the arbitrary use of public resources, everyone pursues their best interests, and destruction is their inevitable destiny." Meanwhile, the issue of climate change has brought about the negative impact of the "green paradox" that means that economists often recommend the restriction of fossil fuels in order to reduce carbon emissions, while fossil fuel owners prevent the devaluation of fossil fuel assets and currently develop large amounts of fossil fuel resources. It turned out that the suggestions of environmental economists failed to reduce carbon emissions, but accelerated fossil fuel consumption and climate warming [2]. One of the Nobel prize winner William Nordhaus, who has devoted himself to the study of climate economics for a long time, recognizes that mankind has entered the condition of "prisoner's dilemma" and "climate casino." Although there is still time to turn and walk out of the 'casino', the prospects for changing mankind are dim [15]. It is consistent with the "Giddens Paradox" view, as the harm of climate warming will not appear immediately and people do not take substantive actions but wait for the harm to come, but when the consequence of climate warming occurs, the problem is already difficult to solve. Bill Gates and others are pessimistic about climate change governance and believe that global warming is inevitable. In recent years, they have promoted research on climate adaptation and prevention. On the contrary, governments in various countries pay less attention to climate adaptation and prevention.

For China, the government has done a lot of work on the publicity and legislation of energy conservation and emission reduction, but there is little publicity and few policy researches on the threat of climate change to medical health. Climate change influences human health directly and indirectly. On the one hand, direct impacts include increased morbidity and mortality in the population caused by high temperature and heatwaves, more likely to spread and spread of infectious diseases on a large scale, and frequent occurrences of extreme weather are more likely to cause outbreaks of various diseases. On the other hand, indirect impacts include regional climate changes, outbreaks of epidemics in certain other regions, and ice melting in the tundra and high latitudes, which is of widespread concern today, causing a large number of viruses to resurrect in the frozen layer. Domestic and foreign research on climate change to the medical field started relatively late, and policy research and media publicity were little. But it is closely related to people's lives, and even the first major threat brought by climate change has come to mankind. For the health of the people, it is urgent to build a community of human and natural life. Compared with the potential dangers such as ocean acidification, the collapse of the Arctic ice cap, and sea level rise, it is more urgent and immediate. For instance, the COVID-19 in 2020 has demonstrated the powerful force of relying closely on the people, promoting the national spirit, gathering the greatest positive energy, and united in the fight against the epidemic, and the process of anti-epidemic demonstrated the active cooperation and spontaneous action of the masses [16]. It is possible to find enlightenment in response to climate change in the anti-epidemic spirit, so that people can understand the medical health threats brought by climate change and fight them like fighting against the epidemic, so as to encourage the people to deeply understand the harm of climate change, and enable the people to actively participate in climate governance and contribute to building a community of human and natural life spontaneously.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, climate changes have led to the increase of people's diseases and affected the health of urban residents. On the one hand, attention to the potential threats that climate change brings to the field of medical and health, must be paid and actively implement relevant scientific research and preventive regulations should also be acted. Adhering to the people's supremacy and lives valuing first, it is necessary for people to actively build a community of human and natural life for the health of the people. On the other hand, it is a must that people should do a good job of publicity work to let the people understand the huge threat that climate change brings to the medical and health field, whose immediacy and urgency can more mobilize the people to actively participate in the governance of climate change. At the same time, it may be similar to the American Environmental Movement in the 1970s, prompting the masses to force some irresponsible governments to take active measures to combat climate change and to better build the community of human and nature.

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