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**Referat: The Role of Justice, Equity and Responsibility in Climate  
Change Mitigation**

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# 3

## Social, Economic, and Ethical Concepts and Methods

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### This chapter should be cited as:

Kolstad C., K. Urama, J. Broome, A. Shoval, M. Carpio Olvera, D. Fullerton, C. Gollier, W.M. Hanemann, R. Hassan, F. Jotzo, M.R. Khan, L. Meyer, and L. Mundaca, 2014: Social, Economic and Ethical Concepts and Methods. In: *Global Change 2014: Mitigation of Global Change: Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Global Change* (Edenhofer, D., R. Pichs Madruga, Y. Sokona, E. Farahan, S. Kainn, K. Seyboth, A. Adler, I. Baum, S. Brunner, F. Eickemeier, B. Kriemann, J. Savolainen, S. Schlömer, C. von Stechow, T. Zwiers and J.C. Mira Medeiros), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA.

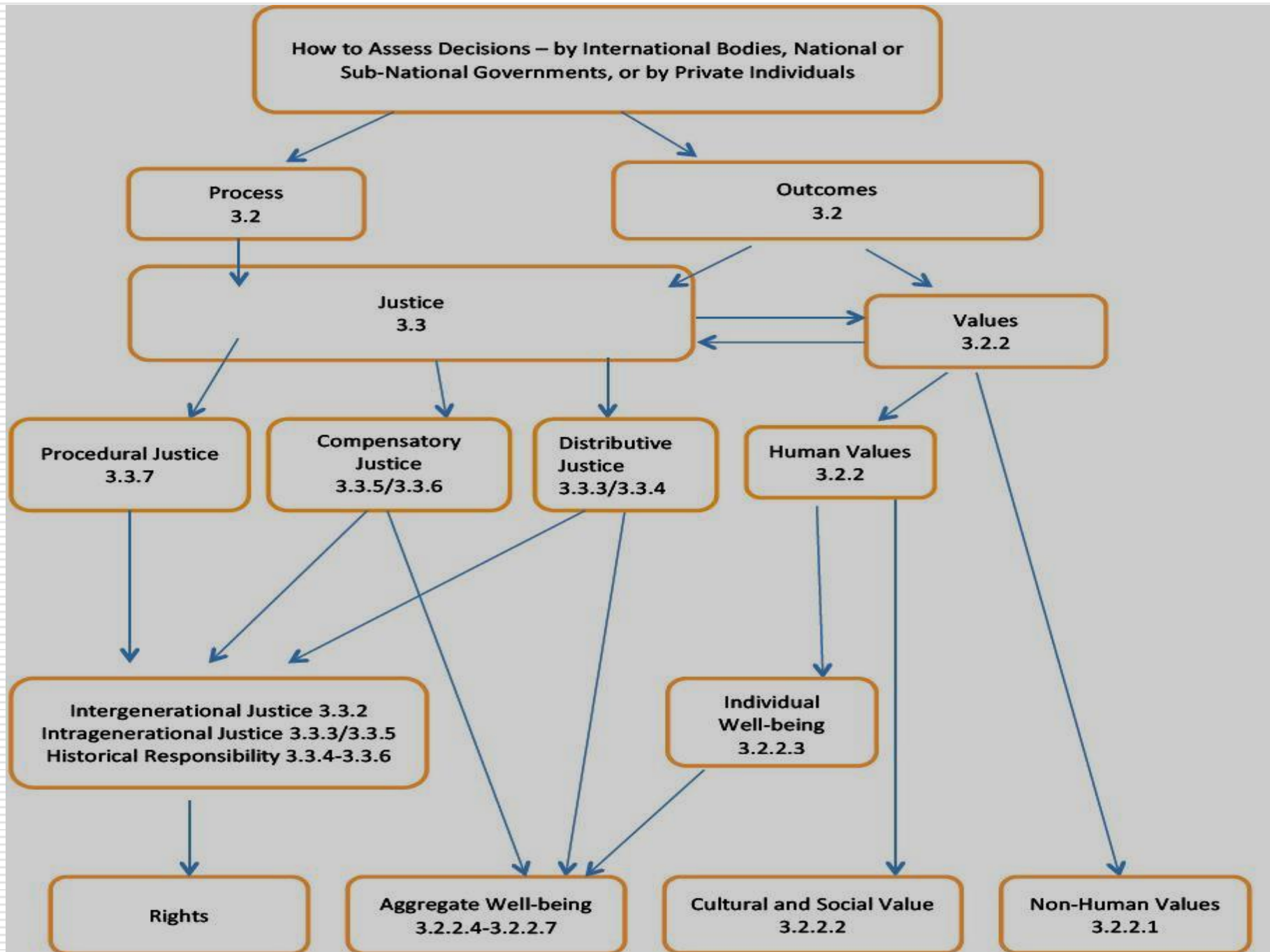
# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Natural Sciences, Economics, Ethics

