

Workshop:

**Accounting for Climate Injustice:
Approaches, Unforeseen Consequences
and Political Resistance**

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Climate Injustice

“Those who use too much of the carbon dioxide absorption capacity of the world’s oceans, vegetation and soil **owe a debt to all living creatures** whose habitat is threatened. They owe a particular debt to the carbon creditors, the poor of the South who use less than their fair share of the CO2 absorption capacity. The poor and Indigenous peoples, are among those who are likely to suffer the most severe effects of disappearing permafrost, floods, droughts, tropical storms and rising ocean levels brought on by climate change. These consequences of global warming are **another manifestation of environmental racism.**”

(Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice 2001)

What are the proposals for accounting for the inequality and dealing with the problem?

Three Basic, and Drastically Different, Options for Accounting:

1. Grandfathering: based on 1990: Kyoto
2. Per capita emissions: one global standard
3. Historical Accountability

Grandfathering

The Kyoto Treaty was designed with one core concept: grandfathering.

- Kyoto caps are in comparison to 1990 emission levels
- Wealthier countries (Annex I) promised to reduce emissions by 6,7 or 8 percent, by 2010.

Critiques of Kyoto's Grandfathering

1. **Criticized From South:** Fundamental questions about equity of entrenching old emissions levels
2. **From North:** Fears about limitations on economic growth
3. **Addressing the Problem or Just a Joke?** Where's the 60% to 80% reduction that must be achieved, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),” to stabilize world climate?
4. **Why Many Supported Kyoto: Political feasibility:** get people on some wagon, get the wagon moving...

But Kyoto is more: Grandfathering *and* Permits Trading

- Jeffrey Rubin, the chief economist of Canadian investment firm CIBC World Markets, estimates that "the cost of importing emissions credits [will] be a third of the cost of domestic abatement policies such as carbon taxes." (GM 20/01/00:B17)
- U.S. industrial interest groups demanded unlimited trading of permits (buying the right to pollute). EU wanted to limit this.

Objections to Trading?

- “Emissions trading is no solution to climate change. It may only delay implementation of reductions in emissions of heat-trapping gases.” (Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice 2001)
 - The surplus emission rights held by Eastern Europe and Russia, whose economies collapsed after 1990, have become known as "**hot air**". Allowing them to sell their rights to hot air does nothing to reduce actual CO2 emissions.
 - “Many environmental groups and some developing countries objected to the US proposal "on ethical grounds since the concept of Emissions Trading carries with it the notion of ‘pollution rights’". (Oberthur and Ott 1999:188-189)

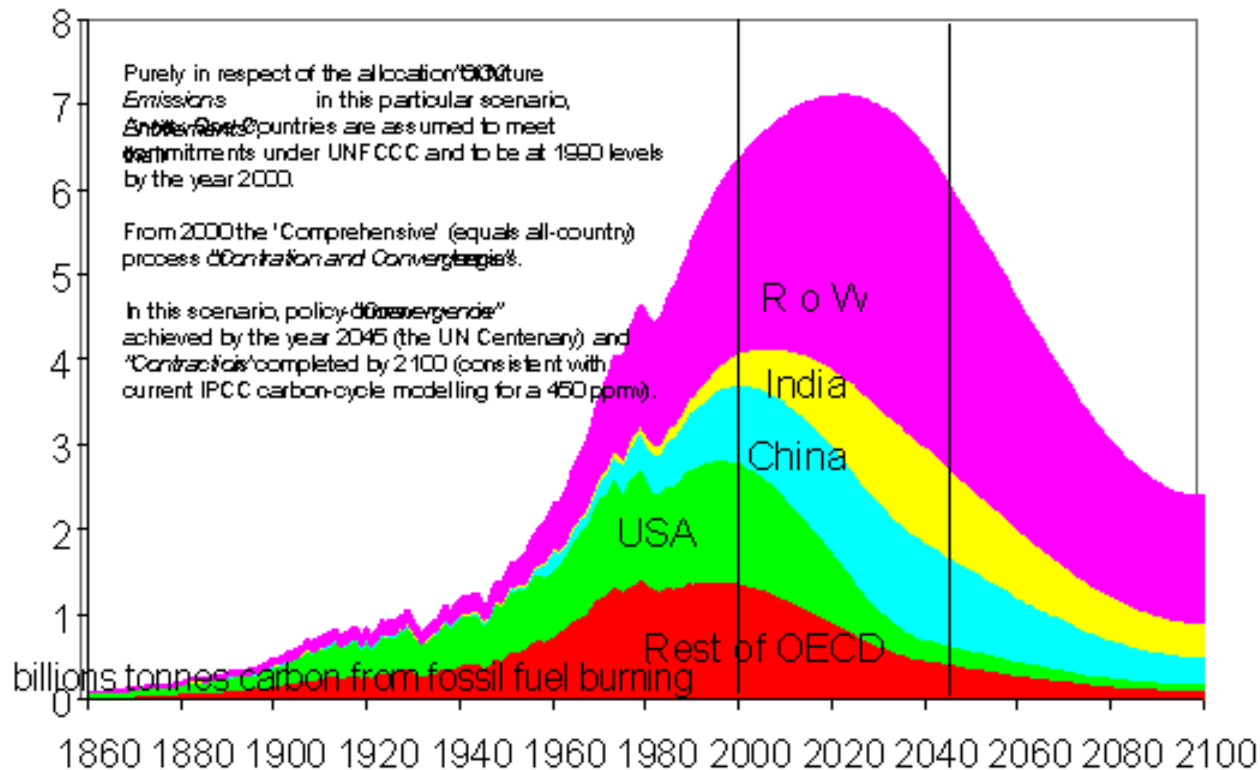
An Alternative to Kyoto: Per Capita emissions, contraction and convergence

