

# Call for Contributors – Climate Change and Global Distributive Justice

Written by Fausto Corvino and Tiziana Andina

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FAUSTO CORVINO AND TIZIANA ANDINA, NOV 25 2020

Although climate change is now a scientifically incontrovertible phenomenon, and very few politicians deny the need to implement more or less radical containment measures, there remains a major political problem as to how the costs of energy transition should be divided. More specifically, it is necessary to establish how the carbon budget should be distributed (the emissions that can still be released by humanity as a whole before global warming exceeds 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, and ideally 1.5 °C), who should be compensated as the net loser of climate change, and who should invest the most in adaptation technologies. This political problem joins a series of moral and metaphysical issues that have so far led to a stalemate in climate diplomacy, which has failed to go beyond a very generic formulation of the principle of “common but differentiated responsibility”, starting with the Rio Declaration, and an equally generic commitment to achieve zero-net carbon neutrality by the middle of this century, with the Paris Agreement. The issues at stake are roughly as follows.

Some countries have emitted more than others, but a percentage of these emissions were released when there was still no scientific unanimity around climate change, therefore an objection based on so-called “excusable ignorance” can be opposed to those who want to make historical emitters responsible for all their emissions; moreover, if historical emitters had followed different paths of industrialisation from those actually occurred, today there would be different people both in number and identity, because their parents would probably not have met or would have made different reproductive choices (the so called “non-identity paradox”). Some states today have a greater capacity to contribute, both in terms of resources and technologies to invest in climate change mitigation and adaptation, than others; but in many cases the greater capacity to contribute is not directly proportional to the historical record of emissions. Just as the historical record of emissions is not directly proportional to the benefits that single countries have derived from emissions: some countries are net exporters of emissions (i.e. of consumer goods produced through emissions), while others are net importers. Finally, some states that we would like to consider responsible for historical emissions no longer exist today or have changed their form of government or have freed themselves from the colonial yoke; the question therefore arises as to whether and how historical responsibility is inherited, and whether this occurs at a community or individual level.

With this volume, therefore, we intend to collect contributions that help to systematise and analyse climate distributive justice, i.e. the set of normative principles that indicate how the costs and benefits of climate change should be shared, both between states and between different generations.

The book will be edited by Fausto Corvino and Tiziana Andina, and published by E-International Relations in online open access and in print formats.

The issues we are interested in and we would be happy to discuss with potential contributors are the following:

- Grandfathering (moderate vs. strong versions)
- Polluter Pays Principle (historical emissions; excusable ignorance objection; non-identity problem; dissolved states; outcome responsibility; Brazilian proposal; what do we do with non-anthropogenic climate change?)
- Beneficiary pays principle (with a clear distinction between consumption-based and production-based)

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- emissions)
- Emissions egalitarianism (including also Contraction and Convergence)
  - Ability to Pay Principle (absolute wealth vs effective wealth; how do we deal with wealthy but environmentally responsible states?)
  - Subsistence principle (the poorest should not be asked to take part in climate change mitigation)
  - Hybrid accounts (theories that mix two or more of the aforementioned principles)
  - Climate distributive justice and transgenerationality (many of the activities that cause emissions have a transgenerational nature, i.e. they require future generations to carry them out, what does this imply in terms of emissions distribution?)
  - Climate distributive justice and the moral gap (how do we cope with the fact that although the majority of people recognise the danger of climate change, many of them do not feel motivated to change lifestyle and habits?)
  - Climate distributive justice and indirect cooperation between different generations (why should we act responsibly toward future generations if they cannot do anything for us, and they can only act responsibly towards their own descendants?)
  - Climate distributive justice and non-human nature (what moral duties do we have toward the non-human “victims” of climate change?)
  - A brief history of climate change diplomacy, from Rio to Paris (with a focus on the distributive principles that have been proposed, criticised and adopted)
  - Climate justice from theory to practice: what mechanisms can be put in place to ensure an economically and socially sustainable transition, once emission permits have been allocated according to justice? (e.g. cap and trade, emission trading systems, etc.)
  - Climate justice from a non-Western perspective (we are particularly interested in how Eastern philosophy addresses and perceives the issues of distributive justice related to climate change)
  - Climate justice and law (through which instruments can international or national law contribute to a fair allocation of emissions between and within single countries?)

We will accept contributions that address the issues listed above from two main perspectives:

i) a theoretical examination of the normative justifications that subtend each principle: highlighting reasons in favour of any principle, possible criticisms and recalling the main references and debated in the literature.

ii) a political and historical investigation on the role that each principle has played in international negotiations and an analysis of the social and economic implications that each principle would have with respect to specific countries or groups of countries (e.g. which countries would be allocated the biggest burden from a distribution of emissions based on the beneficiary pays principle? Or which among the beneficiary pays principle and the polluter pays principle would help the developing countries most? Or what would emission egalitarianism mean for the most developed countries?)

We welcome contributions that adopt both or only one of the two perspectives, and we are also happy to discuss additional topics, that are not on the list, with potential contributors.

## Abstracts and deadlines

Those interested in participating can write to Fausto Corvino ([fausto.corvino@unito.it](mailto:fausto.corvino@unito.it)) and Tiziana Andina ([tiziana.andina@unito.it](mailto:tiziana.andina@unito.it)), attaching a 200–300 word abstract of the chapter they would like to write. Alternatively, they can also contact the editors, at the same addresses, to discuss the inclusion of a specific topic in the book.

The deadline for submitting proposals is **28 February 2021**. Full texts, if commissioned, must then be sent by the end of August 2021. Every accepted chapter will be between 4500–6000 words (excluding references), and it should be written to be understood (within reason) by non-specialists. So, please factor this into your abstract. Our objective is to provide accessible and engaging scholarship on the topics covered by the book.

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