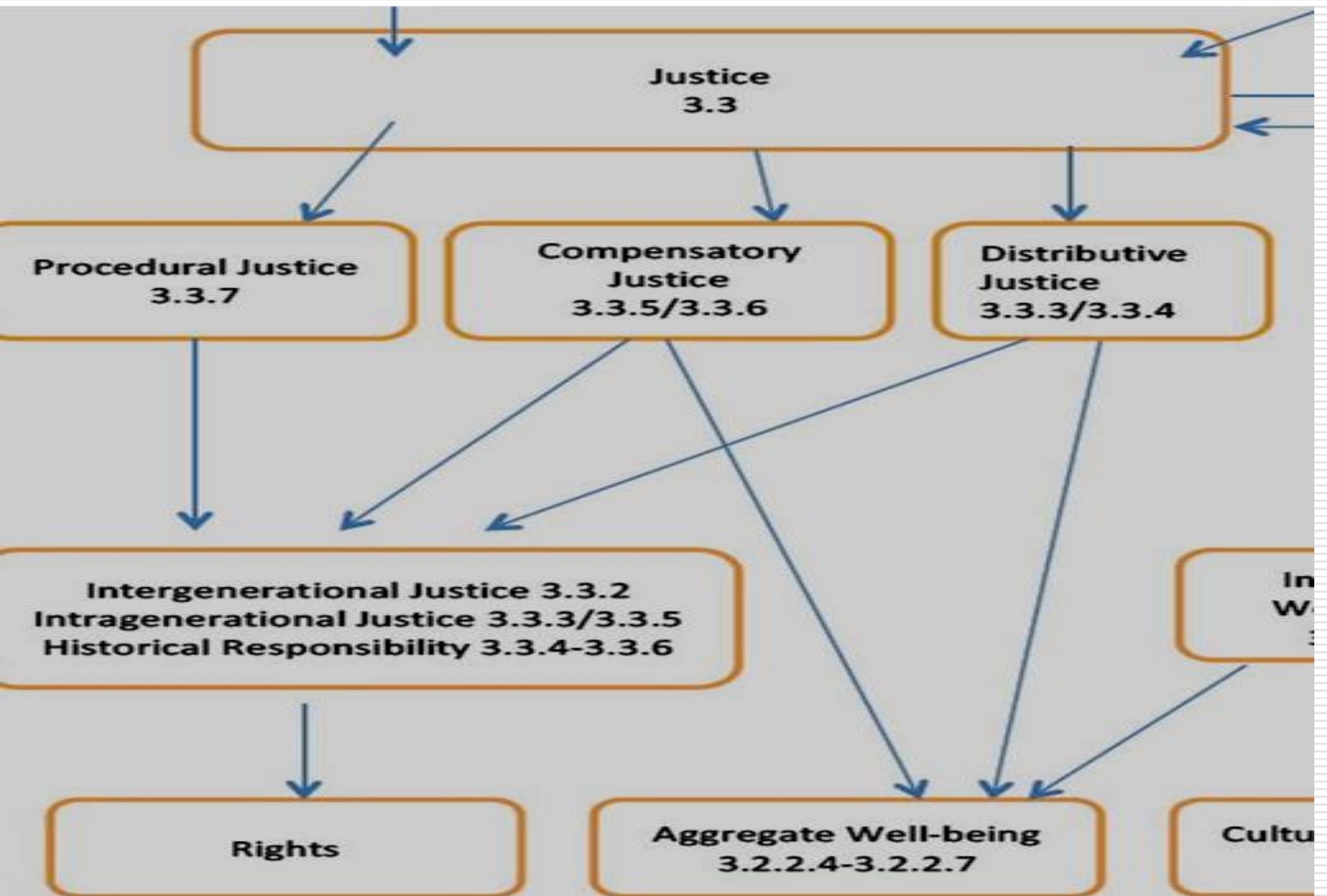
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Article 2 of the UNFCCC specifies:

'The ultimate objective of this Convention ... is to achieve ... stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner' (UN, 1992).



