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## The Concept of Climate Justice in the Context of Political Discourse

### Koncepcja sprawiedliwości klimatycznej w kontekście dyskursu politycznego

#### • Abstrakt •

Celem artykułu jest analiza zmian klimatycznych jako nowoczesnego zagrożenia początku XXI wieku. Autorka przedstawia pojęcie „sprawiedliwości klimatycznej” w kontekście dyskursu politycznego. Celem badania jest analiza istoty sprawiedliwości klimatycznej i form przeciwdziałania jej wdrożeniu. W celu zapewnienia sprawiedliwości klimatycznej polityka klimatyczna powinna obejmować prawa człowieka, równość płci, sprawiedliwość międzypokoleniową oraz integralność kulturową. Zagadnienie sprawiedliwości klimatycznej pojawia się szczególnie powszechnie tam, gdzie mowa o problemach demokracji środowiskowej, aktywizmu klimatycznego, apartheidu klimatycznego, sceptycyzmu klimatycznego. Autorka uważa, że zmiany klimatu należy traktować nie tylko jako kwestię środowiskową, ale także jako kwestię sprawiedliwości klimatycznej, skoncentrowanej na tym, w jaki sposób owe zmiany dotyczą najbardziej narażone grupy ludności.

#### • Abstract •

The article analyzes climate change as a recent threat of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. It presents an understanding of the concept of climate justice in the context of political discourse. The purpose of the study is to analyze the nature of climate justice and the protest forms of its implementation. To ensure climate justice, climate policy must embrace human rights, gender equality, inter-generational justice and cultural integrity. In particular, climate justice is treated everywhere by the problems of environmental democracy, climate activism, climate apartheid, climate skepticism. The author believes that climate change should be addressed not only as an environmental issue, but also as a climate justice issue focused on how the most vulnerable people are affected.

**Słowa kluczowe:** aktywizm klimatyczny; apartheid klimatyczny; sceptycyzm klimatyczny; niesprawiedliwość klimatyczna; sprawiedliwość klimatyczna; zmiany klimatu

**Keywords:** climate activism; climate apartheid; climate skepticism; climate injustice; climate justice; climate change

## Introduction

The climate change issues are considered by scientists in various perspectives since climate change and its consequences are characterized today by a complex interaction of natural, environmental, technological, economic, political and social processes. However nowadays there is lack of works dedicated to study the climate change effects in the light of political discourse. One of the pressing aspects of the climate problem in this context is so-called climate justice. It faces fundamental human freedoms since the burden of climate change is not shared equally. Rich and poor, men and women, young people and the elderly, or indigenous peoples face disproportionate risks. On the other hand, researchers believe that those who are most affected by climate change tend to be the least responsible for causing it and have the least adaptability. This idea was enshrined in the 2015 Paris Agreement, which emphasized the importance of climate justice. On the eve of this meeting, M. Robinson, the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Climate Change, launched a Dialogue on Climate Justice “to mobilize political will and creative thinking to form an ambitious and just international climate agreement in 2015” (Kanbur & Shue, 2018). At the 2017 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bonn (COP23<sup>1</sup>), the Director of IIED<sup>2</sup> E. Norton argued that climate change is “the greatest social injustice of our generation”. He also added, “we can lose generations who understand the climate of the [1950s and 1960s], before climate change begins to be strongly perceived” (IIED, 2017). In 2019, the UN Secretary-General A. Guterres stated that “climate change is happening now and it is happening to all of us. No country or community is immune. And as always, the poor and vulnerable are the first to suffer and suffer the most” (Climate Justice, 2019) According to M. Robinson, climate justice “insists on a transition from the discourse on greenhouse gases and the melting of glaciers to the discourse on civil rights movements with the people and communities most vulnerable to climate change at its core, now, through the re-

<sup>1</sup> COP23 refers to the Conference of the Parties, the 2017 UN Climate Conference.

<sup>2</sup> IIED refers to International Institute for Environment and Development, an independent policy research institute whose stated mission is to build a fairer, more sustainable world, using evidence, action and influence in partnership with others.

cent marches, strikes and protests of hundreds of thousands of students the world is beginning to understand the injustice between generations of climate change” (Climate Justice, 2019).