1. a global emissions budget is calculated and reviewed annually,
2. where plan to stabilize at future target, e.g. 450 parts per million.
3. Each person on earth is given an equal share.
4. Countries converge on that share by the target date.

Meyer 2000, Athanasiou and Baer 2002

Contraction, Convergence and Compensation...

HISTORY & GCI CO2 SCENARIO for 450 ppmv under "CONTRACTION & CONVERGENCE"



“This 'contraction and convergence' (C&C) framework has gathered the support of a majority of the world's countries, including China and India.”

The crux of the matter is whether grassroots support for global equity will defeat the powerful elite interests that currently enjoy the status quo. As one US delegate put it: 'We won the Cold War. Contraction & Convergence is Communism!'" (David Cromwell review of C&C by Aubrey Meyer 2000)

A Grandfathering/Per Capita Hybrid Compromise:

Hybrid Compromise: approach where the carbon cake is split: three quarters of allocation is based on per capita, one quarter on grandfathering. This is based on their 1990 Kyoto levels, and may lock in inequalities. (Benito Muller, Oxford)

Dropping the Bomb: Historical Responsibility

- **Brazilian Historical Responsibility Proposal:** Based on the polluter-pays principal: this proposal assigns entitlements based on responsibility for past emissions and temperature change.
- Brazil's proposal would require an average 30% reductions in total emissions by 2020 for the rich countries, UK 63% by 2010, Japan by 9.5%.
- Lacks formal atmospheric concentration target, and requires complex and debated science.

Carbon Intensity

- **Proposed by the World Resources Institute and the Bush Administration in 2002:**

“The President's Yardstick – Greenhouse Gas Intensity – is a Better Way to Measure Progress Without Hurting Growth. A goal expressed in terms of declining greenhouse gas intensity, measuring greenhouse gas emissions relative to economic activity, quantifies our effort to reduce emissions through conservation, adoption of cleaner, more efficient, and emission-reducing technologies, and sequestration. At the same time, an intensity goal accommodates economic growth...” February 14, 2002.

- No absolute caps because we do not know how economies will grow,
- Voluntary developing country participation
- **Dual-Intensity Targets: WRI 2002**, setting target and a compliance target.

Triptych: Univ. of Utrecht--three sectors with different approaches

- energy-intensive industry (intensity reductions co2/gdp),
- power generation (decarbonization with fuel mix switch from coal), and
- domestic sectors, which includes transport, light industry, agriculture, and commercial sector (per capita convergence to around 3.44 tons co2/capita, which is .94 tons carbon)

Multi-Sector Convergence:

- Setting global norms by seven sectors.
 - Power, industry, transport, households, services, agriculture and waste
 - Starts from 1990 data and applies mitigation rates for each sector
- CICERO/ECN-Norway and Netherlands

Points for discussion in small groups:

1. Which method of accounting for climate responsibility is most just?
2. What are some possible “unforeseen consequences” of adopting that policy?
3. What kinds of political resistance do you expect to your “just” proposal?
4. How could that political opposition be overcome?

Basic Options for Accounting for Climate Injustice

1. Grandfathering: based on 1990: Kyoto
2. Per capita emissions: one global standard
3. Historical Accountability: total CO₂ since 1950, for example
4. Carbon Intensity: CO₂ per unit GDP