

An Introduction to Climate Justice.

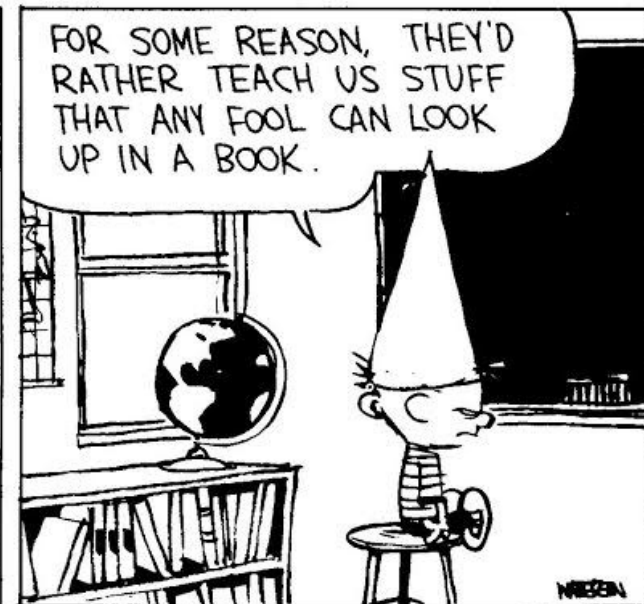
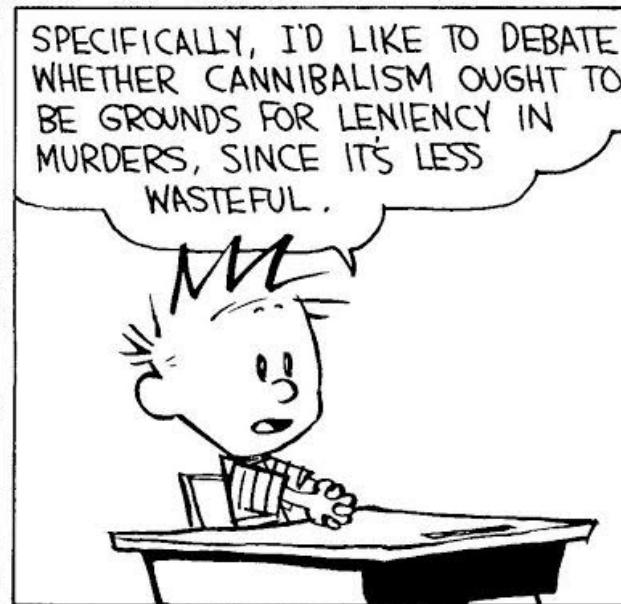
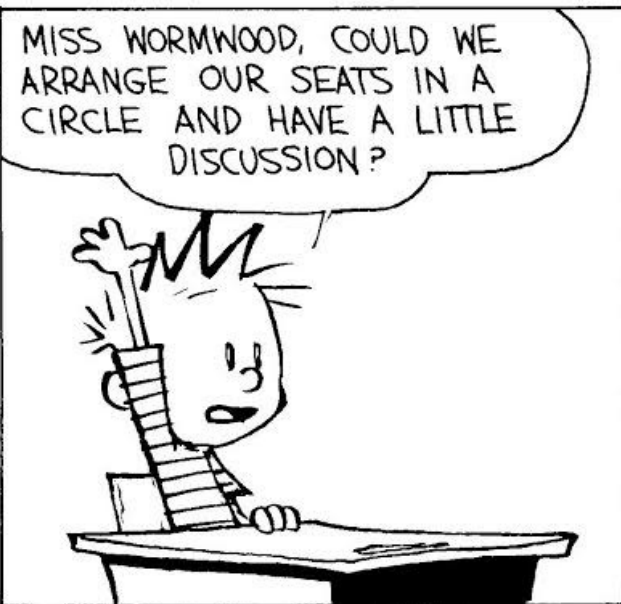


Elie

Overview

- Ethics and climate change
- Elements of a theory of climate justice
- Distributing GHG emissions entitlements
- Responsibility and duties concerning climate change
- Unexplored issues

Ethical questions



Ethics in climate change

Normative versus empirical/descriptive research.

