to use their weapons, so Woodrow Wilson's world of open diplomacy is a noble ideal that cannot be fully realized in the world in which we live.

We could, however, try to get closer to that ideal. If governments did not mislead their citizens so often, there would be less need for secrecy, and if leaders knew that they could not rely on keeping the public in the dark about what they are doing, they would have a powerful incentive to behave better.

It is therefore regrettable that the most likely outcome of the recent revelations will be greater restrictions to prevent further leaks. Let's hope that in the new WikiLeaks age, that goal remains out of reach.

from Project Syndicate, December 13, 2010

THE ETHICS OF BIG FOOD

LAST MONTH, OXFAM, the international aid organization, launched a campaign called "Behind the Brands." The goal is to assess the transparency of the world's ten biggest food and beverage companies concerning how their goods are produced, and to rate their performance on sensitive issues like the treatment of small-scale farmers, sustainable water and land use, climate change, and exploitation of women.

Consumers have an ethical responsibility to be aware of how their food is produced, and the big brands have a corresponding obligation to be more transparent about their suppliers, so that their customers can make informed choices about what they are eating. In many cases, the biggest food companies themselves do not know how they perform on these issues, betraying a profound lack of ethical responsibility on their part.

Nestlé scored highest on transparency, as they provide information on at least some of their commodity sources and audit systems. But even its rating is only "fair." General Mills was at the bottom of the ranking.

In addition to this lack of transparency, Oxfam's report identifies several deficiencies common to all of the Big 10 food companies. They are not providing small-scale farmers with an equal opportunity to sell into their supply chains, and when small-scale farmers do have the opportunity to sell to the big brands' suppliers, they may not receive a fair price for their product.

The Big 10 are also not taking sufficient responsibility to ensure that their larger-scale farm suppliers pay a decent living wage to their workers. There are 450 million wage workers in agriculture worldwide, and in many countries they are often inadequately paid, with 60 percent living in poverty.

Some of the Big 10 are doing more than others to develop ethical policies in these areas. Unilever has committed itself to sourcing more raw materials from small-scale farmers, and has pledged 100 percent sustainable sourcing for all of its main commodities by 2020. This policy gave Unilever the highest score on openness to small farmers, with a rating of "fair." Danone, General Mills, and Kellogg's were at the bottom, with a rating of "very poor."

For many years, Nestlé was criticized for marketing infant formula in developing countries, where breast-feeding was available and much healthier than bottle-feeding. It revised its policies in response to that criticism, but more recently has been targeted again for using child and forced labor to produce its cocoa.

In 2011, the company used the Fair Labor Association to assess its supply chain. The assessment confirmed that many of Nestlé's suppliers were using child and forced labor, and the company has now begun to address the problem. As a result, Nestlé, along with Unilever and Coca-Cola, scored "fair" on workers' rights. None of the Big 10 did better. Kellogg's received the lowest score in this category.

Agriculture is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for more than the entire transport sector, and it is also one of the sectors most at risk from climate change, as recent changes in rainfall patterns have made evident. Clearing tropical forests for grazing or palm-oil production releases large quantities of stored carbon into the

atmosphere. Grazing ruminant animals, like cattle and sheep, also contribute significantly to climate change.

Here, too, the big brands receive low grades from Oxfam, mostly for failing even to track the emissions for which they are directly or indirectly responsible. Nestlé was the only company to achieve a "fair" rating, with Associated British Foods at the bottom, with a "very poor" rating.

Anyone with Internet access can visit Oxfam's website and see how the big brands rank on each of seven ethically significant indicators. The highest scores currently are in the "fair" range, with not a single Big 10 company receiving a "good" rating in any category.

Individual consumers are encouraged to contact the companies directly and urge them to demonstrate greater responsibility for the way in which they obtain the ingredients for their products. In this way, Oxfam hopes, its "Behind the Brands" campaign will trigger a "race to the top" in which big corporations compete to achieve the highest possible score, and to become known as truly transparent actors that produce food and beverages with a high degree of ethical responsibility.

