



Science Meeting – Scientific Report

The scientific report (WORD or PDF file - maximum of seven A4 pages) should be submitted online within two months of the event. It will be published on the ESF website.

Proposal Title: Workshop-Meeting Working Group 3
'Climate change: risks & rights

Application Reference N°: 5166

1) Summary (up to one page)

This was the first Workshop-Meeting of the Working Group 3 of the ESF Networking Programme 'Rights to a Green Future' (ENRI-Future). It was held at the University of Graz on December 05 & 06 2013.

The special focus of the Working Group 3 Workshop was on the question of how to deal with risks and rights in the context of climate change. The basic empirical assumption is that emission-generating activities often benefit emitters, but imply in their cumulative effect a risk of setbacks to basic interests of others as well as future people. These basic interests of people are protected by universal claim rights with general correlative duties as a matter of justice. However, by determining our duties towards others and future people we are confronted with the problem that our knowledge of the environmental and socio-economic effects of anthropogenic climate change is subject to considerable uncertainties. First, we have to consider uncertainties based on the inherent complexity of the climate system and aleatory uncertainties (the inherent randomness associated with natural hazard events). Second, also the future development of emission scenarios, the relations between emissions and temperature rise and between temperature rise and its impacts on the environment are subject to uncertainties. Third, uncertainties are involved in the relation of climate change induced environmental consequences and persons' rights being infringed or violated. Even if we could predict future emissions and the environmental effects of climate change with certainty, their impacts on social, economic and political systems depend on many different factors, for instance the set-up of these systems, their vulnerability to climate change, and their resilience to climate change induced consequences. These uncertainties do not only concern climate change induced consequences, but also the consequences of our actions and policies. One can assume that all policy decisions addressing climate change can impose risks of rights violations and that often the interests of both currently living and future people will be affected. Thus identifying the least unjust option requires weighing the setbacks to interests and violations of rights against currently

living and future people as well as against each other. In the workshop the participants discussed these problems from a normative perspective, with special focus for normatively relevant factors for the evaluation of decisions concerning risk impositions.

The workshop's aim was to discuss pre-circulated draft papers that directly contribute to key research questions of the networking program focusing on risks and rights. At the workshop, draft papers of 7 members of workgroup 3 were discussed. Special focus was put on how to deal with risk and uncertainty in a Human Rights framework. The draft papers will be part of a joint publication (see below). The workshop therefore contributed to key output of the research networking program. The publication should help to realizing especially one of the network's objectives: Assessing diverse models for the conceptualization of risk, uncertainty and precaution in terms of their coherence, applicability and validity in the context of environmental challenges.

Due to the late responses of some of the invited expert, the workgroup-meeting took place without experts. The limited size of the group and the established knowledge of the work of the participants, based on exchange at past ESF meetings, created a very supportive and highproductive atmosphere, and therefore in the end contribute to the productive output of the meeting.

2) Description of the scientific content of and discussions at the event (up to four pages)

The focus of the workshop was on scientific exchange and on feedback on the draft papers. The scientific program of the workshop meeting was based on intensive working group sessions.

Dominic Roser took the opportunity to discuss some points of his paper "Rights and Risks", like: what rights can or should be protected from a rights theorist point of view, when dealing with probability distributions, or if the increasing rights violation potential means that we ought to sacrifice extremely much today to decrease the rights violation potential in the very far future.

Klaus Steigleder discussed in his paper "Risk and Rights" one problem of a rights-based risk ethics, the problem of having to prohibit all or almost all risk impositions. For this he draw on his distinction between two kinds of risks, risks which are relevant for the recipient or R-risks and risks which are relevant for the agent or A-risks as well as the categories of simple risk creation (simple risk imposition), combined risk creation (combined risk imposition) and risk choices (reactions to risks).

Martin Peterson gave a presentation on "Natural Rights and Risk". He focused on the research question of what the natural rights theorists could say about risk impositions that cannot be compensated by offering the victim some suitable benefit. He proposed a form of deontic indeterminacy, based on the assumption that it is neither right nor wrong to impose risk on others.

Christian Seidel presented his paper "Risking Compliance and Discounting Risks of Harm Re-Assessing the Idea of a "Chain of Obligation"". To overcome some challenges to the foundation of ethics by climate change, some authors (Rawls, Howarth, Gosseries) have put forward the idea of a "chain of obligation". In his presentation Seidel argued that this idea ultimately fails in the context of climate change, because it cannot adequately deal with uncertainty and risks.

Fabian Schuppert aimed with his paper "No Risk, no Fun: Freedom, Security and (pre)Caution" to provide an argument for why certain cases of intergenerational risk imposition are morally wrong, while paying special attention to the perceived trade-off between the free agency of

present people and the possible violation of future interests. He also reflected on the idea of taking proper precaution.

Lukas Meyer and Harald Stelzer presented their work on a paper titled “Climate Justice and the Imposition of Risks of Rights Violations”. The circumstance that climate change induced uncertainties impose risks of harms on future generation rather than harming them with certainty this poses a challenge for intergenerational sufficientarianism. As an example they referred to the Climate Engineering technique of stratospheric aerosol injection (SAI).

Alexa Zellentin presented the outline of her paper “Climate Change, Risks, and Cultural Rights”. In her paper she emphasized that cultural rights are rights to be respected and that imposing risks that threaten people’s ability to exercise their cultural way of life for mere personal convenience shows disrespect for their culture and their choice to continue it and thus for them.