Looking at the *reasons* given activists, politicians and others about (for example)

- why care about climate change
- why do something about climate change
- what to do

Ethical claims in climate politics

“I'm committed to climate change because of future generations, it is not about us, right? We're out of here... I just feel that it is so completely unfair and immoral what we are doing to future generations, we are condemning them before they are even born”

Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary to UNFCCC, quoted by the BBC, October 2013.

“I have heard President Sarkozy talking about hypocrisy. I think I am trying to avoid such words myself. I am trying to go with arguments and debate about historical responsibility. People tend to forget where it is from. In the past 200 years of industrialization the developed countries contributed more than 80 % of emissions. Whoever created this problem is responsible for the catastrophe we are facing”

He Yafei, Chinese Negotiator, quoted by Spiegelonline, 2009

A mixture of ethics and politics?

From the perspective of the developed countries, in order for us to be able to mobilize the political will within each of our countries to not only engage in substantial mitigation efforts ourselves, which are very difficult, but to also then channel some of the resources from our countries into developing countries, is a very heavy lift ... If there is no sense of mutuality in this process, it is going to be difficult for us to ever move forward in a significant way”

Barak Obama, quoted by Spiegelonline 2009.

Evaluating moral claims

What would it take to judge whether
an action is right
a situation is fair

what reasons would you offer and accept ...
... and imagine the debate/inquiry could
keep going.

Elements of a theory of Climate Justice

- What is a fair distribution of the benefits and costs of climate change?
 - Involves thinking about:
 - Intergenerational justice
 - Global justice to what? Of states, individuals or other entities?
 - Entitlements to do what? entities?
 - Duties
 - Ideal and non-ideal theorising
- What is a fair political procedure?

Emissions entitlements

- What level of atmospheric GHG concentration should we aim for?
Higher?
- 2 degrees (average) increase
Lower?
- As well as climate sensitivity, etc, answering this depends on what is valued and the importance of future human well-being

The Trillionth Tonne

www.trillionthtonne.org

“If temperatures rise by **2°C per trillion tonnes** of carbon released into the atmosphere, to avoid more than **2°C of warming** we need to limit total cumulative emissions to below **1,000,000,000,000** tonnes of carbon.”

have a go ...

TrillionthTonne.org

www.trillionthtonne.org

trillionthtonne.org

Explaining the need to limit cumulative emissions of carbon dioxide.

Estimated cumulative emissions from fossil fuel use, cement production and land-use change since industrialization began are

575,163,706,380

tonnes of carbon.

Explore what this means

Cumulative emissions matter, because the total amount of carbon dioxide that can be released into the atmosphere is limited if we are to avoid dangerous climate change. The limit depends on:

How much warming should we expect per tonne of carbon released into the atmosphere?

2°C per trillion tonnes: cautious

At what level do you want global temperatures to peak?

2°C moderate warming

If temperatures rise by **2°C per trillion tonnes** of carbon released into the atmosphere, to avoid more than **2°C of warming** we need to limit total cumulative emissions to below **1,000,000,000,000** tonnes of carbon.

Based on emission trends over the past 20 years, we expect the **1,000,000,000,000th** tonne will be emitted on

Wed, 17 Oct 2040 04:36:27 GMT

We would not release the **1,000,000,000,000th** tonne if emissions were to start falling now at **2.4826845603 %** per year

17:34
26/11/2013

Equal per Capita entitlements

Each individual has an equal right to emit GHGs.

States hold emissions entitlements according to their population.

“from the point of view of both basic ethics and enlightenment philosophy, the case for equal per capita rights is an obvious one”.

One underlying assumption?

The “absorptive capacity of the atmosphere” [sic] is a public good” (common good).

+

Each individual has an equal claim to a common good.

“[No] one owns the atmosphere - it is a true global commons - yet we all need it. On that

Objections

Arguments from common goods have been used to justify non-equal distributions:

“first-come, first served”

and/or

distribute according to need

If equality is the ideal, should *all* resources be distributed equally? If not, what is so special about GHG emissions rights?

Alternative 1

Following on from the “first come, first served” objection:

High emitting states have a greater entitlement because their citizens have built up legitimate expectations that they can live in a certain way and it would be unfair to make them change.

Alternative 2

Following from the “needs objection”

Individuals have a right to emissions that are necessary for a minimally decent quality of life.

