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ARTICLES

Non-Identity and Compensation for Climate Change: The Not-So-Minor Difference Claim

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Abstract
This paper examines the implications of the Non-Identity Problem (NIP) for real-world climate change-related duties, responding to Lukas Tank's Minor Difference Claim. Tank argues that robust climate action (involving mitigation, adaptation, and compensation) is already required to respond to the foreseeable negative effects on individuals whose identities are fixed, so accepting (or "biting the bullet" on) the NIP makes only a minor difference to our climate change-related duties. We challenge this view by arguing that accepting the NIP makes a not-so-minor difference for compensatory climate duties. First, it affects their extent. Second, it generates highly unequal compensatory claims both across individuals born at different times (*intragenerational difference*) and among those exposed to the same climate impacts at different times (*intertemporal difference*). We conclude that one must either accept these implications or develop a strategy to resolve or avoid the NIP.

Keywords: Non-Identity Problem; climate ethics; intergenerational justice; compensation duties

Introduction

The Non-Identity Problem (NIP) has long occupied philosophers working on intergenerational ethics (e.g., Broome 1991; Heyd 2009; Parfit 1984). It is well-known how the problem affects climate ethics. Climate change-inducing activities (the use of trains, cars, and planes, the reliance of our energy systems on fossil fuels, etc.) affect the standard of living and social interactions of presently living people. Thus, it is highly likely that these activities will also affect those who will come into existence and the well-being of those who will live in the future, intuitively harming them. Generally, people have a claim against us not to act in ways that harm them. However, this might not be the case for activities that also determine people's identities, such as climate change-inducing activities. If we do not engage in climate change-inducing activities, other people will come into existence in the future. Thus, people who come into existence due to activities that also cause climate change will not be harmed because they will not be

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worse off than in the absence of those activities. In that case, they would simply not exist. Hence, as long as they have a life that is worth living, they do not have a valid claim not to be harmed, and there is no duty to engage in climate action for the sake of not harming them.

This is the story we have been told. Now, in a recent paper, Lukas Tank argued that we should not overestimate the practical relevance of the NIP for our climate change-related duties, even if we defend a philosophical view that "bites the bullet" on the NIP, such as person-affecting, counterfactual harm-based views (Tank 2022).[1] Tank argues that climate change is largely no longer an intergenerational problem because robust climate action is needed now to respond to the foreseeable negative effects of climate change on currently living people with mitigation, adaptation, and compensation efforts (Robust Climate Action Claim). Particularly, when focusing on mitigation duties, he argues that reaching net-zero emissions is required to protect people who are already alive and whose identity will not depend on current emissions. Thus, accepting the conclusions of the NIP barely affects our climate change-related duties, even if we adopt a person-affecting, counterfactual harm-based view. He acknowledges, though, that the NIP somewhat affects the extent of some adaptation duties and our duties concerning the very far future. Biting the bullet on the NIP thus makes some difference to our climate change-related duties, but this difference is minor (Minor Difference Claim). If Tank is right, then we could bite the bullet on the NIP (as, e.g., Boonin 2014; Heyd 2009) and yet still defend the need for robust climate action.

We believe that Tank's argument constitutes a productive starting point for researching the practical implications of the NIP, to which our paper intends to contribute. Our paper does not object to the main argument Tank brings forward, that is, that the NIP does not affect the duties of reaching net-zero emissions. However, we dispute that biting the bullet on the NIP makes only a minor difference for *all* (real-world) climate change-related duties. Concretely, we argue that biting the bullet on the NIP makes a substantially bigger difference to compensation duties than is assumed by the Minor Difference Claim. We call this the Not-so-minor Difference Claim.

Particularly, we argue that biting the bullet on the NIP makes two not-so-minor differences. First, it makes a not-so-minor difference to the extent of compensatory duties. Second, it creates differences in compensatory claims across individuals when people are born at different points in time (intragenerational difference) and when people born at the same time suffer the same negative effects of climate change but at different points in time (intertemporal differences). In those cases, people would have potentially highly unequal compensatory claims. These results are especially relevant in a context where compensation for loss and damage is gaining currency due to the already occurring negative effects of climate change and the rise in climate litigation (Düvel and García-Portela 2024; Hinteregger 2017; Otto and others 2017; Setzer and Higham 2024).