John Broome, Lukas H. Meyer et. al., draft, unpublished (numbers refer to sects of draft chapter)



# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Questions

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- ❖ **Intergenerational Justice:** What level of present and future net-emissions can be justified on a global scale?
- ❖ **Global Justice (1):** How should the permissible emissions be distributed today taking into account historical emissions?
- ❖ **Global Justice (2):** Who should pay for the damages that are caused by (historical) emissions esp. assuming that people have not stayed and will not stay within their fair shares?

# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Intergenerational Justice: What present generations owe to future generations

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### Assumptions:

- (1) Future people are very likely to suffer serious harm in terms of the violation of their basic rights when temperatures rise above a certain level.
- (2) Currently living people can hinder such temperature rise by limiting their emissions to a certain amount and without this being an unreasonable demand on them.

# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Intergenerational Justice: What present generations owe to future generations

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Objection against assumption (1): Future people cannot be bearers of rights vis-a-vis the currently living people

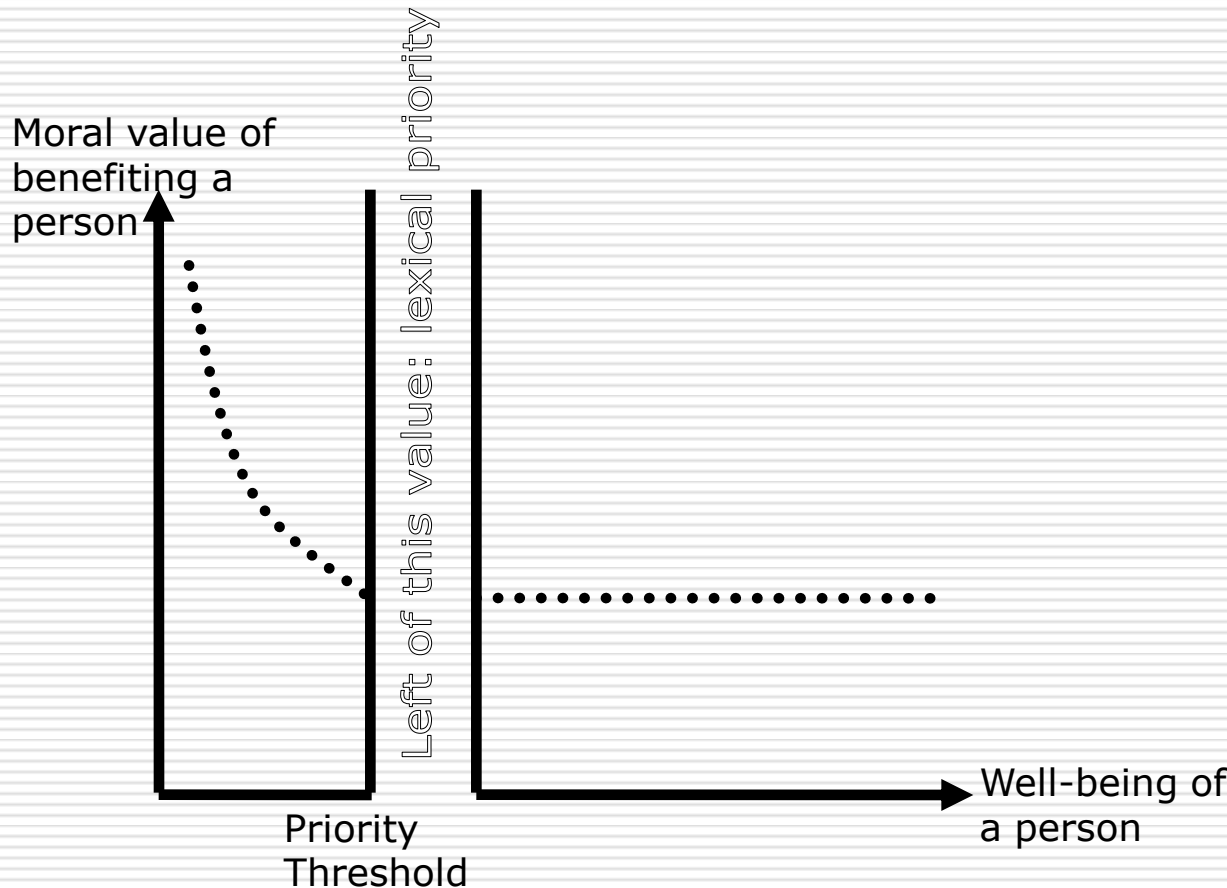
- ❖ since they can neither claim these rights nor impose sanctions on those who violate them,
- ❖ owing to the epistemic uncertainty of their existence, and
- ❖ since the contingency of the composition of future people implies the non-identity problem.



# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Distributive Justice: Strong Suffcientarianism

On the horizontal axis you find persons according to increasing well-being. The vertical axis indicates how important improving the well-being of a person is.

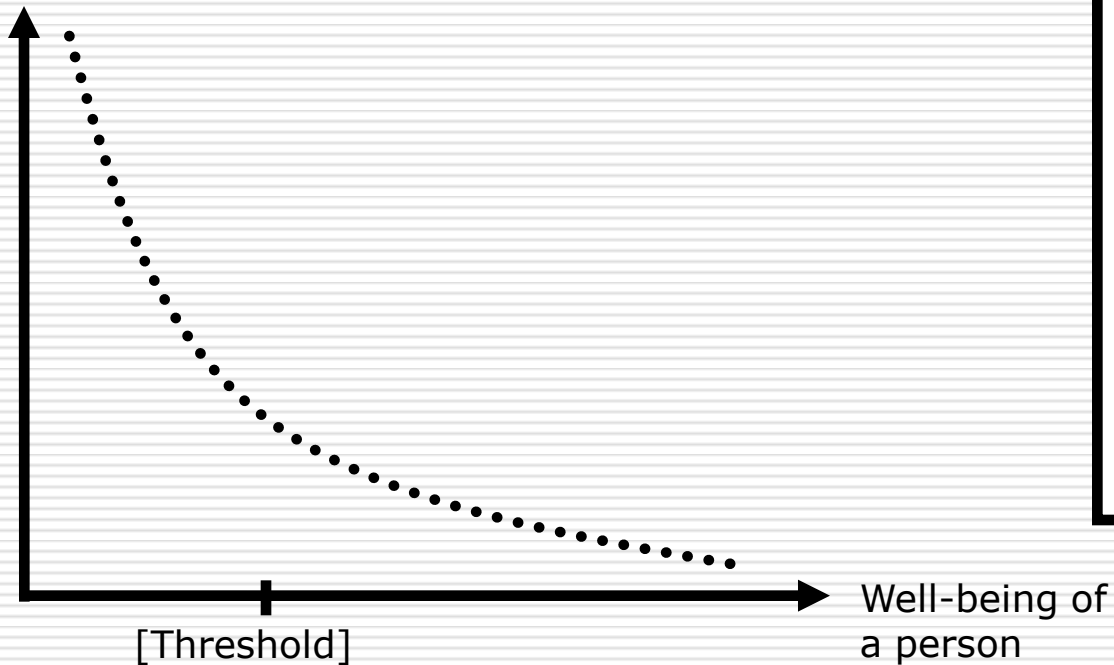


To the group of persons whose improvement in well-being has absolute or lexical priority belong those whose level of well-being is below the threshold. Second, both below and above the threshold it matters more to benefit persons the more people are being benefited and the greater the benefits in question. But: Trade-offs between persons above and below the threshold are prohibited.

# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Distributive Justice: Prioritarianism

Moral value of  
benefiting a  
person



To benefit persons matters more the worse off the person is to whom the benefits accrue, the more people are being benefited and the greater the benefits in question.

