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**“Environmental Protection and
Poverty Eradication: Competing Imperatives?”**

Friday, October 8th, 7:00p.m - 8:30p.m.
Dell Brown Room, Turner Hall

An aerial photograph of a large, swirling storm system over the ocean. The storm is characterized by a dense, white, circular cloud formation with a distinct eye in the center. The surrounding ocean is a deep blue, and the sky above is a lighter blue. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

*“The Perfect
Problem” & “The
Perfect Moral
Storm”*

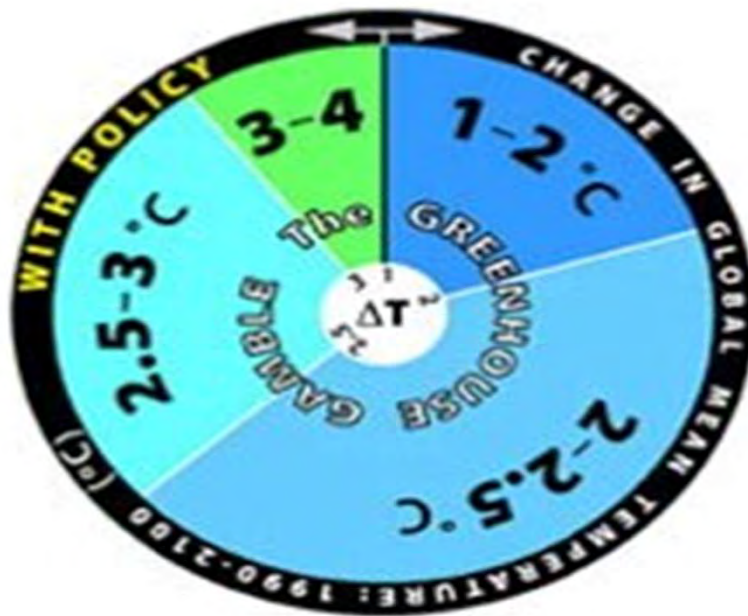
Science and Ethics, Facts & Values

“Natural, technical, and social sciences can provide essential information and evidence needed for decisions on what constitutes ‘dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.’ At the same time, *such decisions are value judgments.*”

Skeptical Approach

The science of climate change is highly uncertain, so incurring potentially large costs to protect against climate change is imprudent and wasteful.

Values, Uncertain Science and Climate Change Policy



POLICY



NO POLICY

<http://globalchange.mit.edu/resources/gamble/>

Climate Impacts & Developing Countries



Shafiqul Islam/WPN

Potential impact of sea-level rise on Bangladesh

Today

Total population: 112 Million

Total land area: 134,000 km²



1.5 m - Impact

Total population affected: 17 Million (15%)

Total land area affected: 22,000 km² (16%)



“Tragedy of the Commons”

Garrett Harden, *Science*, 162 (1968): 1243-1248



An unjust law is no law



“If the end result of negotiations is not fair then it will not be fully implemented. Little or no mitigation of climate change is then the unfair outcome to those who will have to bear the brunt of the impacts.”

Varieties of Justice and Climate Global Change

- Distributive Justice

- Mitigation

- Adaptation

Global Justice

- Intergenerational Justice

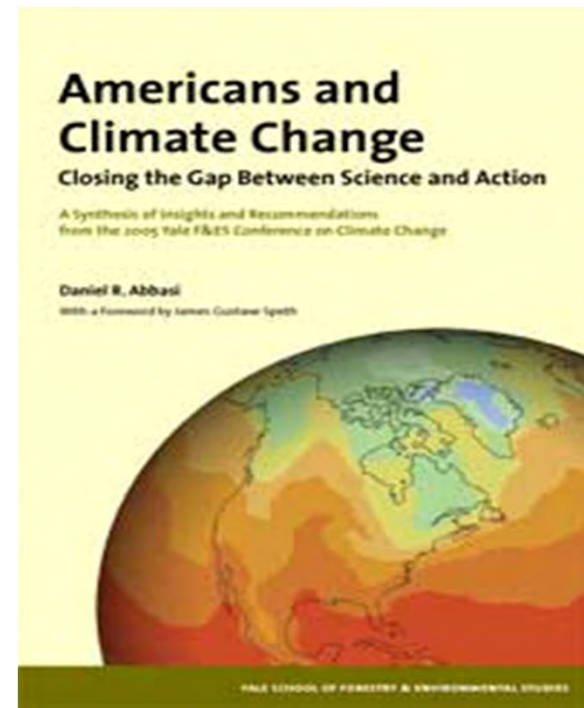
- Environmental Justice


- Procedural Justice


Americans and Climate Change

Why climate change is the “perfect problem”

- “complex and inaccessible scientific content;
- a substantial (and uncertain) time lag between cause and effect;



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- inertia in all the key drivers of the problem, from demographic growth to long-lived energy infrastructure to ingrained daily habits at the household level;
 - psychological barriers that complicate apprehension and processing of the issue, due in part to its perceived remoteness in time and place;

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- mismatches between the global, cross-sectoral scope of the climate change issue and the jurisdiction, focus, and capacity of existing institutions;
 - a set of hard-wired incentives, career and otherwise, that inhibit focused attention and action on the issue.”