All of the above confirms the importance of research conducted in the context of climate justice. The foregoing introduction to the topic contributed to the formulation of the main research problem, expressed by the queries: What is the essence of climate justice? What will be the climate injustice? How can climate justice be achieved? How is climate justice related to the problems of climate skepticism, climate activism, climate apartheid? How does climate change affect human rights? Thus, the purpose of this paper is to study the theoretical and practical aspects of climate justice and its various forms of implementation. The scientific approach to climate justice requires the use of a hermeneutical approach (interpretation method). An integrative approach assesses the strengths of alternative disciplines, captures the intersections between the patterns and pathways of climate change and the consequences of different perceptions of justice.

## Definition of Climate Justice

Climate changes are changes directly or indirectly related to human activity that alter the composition of the world atmosphere and complements the natural variability of climate over comparable periods of time. There are following areas of climate change such as the growth of competition for access to natural resources; increasing frequency of climatic extreme weather events and disasters; pushing people to migrate on a large scale or to use illegal sources of income; disruption of food production and rising food prices; reducing energy efficiency; global warming; increasing demand for water resources and their irregular supply.

The First World Climate and Security Report 2020 by the Expert Group of the International Military Council on Climate and Security (IMCCS<sup>3</sup>) claims that most respondents believe that the following phenomena will be of significant or higher risk to global security in 2040 as well as will have an impact on climate change such as water security (98%), migration and natural disasters (96%), food security (94%). 80% of experts say that 13 of the 22 explored climate change phenomena are of significant or higher risk to global security by 2040 (IMCCS, 2020).

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<sup>3</sup> The research was conducted electronically for a select group of security experts, military and practitioners worldwide through an online survey. In total, 56 respondents from 13 different countries and regions including Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and North America were interviewed. The survey was conducted in English and French.

However, today there is some social resistance to the scientific consensus on the existence of global warming. It is called *climate skepticism*, which is often interpreted as a denial of the global climate change idea in the natural environment caused by human activity. First and foremost, there are some groups in the US and Europe that are skeptical of, or generally rejecting, recognized scientific theories. Climate change skeptics, for example, believe that such changes have been invented or, at least, that a man is not involved in their occurrence. They believe in data making an attempt to falsify climate change. Another example is people who do not believe in evolution for religious reasons (Veldman, 2019).

Climate skepticism, as a rule, takes many forms and is widespread in different countries. For example, according to a global climate change survey, more than two-thirds of people agree that it is mostly caused by human activity, with the vast majority (78%) in Latin America and the Caribbean expressing such opinion. Fewer than 60% of people share the opinion in North America (59%), East Asia and the Pacific (54%). The last region had the highest percentage of people – nearly four in ten – who believe that global warming is caused largely by natural patterns in the Earth's environment. In North America, a third of people (32%) believe that global warming has natural causes, while 9% believe that there is no global warming. This compares with only 3% in sub-Saharan Africa, where the largest percentage of people believe it is caused by human activity (World Economic Forum, 2019).

According to M. Rebetz, professor at the Swiss University of Neuchâtel, an expert on Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), climate skepticism is a well-planned misinformation campaign funded by oil and mining companies. The campaign has been running since the 1990s, i.e., since the Kyoto Protocol, when coal and oil consumption have plummeted on the horizon. The researcher added that the organizers' methods are well known: there are three stages to climate misinformation. Initially, they denied the rise in temperature on the planet, and when it became clear that this is not true, began to deny human involvement. Now, when it is clear that many climate changes are due to human activity, they are trying to justify inaction. M. Rebetz emphasizes that campaign organizers are driven by personal interests. However, if all oil companies began to invest in the transition to green energy sources, then over time the investments would pay off, and then such firms could simultaneously earn and gain the reputation of environmentalists (Klimaticheskij skepticizm..., 2019).