Karsten Klint Jensen presented preliminary results of a joint work with Marcus Düwell entitled “How Can Uncertainty and Obligations to Future Generations be Addressed from a Human Rights Perspective?” Using Nozick and Parfit as a background, Jensen showed how the human rights concept can be revised so as to address the rights of future generations and risks of rights violations. He then sketched how such a theory is faced with a difficult balancing of the rights of the poor of the current generation vs. the rights of future generations.

Martin Peterson’s and Christian Seidel’s paper “Taking risk (very) seriously” was commented by Klaus Steigleder. In their paper they presented a counterexample to the deontic inheritance principle proposed by D. P. Lackey and J. J. Thomson and showed that a number of similar principles are vulnerable to analogous counterexamples. In their conclusion they emphasized that the ethics of risk should not be viewed as an extension of traditional ethical principles from deterministic cases to risky ones.

3) Assessment of the results and impact of the event on the future directions of the field (up to two pages)

The program of the workshop meeting also reserved time for planning sessions, determining more precisely the future directions of the workgroup and the path towards a joint publication. The planning sessions took place at the end of the first and the second workshop day. With regard to the publication the participants agreed to aim for a joint publication based on the papers presented at the workgroup meeting. The topic of the joint publication will therefore be on risks and rights in the context of climate change. Papers will be collected at the end of June, abstracts and outlines by the beginning of April. Before the final version of the paper is submitted exchange of papers should take place, so that each participant will get feedback on her or his paper in time to revise it. This will also enhance the development of a common focus. The joint publication will be edited by Lukas Meyer and Harald Stelzer. It is planned to submit a proposal for a Special Issue (SI). The proposal should be submitted for the start to two Journals Moral Philosophy & Politics and Ethical Perspectives.

For further activities the participants discussed the proposal for a Summer School put forward by Lukas Meyer and Harald Stelzer, which should take place near Graz from September 7 till September 11 2014 on uncertainties, thresholds and coping strategies for climate change from a normative perspective.

Furthermore, the participants came up with the idea of a workshop that should look at different

ways how to deal with risks on the practical and theoretical level. The background idea of the workshop is that scholars engaged in risk ethics meet people from the policy area, NGOs and other stakeholders who engage in the area of climate change and who have to deal with risks in their work. Question of risk imposition play a curtail role for future policy option in response to climate change. From a normative perspective the transfer of risks is of great importance for question of distributive justice, especially considering future generations. In the context of global environmental problems and their consequences for living and future people, risk ethics is a very important part of ethics on the more theoretical as well as on the applied level. There is significant interests in the area of normative theory to engage in such a transdisciplinary exchange.

The workshop should lead to a dialog between theory and praxis and open up new perspective and insights on both sides. The aim of the workshop is

- a) to get a better understanding of what is needed by those who work on the practical level
- b) to enhance their understanding of normative issues in respect to the imposition of risks
- c) to give an impulses for the development of risk ethics.

As the Network activities will end in spring 2015, the best time would be in early spring 2015. With its focus on transdisciplinary research as well as the location near to Berlin the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies in Potsdam would be the perfect host of such a meeting. Furthermore, the workshop fits very well with the research priorities and themes of the IASS, especially concerning the understanding and governing of the Earth systems and resources and the rethinking of economic and cultural perspectives on sustainable development. The imposition of risk due the increasing influence of mankind on the Earth System, as it underlying the concept of the Anthropocene, is an important topic in the context of basic questions put forward by the IASS and can help to heightened awareness for the responsibilities societies face.

4) Annexes 4a) and 4b): Programme of the meeting and full list of speakers and participants

Annex 4a: Programme of the meeting

05. December 2013

- 9:00-10:00 Dominic Roser: "Rights and Risks"
- 10.00-10.15 Coffee break
- 10.15-11.15 Klaus Steigleder: "Risk and Rights"
- 11.15-11.30 Coffee break
- 11.30-12.30 Martin Peterson: "Natural Rights and Risk"
- 12:30-14:00 Lunch
- 14:00-15:00 Christian Seidel: "Imposing (Un)Acceptable Climate Risks and the Idea of a "Chain of Obligation""
- 15:00-15:15 Coffee break
- 15:15-16.15 Fabian Schuppert: "No Risk, no Fun: Freedom, Security and (pre)Caution"
- 16.15-16.30 Coffee break
- 16.30-17.30 Lukas Meyer & Harald Stelzer: "Climate Justice and the Imposition of Risks of Rights Violations"
- 17.30-17.45 Coffee break
- 17.45-19.00 Working group meeting

06. December 2013

- 9.00-10.00 Alexa Zellentin: “Climate Change, Risks, and Cultural Rights”
- 10.00-10.15 Coffee break
- 10.15-11.15 Karsten Klint Jensen: “How can uncertainty and obligations to future generations be addressed from a *human* rights perspective?” (joint with Marcus Düwell)
- 11.15-11.30 Coffee break
- 11.30-12.30 Martin Peterson and Christian Seidel: “Taking risk (very) seriously” – Comment by Klaus Steigleder
- 12:30-14:00 Lunch
- 14.00-16.00 open discussion and future activities

Annex 4b: Full list of speakers and participants

Karsten Klint Jensen (University of Copenhagen)
Lukas Meyer (University of Graz)
Martin Peterson Eindhoven University of Technology
Dominic Roser (University of Oxford)
Fabian Schuppert (Queen’s University Belfast)
Christian Seidel (University of Tübingen)
Klaus Steigleder (University of Bochum)
Karl Steininger (University of Graz)
Harald Stelzer (IASS Potsdam)
Alexa Zellentin (University College Dublin)