# Climate Justice

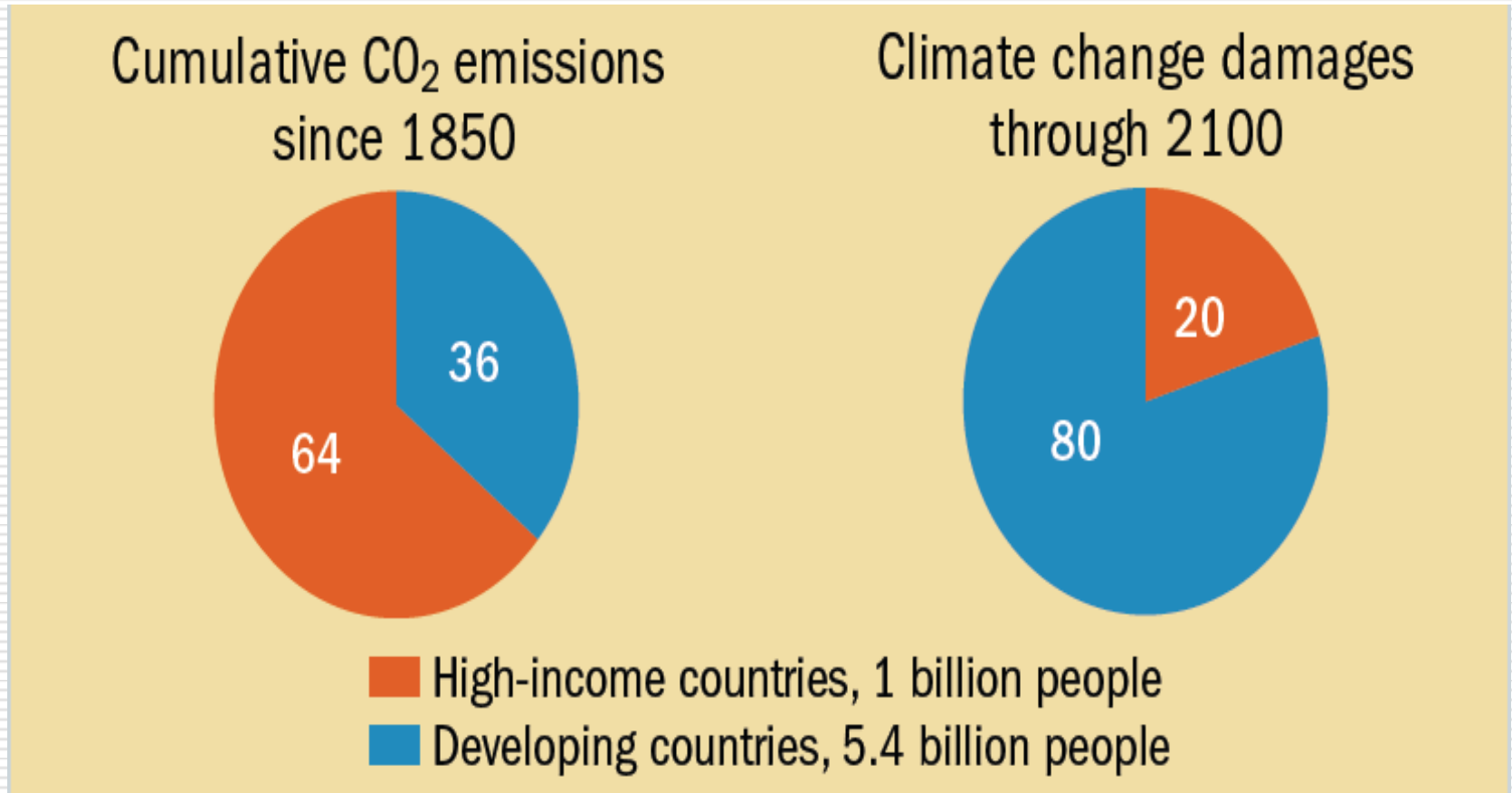
## Distributive Justice: Applying prioritarianisms (disregarding historical emissions)

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	Some recipients are worse off than others	Some recipients can draw more benefits from emission rights than others	Conclusion
Abstracting from the background distribution of other goods	Does not apply	Does not apply	Equal <i>per capita</i> emission rights
Taking into account the currently existing inequality in the distribution of other goods	Speaks in favour of more or all emission rights for the South	Unclear	Higher <i>per capita</i> emission rights for the South

# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## The Significance of Historical Emissions



# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## The Significance of Historical Emissions

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Objections:

1. Currently living people are not responsible for them.
2. Past people might have been (blamelessly) ignorant.
3. Currently living people might (due to the non-identity problem) neither be said to have benefited nor harmed.

# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## The Significance of Historical Emissions

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1. Past emissions during the lifetime of currently living people.
2. Balancing inequalities owing to historical emissions that were side-effects of the production of goods in the past that still benefit currently living people.

As a matter of *distributive justice* certain parts of past emissions should be taken into account for the purpose of distributing emission rights today.

# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Compensatory Justice

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Deviations from the just (prioritarian) baseline distribution call for two different kinds of reactions:

- ❖ If based on the wrongfulness of what occurred: compensatory justice.
- ❖ If based on the idea of evening out undeserved benefits or harms: distributive justice.

# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Compensatory Justice

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Three principles to identify the duty bearers of compensatory measures:

- ❖ the *Polluter Pays Principle* (PPP)
- ❖ the *Beneficiary Pays Principle* (BPP)
- ❖ the *Community Pays Principle* (CPP)

Two questions:

- ❖ Generally plausible as a p. comp. justice?
- ❖ What kind of compensatory measures can it justify in the climate change context?



# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Compensatory Justice

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### Objections

- a. Potential payers might have been (blamelessly) ignorant.
- b. Potential recipients might (due to the non-identity problem) not be harmed or only be said to be harmed according to a threshold conception of harm. Potential payers might (due to the non-identity problem) not be said to have benefited.
- c. Potential payers might be dead.

# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Implications for Compensation Payments

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- ❖ Compensation payments for climate damages caused by historical emissions are difficult to justify.
- ❖ Conceptions of compensatory justice may succeed in justifying some compensatory measures.
- ❖ They only justify these measures for part of those who cause or suffer from climate change.

# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Distributive Justice and Compensation Payments

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- ❖ Providing measures of compensation for damages that are caused by historical emissions is today primarily a matter not of compensatory but of distributive justice.
- ❖ Providing measures of compensation for damages that are caused by historical emissions is today primarily a matter not of compensatory but of distributive justice.
- ❖ If currently living people fail to fulfill their duties vis-à-vis future people, this constitutes harmful wrongdoing for which they may owe compensation.

# **The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation**

## **Chapter 3, Social, Economic, and Ethical Concepts and Methods, Excerpt from Executive Summary**

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The methods of ethics are necessary, but not sufficient, to determine the 'correct' level of effort and 'burden sharing' (medium confidence). The questions of how much overall mitigation is needed to avoid 'dangerous interference', how the effort or cost of mitigating climate change should be shared among countries and between the present and future and how to account for such factors as historical responsibility for emissions, all involve value judgements and are fundamentally normative. [3.2, 3.3, 3.4]

# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Chapter 3, Social, Economic, and Ethical Concepts and Methods, Excerpt from Executive Summary

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Duties to pay for some climate damages can be grounded in compensatory justice and distributive justice (medium confidence). If compensatory duties to pay for climate damages and adaptation costs are not due from agents who have acted blamelessly, then principles of compensatory justice will apply to only some of the harmful emissions [3.3.5]. This finding is also reflected in the predominant global legal practice of attributing liability for harmful emissions [3.3.6]. Duties to pay for climate damages can, however, also be grounded in distributive justice [3.3.4, 3.3.5].

# The Role of Justice in Climate Change Mitigation

## Literature

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Kolstad C., K. Urama, J. Broome, A. Bruvoll, M. Cariño Olvera, D. Fullerton, C. Gollier, W. M. Hanemann, R. Hassan, F. Jotzo, M. R. Khan, L. Meyer, and L. Mundaca, 2014: Social, Economic and Ethical Concepts and Methods. In: Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Edenhofer, O., R. Pichs-Madruga, Y. Sokona, E. Farahani, S. Kadner, K. Seyboth, A. Adler, I. Baum, S. Brunner, P. Eickemeier, B. Kriemann, J. Savolainen, S. Schlömer, C. von Stechow, T. Zwickel and J.C. Minx (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA.

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