It is believed that the phenomenon of climate skepticism cannot be taken into account. However, scientists cannot ignore people who adhere to a certain climate skepticism. At the same time, scientists say, the effects of climate change cannot be

overestimated since global temperatures are still quite high today and will continue to rise for decades as a result of greenhouse gas emissions from human activity. Carbon emissions and climate change have a major impact on our ecosystems, including air pollution, and temperature changes leading to drought and heat waves and rising sea levels leading to flooding. Climate change is also a major threat to human life as well as to physical health and survival, lack of food and water, loss of property, home and lifestyle; the most vulnerable in our society are social groups such as children, the elderly and marginalized communities who are often at the greatest risk (Greenpeace International, 2018).

Ukrainian researcher T. Hardashchuk rightly points out that climate change has a complex effect on both natural and socio-economic systems, indicating an extremely low threshold for their vulnerability. They do not only increase the existing risks, they also create new ones, and the likelihood of such processes will only rise in the future. The uneven distribution of risks from climate change should be taken into account, making the more vulnerable sections of the population in different countries and communities much more vulnerable to them and suffering greater losses. The future of the planet and humanity, the well-being of humans and their very existence depend directly on the ability to slow down climate change or adapt to the processes occurring in the environment due to climate change (Hardashchuk, 2018).

The Climate Justice Handbook stated that in the late 1990s the term “climate justice” began to gain weight after the broad range of social and environmental justice movements that emerged in response to fossil fuel area activity, and subsequently to the fact that their members were unsuccessful with the global climate management model that became so transparent at Copenhagen’s COP15. The term continues to gain momentum in discussions on sustainable development, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and is slowly becoming increasingly popular in the world of international and national politics. However, the link between climate change and climate justice remains uncertain (Duyck, Jodoin, & Johl, 2018).

It is believed that the emergence of this term was prompted by the need for a clearer articulation of the relationship between equity and climate change in science so that programs and plans for action on climate change adaptation can be based on the principle of shared but differentiated responsibility (Hardashchuk, 2018).

Climate change justice is related to the uneven (spatial) distribution of climate change impacts, vulnerability and opportunities (Duyck et al., 2018). The UK researcher F. Comim argues that climate injustice, in its turn, is a pervasive feature

of contemporary climate change issues. It manifests itself in the asymmetry of costs and benefits and the erosion of people's capabilities. In his view, in order to understand the overall impact of climate change on poverty and human development, it is important to contextualize the discussion within the general question of the ecosystem services impact on human well-being. In addition, it is important to define what we mean by "climate justice" and to apply such characteristic to think through policy directions for better response, focusing on integrating these two dimensions of justice (Comim, 2008).

Contemporary scientists believe that the concept of climate justice, underpinned by a deep and clear understanding of the implementation of climate justice at the national and local levels, was created as an international ideal, reflecting relations between nations and defining the role of states and non-governmental organizations. Climate justice also offers new approaches to "justice theorizing" (Fisher, 2012). This concept broadens the analytical space for consideration of different kinds of justice as it concerns not only the distribution of environmental goods between nation states, but also their distribution at all levels with the active participation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes, according to J. Rawls, who are "fair, accountable, open and free from corruption" (Rolz, 2001, as quoted in Hardashchuk, 2016).

Climate justice is defined as the effort to ensure equitable behavior with people and on the planet in such a way as to decrease further climate change by reducing the amount of fossil fuels burned for energy and adapt to the changes caused by the climate by growing drought tolerant crops, where rainfall has decreased as a result of climate change (known as adaptation) (The Geography of Climate Justice, 2011).

Researchers talk about climate and social justice as two sides of the same coin. Protests in Chile, Haiti, Ecuador and France make it clear that climate and social justice are linked. Accelerated climate action must be socially just. Only by internalizing the link between climate and social justice, the fair and socially possible transition to a future clean emission level can be achieved (CCPI, 2020).

## **Achieving Climate Justice**

Climate justice can only be achieved when industrialized countries: will reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with their common and differentiated commitments; will provide short- and long-term climate finance to help the most vulnerable countries adapt to climate change and pursue a low-carbon devel-

opment strategy; will foster capacity building and technology transfer to help the most vulnerable become more resilient to climate change and benefit from green growth (The Geography of Climate Justice, 2011). Canadian civic activist Naomi Klein says that we need political rules that will make both simple and convenient choice for everyone to abandon carbon production. And above all, these rules must be fair. Equality in society will lead to lower carbon emissions and a cleaner lifestyle. In fact, tackling social inequality must be at the heart of the battle against climate change (Klein, 2016).

