



# Global miljö rättvisa

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# Global Environmental Justice

- ‘Global Environmental Justice’ as a philosophical concept.
- Global *Climate* Justice.

# Climate Change as a “Perfect Moral Storm”

Three major problems interfere with our ability to behave justly:

- 1. The Global Storm:** The difficulty of reaching international agreement on measures to combat climate change; The Tragedy of the Commons.
- 2. The Intergenerational Storm:** The current generation has asymmetric power over future generations.
- 3. The Theoretical Storm:** There are no robust general theories to guide us. Uncertainty: scientific, ethical, political. (Gardiner, 2011)

# Responses to climate change

- **‘Business-as-usual’**: let the changes happen and suffer the consequences.
- **Mitigate**: reduce the pace and magnitude of climate change (reduce greenhouse gas emissions through e.g. changing energy use, or limiting deforestation; geo-engineering to remove gases from the atmosphere).
- **Adapt**: reduce the impact of climate change (develop crops resistant to flooding; flood control and drought management; building barriers against sea-level rises; migration). (Risse, 2012)

# What should we do?

- Philosophical theories about justice can help us figure out what we should do.
- What is wrong with the ‘business-as-usual’-approach?

# Distributive Justice

- Mitigation and Adaptation will come with *costs*. How should these costs be distributed?

# Distributing access to the absorptive capacity of the atmosphere

- The atmosphere is a global commons – a global ‘sink’ into which we can pour a fixed amount of greenhouse gases before there are serious and irreversible effects on the climate.
- How should we distribute rights to pour carbon into this ‘sink’?
- Peter Singer’s question: “Why should anyone have a greater claim to part of the global atmospheric sink than any other?” (Singer, 2004)

# The Equal Per Capita Principle

- We determine an acceptable overall level of anthropogenic greenhouse emissions;
- This level of emissions is then divided equally among the world's population to produce *equal per capita entitlements to emissions* (e.g. one metric ton per year per person).

(Singer, 2004)

# The Equal Per Capita Principle

- This proposal has *radical* redistributive effects:
  - U.S.A: 5 metric tons per capita.
  - Western Europe, Japan, Australia: 1.6 – 4.2 metric tons per capita.
  - China: 0.76 metric tons per capita.
  - India: 0.29 metric tons per capita.

(Gardiner, 2010)

# The Equal Sacrifice Principle

- First: Rich countries should alone bear the costs of mitigating climate change. Poverty is a serious enough issue that we ought to *allow* the poorest societies to increase their emissions somewhat if doing so is necessary to tackle their poverty.
- Second: How should rich societies distribute the costs among themselves?
  - The Equal Per Capita Principle ignores societies' different capacities to reduce their emissions – very costly for large emitters!
  - The Equal Sacrifice Principle takes this into account: All those who can contribute without harm to their vital interests should do so on an equal basis. Countries should make sacrifices to mitigate which are *equally costly*. (Miller, 2009)

# A Challenge to the Equal Per Capita Principle: Historical Emissions

- The Equal Per Capita Principle is *forward-looking* – it tells people how much they are allowed to emit from now onwards.
- It treats the current concentration of GHG:s in the atmosphere as a baseline.
- Maybe this is morally misleading?
- *How* did we get to current concentrations of GHG:s, and who was *responsible* for it?
- Is it acceptable to hold developed countries responsible for historical emissions even though they may not have known the impact those emissions might turn out to have?

(Armstrong, 2012)

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