The changes that have already occurred show that if big corporations know that their consumers want them to act more ethically, they will do so. To be effective, such a campaign requires individual consumers to take it upon themselves to become better informed about the food and beverages that they consume, to make their voices heard, and to make purchasing choices that are influenced by ethics as well as by taste and price.

from Project Syndicate, March 12, 2013

FAIRNESS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(with Teng Fei)

A SENSE OF FAIRNESS IS universal among human beings, but people often differ about exactly what fairness requires in a specific situation. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the debate over the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid dangerous climate change.

China and the United States are the two largest emitters of GHGs, and it seems unlikely that any global agreement to reduce emissions will be effective unless both participate. Yet in international climate negotiations, they seem to be far apart in their views of what each nation should do. We are professors interested in the issue of climate change, one from a leading university in China, and one from a leading university in the United States. We thought it would be interesting to see if we can reach agreement on what would be a fair principle for regulating GHG emissions.

We decided to use the Gini coefficient, a common measure of inequality in income distribution, to measure inequality in carbon emissions. The Gini coefficient is a number between 0 and 1, where 0 indicates that everyone has exactly the same income, and 1 indicates that a single person has all the income and no one else has any. Naturally, all existing societies fall somewhere between these two extremes, with relatively egalitarian countries like Denmark at around 0.25

and less egalitarian countries like the United States and Turkey closer to 0.4.

Different equity principles will generate different emission distributions over the population and different "carbon Gini coefficients." We use the 1850–2050 time span to calculate the carbon Gini coefficient. This allows us analyze the principle of historical accountability, advocated by countries like China and Brazil, which takes into account past emissions that have had an impact on the atmosphere.

We have selected three widely discussed methods of allocating GHG emission quotas to different countries:

The equal per capita emission rights approach allocates emission rights to countries in proportion to their population, but only for the remaining portion of the global carbon budget, that is, for the amount that can still be emitted, between now and 2050, consistently with avoiding dangerous change to our climate. (This limit is usually stated as avoiding more than 2°C of warming.)

The equal per capita cumulative emission approach seeks equality over time, rather than just from now on. Thus it combines the dimensions of responsibility for past emissions, and equal per capita rights. It allocates an equal share of the overall global budgets taking into account the portion that has already been consumed.

The grandfathering approach bases emission rights on existing patterns. This allocation scheme has become the *de facto* approach applied to developed countries in the Kyoto Protocol which requires these countries to achieve an emissions target based on a percentage reduction from what they emitted in 1990. Thus those countries that emitted more in 1990 have an entitlement to emit more in future than other countries that emitted less in 1990.

The equal per capita cumulative emissions approach is, by definition, a way of producing perfect equality among all

countries in the contribution they will have made, over time, to climate change. It thus leads to a carbon Gini coefficient of 0.0. The equal per capita principle applied to annual emission flows, from now on, results in a carbon Gini coefficient of about 0.4. The difference shows that the dispute between developed and developing countries over the principle of historical responsibility accounts for about 40% of the global GHG emissions that can occur from 1850 to 2050, compatibly with avoiding more than 2°C of warming. The grandfathering principle leads to the largest carbon Gini coefficient, of about 0.7.

These widely different carbon Gini coefficients indicate that the world lacks a common understanding on what would be a fair solution to climate change. Success in international climate negotiations will hinge on how parties—and the citizens they represent—consider a few vital equity principles, especially historical responsibility and equal per capita rights. In the negotiations so far, it is already clear that long-term equity concerns are not being adequately addressed. When the *de facto* grandfathering principle is included, our carbon Gini coefficient indicates that as much as 70% of the global carbon budget is still in dispute between rich and poor countries.

If it proves too difficult to reach agreement on a substantive principle of equity, then an agreement that some carbon Gini coefficients are too extreme to be fair could form the basis of a minimum consensus. For example, the grandfathering principle has a very high Gini coefficient of 0.7. We can compare this with the Gini coefficient of the income distribution of the United States, which most people think of as highly inegalitarian, and yet which is, at about 0.38, much lower.

On the other hand, equal per capita annual emissions is based on a principle that at least has a claim to be considered

fair, and has a Gini coefficient of less than 0.4. We therefore propose that any fair solution should fall within a Gini coefficient "fair range" of 0.0–0.4. Although any choice of a precise number is somewhat arbitrary, this may serve as a boundary of those proposals that would be discussed by parties committed to a fair solution to the problem of climate change.

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