Climate Change Essay 2. How can we address the motivational gap with respect to climate change? 2,00 words.

Required seminar readings:

* Jamieson, D. (2006). The moral and political challenges of climate change. In: S. Moser and L. Dilling (eds). *Creating a climate for change: Communicating climate change & facilitating social change.* 475-482. Cambridge: University Press.

Peeters, W., Diependaele, L., Sterckx, S. (2016). Moral disengagement and the motivational gap in climate change. [draft to be uploaded in Week 3].

Notes from this seminar:

What are the two main explanations for the observed lack of motivation to tackle climate change?

* It lacks the characteristics of a paradigm moral problem. (a problem in which an individual acting intentionally harms another individual- both are identifiable and the individuals and harm are related in time and space closely.) Inadequate moral justice system. – don’t normally think about the biggest problem. Remote space and time.

Below= page 7/8 of the frontiers of ethics.

* Example 1: Jack intentionally steals Jill’s bicycle.

Example 2: Jack is part of an unacquainted group of strangers, who each, acting independently, takes one part of Jill’s bike, resulting in the bike’s disappearance.

Example 3: Jack takes one part from each of a large number of bikes, one of which belongs to Jill.

Example 4: Jack and Jill live on different continents, and the loss of Jill’s bike is the consequence of a causal chain that begins with Jack ordering a used bike at a shop.

Example 5: Jack lives many centuries before Jill, and consumes materials that are essential to bike manufacturing: as a result, it will not be possible for Jill to have a bicycle.

* These ‘thought experiments’ help explain people’s lacking in viewing climate change as an urgent responsibility. Not viewed on the same level as normal moral challenges.
* It challenges our political system: political action based on values vs political action based on interests and preferences. Values = core part of identity how someone wants the world to be, not what the person may want for themselves. Preferences= what people want in a particular moment These two can conflict. Eg wealth.
* Self-interest: want to drive our cars.

What is moral disengagement and how is it to be situated in relation to moral agency?

* Moral agency = acting according to the beliefs of internalists.
* Moral disengagement = not engaged to act on the morals of issues. Eg CC

How does moral disengagement connect the two explanations for the motivational gap?

* The threat isn’t proportionate to what we are doing about it self-interest. People aren’t engaged because it doesn’t benefit them and it is too complex. It doesn’t benefit us and our wants and is easy to ignore as you don’t understand it anyway.

Give an original or personal example of how moral disengagement is used in climate change and determine which strategy it is exactly

How can the motivational gap in climate change be addressed?

What are the green virtues to which Jamieson refers?

Things that we should aspire to do. Change ourselves first: humility, temperance – not overly consuming, mindfulness< reflect on the affects of your acts. Helping the environment= better satisfaction than consuming.

Solution for the motivational gap? The desire to desire those virtues. People have to choose them. Need the youth to learn. The society we live in dictates our virtues!

Institutional structures affect the type of person we will be, and who we are also has effects on the nature of our society. We cannot opt for changing ourselves rather than the world, or the world instead of ourselves. We are the world.

The Motivational Gap Lecture:

Individuals:

No one wanting to accept responsibility. + Climate Change denial. Exclusive job of the government to deal with it.

The gap= The threat CC poses to human lives/ rights vs the inadequate action at all levels.

Why?

* Inadequate moral judgement system. Jamieson ‘Climate change is not a matter of a clearly identifiable individual acting internationally so as to inflict an identifiable harm on another identifiable individual, closely related in time and space.’
* Markowitz & Shariff (2012, 243) ‘the human moral judgement system is not well equipped to identify climate change- a complex, large scale and unintentionally caused phenomenon as an important moral imperative.’
* Self interest: competing motives + self protection. > Advantageous comparison: People derive subjective/ descriptive norms from comparison of their actions with those of others. Eg people eat meat and I’m vegetarian so I can justify not being vegan as most people are way worse? Also equality: ‘keeping up with the Jonses’ + superiority- luxury goods but own nice art instead of a nice car?
* Dehumanisation: joys/ sufferings of those with whom one identifies are more vicariously arousing than strangers.