In recent years, the principles of climate justice have been developed, in particular the so-called *Bali Principles of Climate Justice* (2002) (International Climate Justice Network, 2002). People's movement representatives, together with activists working for social and climate justice, have decided to start building an international movement for all nations for climate justice based on 27 basic principles. Their analysis identifies several major groups of principles, among which there are principles related to the political sphere of society in the context of the research topic. We group them into two main subgroups.

Firstly, these are *the principles of a democratic solution* to climate change:

- 1) governments are responsible for combating climate change because they are democratically accountable to their people and in accordance with the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities;
- 2) communities, especially affected communities, should play a leading role in national and international climate change processes;
- 3) the role of multinational corporations should be diminished in shaping volatile production and consumption patterns and lifestyles as well as in unduly influencing national and international decision-making processes;
- 4) any market or technological solution to climate change such as carbon trading and carbon capture must be subject to the principles of democratic accountability, environmental sustainability and social justice;
- 5) state policy must be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples without any form of discrimination or prejudice;
- 6) climate justice must counteract military action, occupation, repression and exploitation of land, water, oceans, peoples and cultures and other forms of life, especially as it relates to the role of the fossil fuel industry (International Climate Justice Network, 2002).

Secondly, it is *following human rights* in the fight against climate change:

- 1) the rights of indigenous peoples and affected communities must be represented and protected;
- 2) the right of all people, including the poor, women, rural populations and

indigenous peoples, to have access to affordable and sustainable energy must be represented and protected;

- 3) socio-economic models that guarantee fundamental rights to clean air, land, water, food and healthy ecosystems must be presented;
- 4) the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples and their right to control their lands including subsurface lands, territories and resources as well as the right to protection from any action that may lead to the destruction or degradation of their territories and cultural lifestyles should be recognized;
- 5) the right of indigenous peoples and local communities to participate effectively in decision-making on any level, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, carrying out and evaluation, clear principles execution of prior informed consent and the right to say “No” should be accepted;
- 6) decisions concerning women’s rights must be submitted;
- 7) the right of young people as equal partners in the movement to tackle climate change and its consequences must be reaffirmed;
- 8) the right to education of present and future generations should be recognized to emphasize climate, energy, social and environmental issues based on real-life experiences and the assessment of diverse cultural perspectives;
- 9) the rights of unborn generations to natural resources, a stable climate and a healthy planet must be confirmed (International Climate Justice Network, 2002).

Climate justice is therefore a broad term that may have different understandings but a combination of ethics and politics is a key to such interpreting. Climate justice requires the acceptance of social justice principles, environmental sustainability and democratic participation and accountability. It politicizes climate change by working to humanize it, linking climate change to people, communities, governments and human rights.

### **Climate Activism in the Context of Climate Action Activation**

All of these climate justice principles are linked to the phenomenon of *climate activism* which implies a steadily increasing social and political intensification of climate action. Researchers believe that activism is characterized by actions that are based on many factors such as labor, religious and environmental goals. There are three types of activism focused on the past, present and future:

- past-oriented or reactionary activity seeks to protect the interests of those with more power, often at the expense of those who are weaker;

- nowadays-oriented policy-driven activism is called reformism;
- future-oriented activism (what T. Jordan called “activism!”, with an exclamation mark) and a change in social relations not just politics (Martin, 2007).

In our view, climate activism belongs to the third group, that is, future-oriented and aimed at changing climate policy and the whole climate change-related system.

According to Western scientists, climate revitalization is an amalgamation of different people groups and organizations working to collaborate in social, scientific, political, communication and ideological fields with the main purpose of solving climate problems. These people and organizations collectively form part of the green movement and share a common agenda for environmental protection and conservation. The most significant ideology shared by these people in terms of ideas is the solution to climate problems. Therefore, they divide environmental activism into three parts. This can also be attributed to climate activism: segmental, polycentric and network activism. Segmentation means that there are diverse groups in the organization that are combined with a common interest. Polycentricity means that groups have multiple and often temporary centers of influence. Finally, it is called a network because it has a loose, integrated, and mesh network that has many links formed as a result of overlapping membership (Rinkesh, n.d.).