The Perfect Moral Storm

Thesis: "Climate change is a perfect moral storm. Even if the difficult ethical questions could be answered, we might still find it difficult to act. For the storm makes us extremely vulnerable to moral corruption."

The Global Storm (spatial dimension)

- Dispersion of cause and effect
- Fragmentation of agency
- Institutional Inadequacy



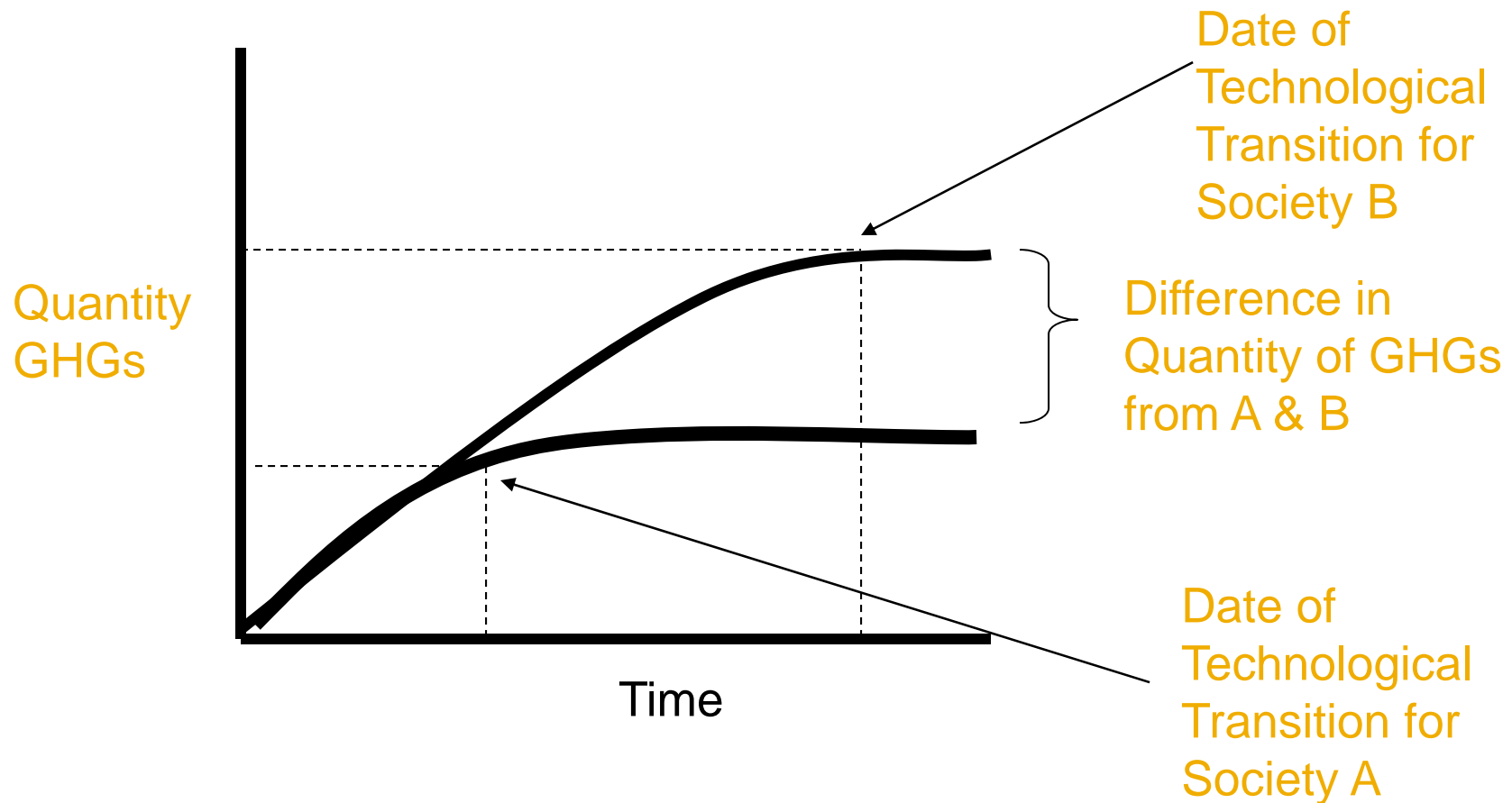
Prisoner's Dilemma

	Confess	Do Not
Confess	$(-10, -10)$	$(-1, -25)$
Do Not	$(-25, -1)$	$(-2, -2)$

The Intergenerational Storm (temporal dimension)

- Dispersion of cause and effect
- Fragmentation of agency
- Institutional Inadequacy

The Date of Technological Transition



The Theoretical Storm

- Scientific uncertainty
- Intergenerational equity
- Contingent persons
- Nonhuman animals
- Nature

Moral Corruption

- Distraction
- Complacency
- Unreasonable Doubt
- Selective Attention
- Delusion
- Pandering
- False Witness
- Hypocrisy