Weak internalism: A sincere moral judgement necessarily entails some motivation to abide by it, can be a lot/ a little. Our moral motivation can be overridden by our desires conflicting. < the issue at hand?

Moral agency:

* Do things which give us satisfaction/ self-worth. Belief in the social/ moral worthiness of an enterprise eliminates self-condemnation for its harmful aspects. Keep our self-worth while inflicting harm.
* Do not behave in ways that violate moral standards as this means we have self-respect

Inconsistency between moral standards/ acting on desires eliminated by:

* Changing conduct: moral integrity
* Changing moral standards
* Convincing yourself and others that one’s conduct still falls within moral standards. Rationalise your bad behaviour= moral disengagement. Eg: me being vegetarian and not vegan yet.

Restrictions on moral responsibility:

* Negative duties = stricter and take priority over positive duties
* Special obligations eg your family/ Britain. (lol)
* Individual agent responsible for outcomes produced by his / her own actions.

Different types of actions:

* Acts= primacy over omissions. Doing something is more important than preventing something from happening.
* Near effects= primacy over remote effects
* Individual effects have primacy over group effects.
* Failure to prevent climate change: Natural causes, Emitting GHGs = default, normal, innocent.
* Unintended effect: Anthropogenic CC is only unwelcome by-product of human activities, part of purpose. < People believe this because of lack in education? Jamieson. Discussion of luxury emissions.

Sinnott-Armstrong (2005, page 290) People should not be held responsible for harms ‘when their acts are not at all unusual, assuming that they did not intend the harm.’ Pragmatic heuristic: reserving condemnation for the worst offenders: If many people jump off a cliff you shouldn’t after them! Climate change is a global problem- look at that context. ‘Maybe you do not like to go for drives in sports utility vehicles on sunny Sunday afternoons, but many do.’

Nay omissions > positive duties. Remote effects > obligations to distant strangers

Group effects > collective responsibility

Yae: Acts > negative duties Near effects > special obligations

Individual effects > individual responsibility

Competing sources of motivation in climate change (Kant, 1785 page 17-18)

A person feels a powerful counterweight to morality; a counterweight that is rooted in one’s needs and inclinations, the entire satisfaction of which he sums up under the name happiness.

Buck-passing: Shifting the responsibility for something to someone else.

**Gardiner, S. (2011). A perfect moral storm. The ethical tragedy of climate change. Oxford University Press. [Chapter 9: Jane Austen vs. climate economics].**

**Page 2:** Ethically vulnerable as we can pass the load onto the poor/future/nature. So refuse to acknowledge there is any issue. Moral corruption is subtle/ indirect. Example by Jane Austen: ‘the perfect storm.’ The corrupt arguments she revealed= alarmingly ‘inaction’ similarities. Are we the victims of moral corruption in the perfect storm? Reason to work harder at the ethics of CC, ‘defensive ethics’.

**Page 3: “Corruption”** if we are tempted to remove responsibility to someone else, but do not want to face up to moral criticism for succumbing to it, likely to be attracted to weak/ deceptive arguments. On the surface they license such behaviour so we don’t scrutinise them! Many victims of our bad behaviour (eg future) lack the ability not just to resist but to have a voice. If we accept Austen’s case = a paradigm case of moral corruption, then the resemblances should give us pause. We don’t want to be those in the story.

**Page 4: ‘Corruption in general.’** “immoral or dishonest, especially as shown by the exploitation of a position of power or trust for personal gain.” But not all immorality is corrupt.

**Page 5:** the perform storm bringing on a threat of corruption. Modern political life. Use climate policy as a means to their end eg industries, unions, nations.

**Page 6:** Subtle corruption- we can’t even understand what is going wrong in moral terms as we subvert moral discourse to other ends.