The importance of climate activism should be linked to the creation of climate awareness among people; influencing legislation to enact laws to address the effects of climate change; effecting those who cause environmental pollution; teaching the population how to conserve the environment; encouraging companies to “green” production; protecting communities from the devastating effects of pollution and using alternative forms of energy to reduce greenhouse gas accumulation; creation of innovative programs for nature conservation and re-use and recycling of non-biodegradable products (Rinkesh, n.d.).

Accordingly, climate activism is manifested in various forms: influence on government actions, legal activism, communication activism, etc. Researchers point to the following types of climate activism:

- *Environmental activism* targeted primarily to protect and improve the environment aimed at creating a clean and safe environment for human life. It is implemented by so-called “green” organizations around the world.
- *Individual and policy actions* addressing the ethical aspects of climate justice in climate change adaptation and policy actions and positions. Activist groups and the climate lobby consider climate change problem solution to be their tasks.

- *Security activism* with main purpose to protect natural resources and wildlife, plants and animals, conserv biodiversity.
- *Environmental justice* is related to the actions of social movements focusing on fair and equitable sharing of benefits and burdens in the environment. They are in favor of social justice, seeking to address environmental discrimination. These movements aim to ensure that environmental justice becomes a right.
- *Ecological modernization* supports the idea that economics and ecology can be combined thanks to the philosophy of environmental productivity boosting the use of natural resources in a productive way that can lead to economic growth in the future.
- *Climate grassroots activism* is an activity driven by the belief that change can only occur through people taking action on climate change.
- *Ecoterrorism* implies “actions of individuals, environmental organizations and movements in relation to groups of people, professional and business circles, investment plans, various projects, views, etc., which are carried out using methods unacceptable to a particular layer of society”. Polish scientist A. Hżhyvach believes that such actions are justified by the need to protect the environment and natural resources from real or potentially harmful effects. Sometimes such an impact can be considered unilaterally without taking into account the arguments of other parties to the conflict and may be exaggerated, debatable or, as it may later be shown, with no significant adverse effects on the plant and animal population of the non-living environment (Hżhyvach, 2013).
- *Local activism* involves the organization of locals who oppose or propose policies aimed at protecting their environment (Rinkesh, n.d.). According to scientists, civic activation is the most effective method of achieving emission reductions taking into account the fact that governments are unlikely to accept carbon restrictions without public pressure and individual conservation is not able to produce sufficient emission reductions (Roser-Renouf et al., 2014).

It seems today that social movements and activism – from school revolts around the world to indigenous peoples’ revolts against extinction – can provide an effective way to bring about change. However, high demand for political action is vital if we are to overcome the barriers we face in effectively combating climate change. R. Latchford says that we need to move away from the classic environmental activist who may have formed already today to ensure these processes. Instead, we must move forward to create a climate justice movement that motivates and draws

more people into action that pervades all sorts of social movements and struggles. Instead of fighting for the “rescue of polar bears” it is necessary to fight climate change, understanding and perceiving it as a fight for human rights, equality, housing, and health. The climate justice movement must move from environmental issues to those that affect us all if we are to achieve mass mobilization of people and movements. It is impossible to achieve global human well-being in any sense unless our planet is safe for life. It has to be realized and it has to be emphasized (Latchford, 2019).

## Climate Changes and Human Rights

States pay little attention to human rights when analyzing climate change. Although these changes have been on the human rights agenda for over ten years they remain a marginal issue for most actors. However, this is an emergency and it requires a brave and creative thinking from the human rights community and a radically more robust, detailed and coherent approach. Accepting the 2018 Nobel Prize in Economics, prize-winner W. Nordhaus<sup>4</sup> called climate change a “colossus that threatens our world” and “a final challenge to the economy”. “Climate change is threatening the truly catastrophic effects on much part of the globe and the rights of many will be sacrificed” (Alston, 2019a).