This paper is structured as follows. Section 1 reconstructs Tank's Minor Difference Claim and discusses its scope and its implications for compensation for the negative impacts of climate change. Section 2 presents three cases that show how biting the bullet on the NIP makes a not-so-minor difference for climate change-related duties. That section grounds the Not-so-minor Difference Claim. Section 3 concludes.

[1]A person-affecting view holds that an act can only be bad if it is bad for someone. Following Tank, we focus on harm-based views and assume a counterfactual notion of harm that holds that someone is harmed if they are worse off than they would have otherwise been. For discussion, see Meyer (2003).

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1 The minor difference claim and compensation for climate change

Tank defends what he calls the Minor Difference Claim. As the term indicates, Tank argues that the NIP makes some difference, albeit not a big difference, to what we should do about climate change. Specifically, Tank argues that the NIP makes only a minor difference for our "practical climate duties" (Tank 2022, p. 88). These duties are described by the robust climate action claim:

> Robust Climate Action Claim
> We have a moral duty to pursue robust climate action. This must include extensive mitigation, adaptation, and compensation efforts. Perhaps most importantly, our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions must quickly be reduced and reach net zero during the next decades.

There are two things to note here. First, the claim is intentionally left vague to capture a broad consensus view of our climate duties. Second, the duties include mitigation (reducing emissions to avoid impacts), adaptation (making people more resilient to impacts), and compensation (addressing impacts that have not been avoided), but the most salient duty here is the duty to mitigate climate change by reducing emissions to net zero within the next couple of decades.

The key to Tank's argument is that, even if we operate within a philosophical approach that is affected by the NIP (such as person-affecting, counterfactual harm-based views), these robust climate action duties, in particular mitigation duties, can be justified. The reason is that robust climate action is needed to protect people whose identity is already fixed and would thus be harmed in a counterfactual sense if we do not engage in such action. Tank reaches that conclusion because climate change already affects people around the world who are alive today and will increasingly do so in the coming decades. Without robust climate action, many people will lead lives far worse than they could have, and also many people will die because of climate change. But these people are already alive, and thus their identities do not depend on our actions – the NIP doesn't apply in their case. As Tank notes, people born today in some countries can expect to live into the 22nd century – a time at which unchecked emissions will lead to grave harm (United Nations 2022, p. 17). Since we do not even need to take into account the harm that may befall people who are not yet born and whose identity would presumably be affected by current actions, adopting a view subject to the NIP and biting the bullet would barely have any practical consequences for our climate change-related duties. Because climate change became a "fixed-identity problem," the NIP plays much less of a role.

Even though the NIP has lost strength, Tank notes that embracing the No Difference Claim would be unjustified. The No Difference Claim states that "the NIP never makes a difference to our climate duties" (Tank 2022, p. 93). The No Difference Claim is unjustified because the NIP still makes a difference for our climate policy-related duties concerning the far future and the extent of adaptation measures. For example, even modest global warming of, say, 1° C, might cause glaciers to melt only over very long timescales and cause harm to people who are not yet born. So those who bite the bullet on the NIP would not be able to justify a duty to limit global warming to below 1° C because such actions would only be morally relevant if we could claim to be able to harm people in the far future. Therefore, whereas biting the bullet on the NIP can still justify the Robust Climate Action Claim to limit global warming to, say, 1.5° C, it cannot

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justify climate change-related duties to limit global warming to 1° C, following the assumptions above. Similarly, if we bite the bullet on the NIP, we might not be able to justify adaptation measures to a certain extent. For instance, in certain circumstances, lower dykes would be enough to protect already-existing people against the negative effects of climate change, but such dykes would not be enough to protect people in the far future from the effects of climate change (for which, by assumption, we would need higher dykes). In such cases, if we bite the bullet on the NIP, our climate change-related duties would only be limited to building the lower dyke (cf. Tank 2022, p. 93).

Tank believes that while these cases are worth investigating, they also show that biting the bullet on the NIP only makes a minor difference to our climate change-related duties and that, even under those circumstances, the Robust Climate Action Claim holds. He concludes that "even if we stay with a view that is clearly subject to the NIP and concede that the NIP can make a difference to what this view tells us to do, if we 'bite the bullet', so to speak, the case of climate change is such that what we should actually do about climate change changes only in relatively minor ways" (Tank 2022, p. 85).