**Page 7:** Kant, interpret: moral corruption is a tendency to rationalise, which casts doubt on the validity and/or strictness of moral claims by seeking to pervert their status and substance, and in doing so aims to make those claims better suited to our wishes/inclinations and destroys the characteristics in virtue of which we respect them. Cause of corruption: moral claims are uncompromising and don’t accommodate sources of motivation.

**Page 8:** hard to isolate the morally corrupt from the merely mistaken.

**Page 9:** focus- understanding/resisting the temptation of buck passing. Blame is secondary. What should we do? A) invoke the correct theories of global/ environmental ethics and show their correctness. But we lack strong theory. ‘invoke and apply’ ignores the problem. We cannot assess theories properly in the perfect storm, because of the temptations to not.

**Page 10:** Moral corruption in Jane Austen’s Sense and Sensibility.

**Page 11:** How easily John Dashwood moves from accepting a serious and apparently unassailable moral commitment to help his step-mother and half-sisters into dismissing that commitment almost entirely. Moral corruption= familiar + we are vulnerable to it

**Page 12:** both cases= those with a duty to act not only suffer few consequences of their actions but also benefit from them. Both cases= transfer of power across generations, John possess most of the resources of his generation, at the expense of his sisters. Both cases= henry’s ability to help his daughters directly is limited. Must rely on his son. Like the early generation whose efforts to benefit the further future depend on the cooperation of intermediate generations.

**Page 13:** parallels. There are disanalogies though: John commits to aid but this is not the case in the global/intergenerational situation. Not important: the duties of global justice do not require consent. Another: CC violates negative duties not to harm rather than positive duties to aid. John has no done anything to bring about the situation of his family. The parallel claim is not true in the perfect moral storm. Our actions play the biggest role in shaping the problems. Increases our obligation to act.

**Page 14:** the broad outline of what to do seems clear. John: appropriate amount and sticks to it for some time. The initial plan is not unreasonable. CC: scientists/politicians long-term targets that seem generally appropriate. Eg early 90s target- stabilisation of emissions at 1990 levels by 2000.

**Page 36 The Moral of the Story:** rich man moved from acknowledging a serious commitment to rejecting anything beyond the minimal, claims appropriate to a neighbour rather than close family members. Justified through his father/sisters not acknowledging what is owed to him. Comparison with climate policy. Like the poor the future and nature. – fend for themselves.

**Page 37:** moral concerns just as central to the problem as scientific concerns. Moral reasoning can be misused like scientific reasoning. Circumstances- outright abuse is likely eg perfect moral storm. Practical ethics helps: facilitates our understanding of our moral situation + scrutiny of the arguments involved. Also beware the cumulative effect of poor arguments. Some seek to dispute the application of the moral claim, others claim compliance will have unintended bad consequences, reduce the magnitude of the moral demand and seek to undermine the implementation of the duty. + aims to breed resentment on the part of the duty-bearer.

**Jamieson, D. (2014). *Reason in a dark time.* Oxford: University Press. [Chapter 5: The frontiers of ethics].**

**Page 1:** people who care about CC do not feel like killers when they fly and drive as there are differences between clear cases of morally suspect acts and those that contribute to CC. two main revised conceptions of responsibility have counterintuitive consequences/ in tension with classical liberal ideas.

**Page 2:** biological nature/ facts about our political institutions- explain our failing to act. To motivate action- economics succeeds in showing solutions that appeal to our interests. (limited) Ethics succeeds in showing responses accord with our moral ideals. We must turn to ethical concerns as economics fails. But this is disappointing too.

**Page 4:** The 42 members of the Alliance of Small Island States on a per capita basis emit one-fourth as much Co2 as the global average. But many will disappear under rising seas. 80% of global carbon emissions come from only 10 countries.

**Page 11:** While actions that may contribute to CC may not obviously fall under our prevailing notions of wrongful behaviour, it may be claimed that there are instances of them nevertheless. Caney- despite there being no HR to a stable climate, there is the violation of HR without it. Right to health, development, not forcibly evicted. HR normally spoken about in terms of government violation rather than individual.