For the last decade, human rights and climate change have been clearly identified only by the UN Human Rights Council and the UNFCCC. The UN Human Rights Council has become a leader in the study of the correlation between human rights and climate change. Resolutions have been adopted on a regular basis since 2008, establishing and extending the mandate of special procedures on human rights and the environment. A resolution on human rights and climate change was adopted in 2008, stating that climate change “poses an immediate and far-reaching threat to people and communities worldwide and has implications for the full enjoyment of human rights”. The following issues were further highlighted in, among others, the Resolutions of the Council on March 25, 2009; September 30, 2011; June 23, 2014; July 2, 2015; July 1, 2016, as well as in the seminars of the Human Rights and Climate Change Council of February 23–24, 2012, and

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<sup>4</sup> American Economics Scientist William D. Nordhaus and Paul M. Romer received the 2018 Swedish Academy of Sciences Award in Economics for “Integrating Innovation and Climate with Economic Growth”. Nordhaus became the first person to create an integrated model of assessment, that is, a quantitative model that describes the global interaction between economy and climate. His model integrates theories and empirical results in physics, chemistry and economics (Press Release, 2018).

the Expert Discussion of the Council on the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Human Rights on March 6, 2015, which confirmed the concern that the adverse effects of climate change have the direct and indirect consequences for all human rights, and the most acute are those who are already vulnerable, depending on geography, poverty, gender, age, indigenous status, or disability (UN Human Rights Council, n.d.).

The 2015 Paris Agreement has become the first treaty on climate change mentioning human rights. Its preamble stated that “recognizing that climate change is a common problem of humanity Parties should take steps to respect, encourage and promote climate change and to take into account their respective commitments on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities, persons in vulnerable circumstances, and the right to development, gender equality and empowering women, and inter-generational justice” (Paryzka uhoda, 2015).

The most recent example is the Resolution of July 5, 2018 on Human Rights and Climate Change which also takes into account women’s rights. Its operative provisions give a good indication of the state of the technical environment. Firstly, it recognizes “the urgent importance of continuing to address the [...] adverse effects of climate change”. Secondly, the resolution expresses particular concern about the negative effects “especially in developing countries and relating to the people most vulnerable to climate change”. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has produced reports on climate change in general, 43 on climate change and health rights, 44 on climate change and children’s rights, 45 on climate change and migration, and 46 on climate change and migration, and also on climate change and women’s rights. However, the bottom line is that climate change advocacy remains marginal to the Office’s core concerns. In 2018 it was confirmed that “the state has failed to prevent the alleged damage to human rights caused by climate change” (Alston, 2019a).

The integration of human rights in climate policy is becoming increasingly a key factor in achieving climate action that is beneficial to both people and the planet. Climate justice links human rights and development to achieving a people-centered approach to climate action. Such integration enables governments to fulfill their obligations under the UNFCCC and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The actions taken to adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce emissions that cause global warming ultimately protect human rights as they seek to avoid dangerous climate change. However, climate action, designed and implemented without respect for human rights, undermines these rights (Mary Robinson Foundation, 2016).

The inclusion of existing human rights obligations in the development of climate action requires the potential to inform and strengthen national and international climate change policies. However, most states do not currently have clear human rights references in their reports to the UNFCCC, although the relationship between climate action and human rights has recently been documented at the interstate level. Mary Robinson Foundation research shows that only 40% of national communications, 4% of national adaptation programs, and 25% of national Universal Periodic Review reports correlate between climate change and human rights. However, to adopt a human rights approach one must understand how climate change and climate action can affect human rights (Mary Robinson Foundation, 2016).

Researchers emphasize that human rights and climate change are linked in three key ways: climate change affects the full range of human rights, especially for people living in poverty, marginalization and vulnerability; failure to integrate human rights into climate action can undermine human rights; integrating human rights into climate change policies can increase efficiency and benefit people and the planet.

The reports that establish the correlation between climate change and human rights are similarly divided into three categories: those that highlight the impact of climate change on human rights; those which put emphasis on steps taken to ensure climate action without violating human rights; and those which emphasize efforts to integrate human rights into climate change policy to increase efficiency and benefit people and the planet (Mary Robinson Foundation, 2016).