EPC does not take into account that some GHG emissions serve trivial purposes, others serve vital purposes.

A puzzle for EPC and subsistence accounts

- Taking account of the human/social element.
- Problem for EPC
 - The global “atmospheric commons” is not “manna from heaven”. Global sink capacity is maintained/affected by many human actions, such as land management (Blomfeld 2012). Therefore, some states (e.g. with large forests) do more to maintain global sinks.

Distributing duties

Common but differentiated responsibility

the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation

in a common effort to address the urgent global climate challenge.

The contribution to problem principle.

“in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities ...”

Those who have emitted GHGs should bear duties in proportion to their emissions records

Historical responsibility:

you broke it, you fix it



Problems for the CPP?

- “Poor polluters”
- Contribution of non-anthropogenic climate change
- “Excusable ignorance”

The ability to pay principle

“... and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions.”

(UNFCCC)

- Those who are well off should bear duties, in proportion to their prosperity

- “If you are in a position to contribute, you

Problems for the APP?

- No incentives?
- Ignoring the cause?

The beneficiary pays principle

- Those who have benefitted from climate change should bear duties, in proportion to the amount of benefit received
- You shouldn't benefit from actions that harm others

Problems for the BPP

- “Poor beneficiaries”

- “involuntary receipt”



Non-ideal conditions

- Dead/non-existent polluters/ beneficiaries
- Who should make up for their contributions?



How hybrids might help

Using a combination of APP and CPP.

1. States who have both emitted more than (x) GHG and who attain (x) development indicators must bear duties.

Addresses *poor polluters* objection to CPP and *ignoring the cause* objection to APP.

Using a combination of APP and CPP

2. Duty-bearers (those who emitted and are above threshold) can be liable for proportion of damage associated with pre-1990s emissions

but they must pay according to their *relative wealth*, not according to their emissions

Future challenges

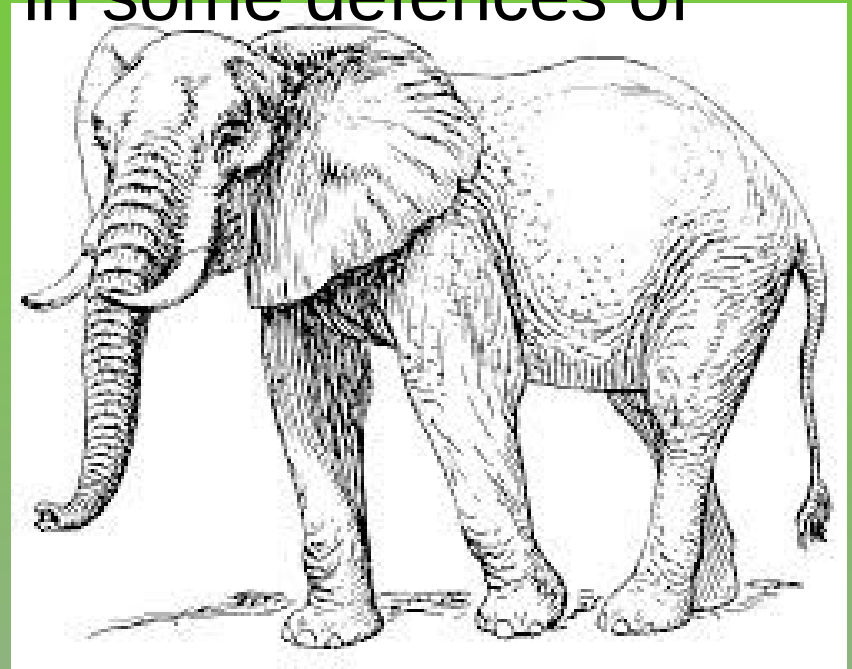
- Choosing hybrids (Caney 2005; 2009, Page 2008; 2011)
- Operationalising (Page 2012)
- Accounting for motivational force (meta-ethics)

Further questions:

“Aristotle” “Lind” “Lind” “Lind” “Lind” “Lind” “Lind” “Lind” “Lind” “Lind”

Elephants in the rooms?

- Population growth
 - discussed only briefly in some defences of EPC



- Geoengineering