**Page 12:** Discuss the moral issue of CC with respect to HRs. moral responsibilities that are embedded in common-sense morality.

**Page 13:** Caney claims HR violations as it kills people. Agents violate HR by murder. No agent has capacity to bring about CC alone- much less to kill people through it. Performing acts that may contribute to CC = sufficient for committing acts of CC that kill people- then everyone is a HR violator.

**Page 14:** normal HR violations= avoidable, but some emissions are not eg respiration/ cooking/heating.

**Page 16:** luxury vs subsistence emissions = clear. Arnold Schwarzenegger driving a Hummer vs a Kenyan farmer cooking her dinner on a dung fire. But some are hard to distinguish. People want to use energy, but few care about the source of the energy. Probably do not know where their energy comes from.

**Page 17:** what fraction of emissions in poor countries are subsistence? Eg war/conflict. Are the necessities imported / locally produced? Also emissions that produce goods such as art-making, or education, or religion subsistence emissions. Every year 3 million people visit Mecca for the Muslim hajj, how do we regard this.

**Page 18:** John Nolt: Rather than violating human rights, anthropogenic CC involves dominating posterity (all future generations of people) in a way that is analogous to historical instances of dominating racial, ethnic or national minorities. Domination: the agent wields superior power over the subject, the subject is not free to exit the relationship without incurring costs, the agent wields power over the subject in a way that harms the subject. BUT Jamieson not happy: a subject dominated by an agent when the subject does not exist at the time when the agent engages in the dominating actions, and would not exist at all if the agent did not engage in these actions… Nolt: a child born into slavery who would not otherwise have existed had there been no such institution, Even so, slavery is an injustice to the child and concludes that ‘it does not follow from the premise that future people owe their lives to our domination that the domination was not unjust.’

**Page 19:** Jamieson agrees that once the child is born, living in slavery is an injustice to the child, but this observation does not bear on the objection that I want to raise. My concern is not with the question of whether our domination of posterity is unjust, but whether the relationship between us and posterity constitutes domination in the first place. We bring the next generation into existence- but also rule the conditions of their existence. Simply a consequence of how generations are temporally related.

**Page 20:** Neither human rights/domination provide an explanation of how individual actions that may contribute to CC can be taken up by common-sense morality. Everyday moral notions continue to strain to account for such behaviour. Tried to show the difficulties in CC actions being under our common-sense notions of individual moral responsibility.

**Page 21:** CC problem different being of the magnifying power of technology. Eg starting a car. Can remove large amounts of carbon from deep inside the earth and transfer it to the atmosphere- affecting global climate.

**Jamieson, D. (2006). The moral and political challenges of climate change. In: S. Moser and L. Dilling (eds). *Creating a climate for change: Communicating climate change & facilitating social change.* 475-482. Cambridge: University Press. Seminar reading**

**Page 475:** CC lacks the characteristics of a paradigm moral problem. (where an individual acting intentionally harms another individual; both the individuals and the harm are identifiable; and the individuals and the harm are closely related in time and space.)

**Page 476:** Jack stealing Jill’s bicycle example.

**Page 477:** Values (core to a person’s identity) vs preferences (what you want at a particular moment)

**Page 480:** CC and character. ‘the green virtues’. There is a complex relationship between our character as individuals and the societies into which we are born. Cant opt for changing ourselves rather than changing the world or the world instead of ourselves: in an important sense of the expression: we are the world. Humility= widely shared moral ideal. Temperance= self-restraint/ moderation. Institutions play a role in enabling virtue.

**Page 481:** seeing the issue as a moral problem provides the motivation for individual and political action. Morality= care, empathy, responsibility, duty.

How can we address the motivational gap with respect to climate change?

Motivational gap: people not having the motivation to act- specifically on the issue of CC. moral disengagement. Read Jamieson seminar reading one. Read Caney. Read the lecturer’s work.

To do list for essay:

Read the seminar readings: Jamieson + Wouter Peeters.

Finish reading bits of this Jamieson

Read Caney?