In turn, human rights in the study are treated in two ways: either substantive or procedural. Fundamental (essential) natural rights (such as the right to adequate food, the right to water and sanitation, or the right to life) can be considered as the basic natural requirements of a person to live a life underpinned by dignity. Procedural (process) rights (such as the right of access to information, the right of access to justice, or the right of public participation) relate to how material rights are protected (Mary Robinson Foundation, 2016).

Recently the UN Human Rights Council has raised the issue of poverty and human rights and spoken about the threat of *climate apartheid*. In a report presented by the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Professor Ph. Alston noted that the effects of global warming can not only undermine fundamental rights to life, food, water and housing for hundreds of millions of people, but also threaten democracy and the rule of law. “Of course, while the people in poverty are responsible for only part of the world’s emissions, they will bear the brunt of climate change and have the least potential for protection”

(Alston, 2019a). Ph. Alston spoke of growing inequalities, deprivations and dissatisfactions resulting from climate change, which could ignite nationalist, xenophobic and racist sentiments, adding to the balance of approaches to civil and political rights. Like many environmental experts, he argues that the steps taken by the UN countries, non-governmental organizations and business on climate change are extremely inadequate when they acknowledge the urgency and scale of a climate emergency: human rights may not be maintained (Alston, 2019b).

*Apartheid* is defined in the Encyclopaedia Britannica as a form of social policy that governed relations between the white minority and the non-white majority of South Africa before its liberation in 1994, and punished racial segregation and political and economic discrimination against non-whites. The implementation of apartheid, often referred to as “separate development”, was made possible by the Population Registration Act which classified all South Africans as black Africans, colored (mixed race), or white. Later, a fourth category was added such as Asian (Indian and Pakistani). To ensure segregation of races and to prevent blacks from encroaching on white areas, the government has strengthened existing laws requiring non-white documents to permit their presence only in restricted territories (Bantustans). Other laws prohibited most social contacts outside of Bantustans, sanctioned segregated public institutions, set separate educational standards, restricted each race to certain types of work, reduced non-white labor unions, and prohibited non-whites from participating in government (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).

*Climate apartheid* is a term introduced by Ph. Alston, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights in one of his reports to the UN Human Rights Council. He described the scenario of “climate apartheid” as a situation “when the wealthy pay to avoid overheating, starvation and conflict, while the rest of the world remains suffering” (Alston, 2019a). That is, climate apartheid today should be interpreted as a social policy that penalizes social segregation and political and economic discrimination against the poor, creating favorable living conditions for the wealthy.

## Conclusions

The term “climate justice” began to gain weight in the late 1990s, which was updated by the need for a clearer articulation of the relationship between justice theory and climate change in the scientific world. Climate change equity is linked to the uneven (spatial) distribution of climate change impacts, their vulnerability

and opportunity, and climate inequality, in turn, manifests itself in cost-benefit asymmetries and erosion of people's capabilities.

In recent years, the principles of climate justice have been developed, in particular the so-called Bali Climate Justice Principles, which are the principles relating to the political sphere of society as ones of particular importance: the principles of democratic resolution of climate change issues and adherence of human rights in the fight against climate change. These principles are linked to the phenomenon of climate activism, which implies a steadily increasing social and political activation of climate action. Its importance should: be linked to the creation of climate awareness among people; influence legislation to enact laws to address the climate change; effect those who cause environmental pollution; teach the population how to conserve the environment; encourage companies to "green" production; protect communities from the devastating impact of pollution and the use of alternative forms of energy; create innovative conservation and reuse and recycling programs for biodegradable products.

Climate justice links human rights and development to achieving a people-centered approach to climate action. The integration of human rights in climate policy is becoming increasingly a key factor in achieving climate action that is beneficial to both people and the planet. Human rights and climate change are connected in three ways: climate change affects the full range of human rights, especially for people living in poverty, marginalization and vulnerability; failure to integrate human rights into climate action can undermine human rights; integrating human rights into climate change policies can increase efficiency and benefit people and the planet. The climate apartheid predicted by experts today can be interpreted as a social policy that penalizes social segregation and political and economic discrimination against the poor, creating favorable conditions for the well-to-do.

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