Even though Tank devotes some space to evaluating the real-world implications of a biting the bullet strategy on the NIP for mitigation and adaptation duties, he surprisingly does not address compensatory duties. However, the real-world implications of the NIP for duties of compensation also deserve scrutiny because climate mitigation and adaptation will not be enough to avoid all of the negative effects of climate change. In the short- and medium-term, most climate change impacts will be caused by extreme weather events, such as floods, heatwaves, etc. Many people will be harmed by climate change despite our best efforts. In fact, as the IPCC acknowledges, some are already harmed today because of our past inaction (IPCC 2022, p. 5). For this reason, the possibility of creating a "loss and damage" fund to compensate for those negative effects has been a long-standing demand of those most affected by climate change and widely discussed during climate negotiations, especially in recent years (Düvel and García-Portela 2024; García-Portela 2025).

In principle, as with every other compensatory scheme reserved for a certain purpose, a minimal condition for accessing a compensatory fund for loss and damage from climate change is that the claimant has been negatively affected by the problem the fund intends to address, in this case, climate change. This assumption is reflected in ongoing negotiations and discussions on loss and damage and has become especially salient in light of recent advances in attribution science, which increasingly allow us to link specific harms to climate change (Lloyd and Shepherd 2021; Otto 2023). Implicitly, then, other types of harm, e.g., from natural climate variability, unjust wars, terrorist attacks, or poverty, might belong to other policy or financial instruments (García-Portela 2023). In other words, compensation duties and claims related to climate change are typically grounded in establishing a causal link between climate change and the specific harms for which compensation is sought.

The NIP becomes relevant in this context precisely because it challenges this causal connection between the negative effects people may suffer and climate change. By now, we should already know how this goes. Had it not been for climate change, the allegedly affected person would not have been born and thus, under a counterfactual understanding of harm, would not have been harmed by climate change. Thus, they would not have compensatory claims and, accordingly, would not have access to a loss and damage fund. This is at least typically the conclusion of biting the bullet on the NIP in the context of compensation for climate change-related harm. Hence, if Tank's Minor

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Difference Claim applies to compensation, too, this traditional conclusion would be misguided, or at least, the practical implications of biting the bullet on the NIP would be rather minor.

In the remainder of the discussion, we examine the real-world implications of biting the bullet on the NIP. We present three compensation cases and argue that biting the bullet on the NIP makes important differences to compensatory duties and justice claims in these cases and that those differences are more significant than those acknowledged by the Minor Difference Claim. We call this the Not-so-minor Difference Claim.

Before proceeding, one caveat is in order. Our analysis here is limited to purpose-oriented compensatory schemes that seek to compensate individuals for the negative effects of climate change.[2] Of course, other understandings of compensation are possible. For example, compensation can also be understood as distributive transfers aimed at offsetting harm derived from bad luck, as in some luck egalitarian accounts (Gosseries 2023). These views are not subject to the NIP because the causal histories of the claims are irrelevant to compensation. Here, the grounds for compensation are only related to the unfortunate situation that people find themselves in.

However, two things should be noted regarding such distributive views. First, it is not clear to what extent a financial scheme that compensates people simply for their disadvantage can fall under the label of a compensatory scheme for climate change loss and damage since such a connection seems to be required by the very nature of the scheme. Second, precisely because a distributive justice view would not be affected by the NIP, discussing its implications would be beside the point of Tank's argument. Recall that his focus is to analyze the prospects of "a view that is clearly subject to the NIP" when we "bite the bullet" (Tank 2022, p. 85). Here, we address precisely the prospects of such a view, that is, a compensatory view that is subject to the NIP, and what a biting the bullet strategy would mean for our real-world climate change-related duties. We do so because of its relevance in climate policy negotiations. Our point is thus that either one adopts a view not affected by the NIP (and thus beyond Tank's point), or one follows Tank and assesses the prospects of a view affected by the NIP for our compensatory climate change-related duties. We propose here to take this second route, and we conclude that, if we do so, biting the bullet on the NIP makes a difference, and this difference is, *pace* Tank, not-so-minor.

2 Non-identity and compensation

This section discusses several cases that bring out the significance of biting the bullet on the NIP for compensatory climate change-related duties. Importantly, all cases involve persons who are already born and are thus not classical non-identity cases. The first case and its variations show how time lags between emissions and climate impacts affect the extent of compensatory duties if we bite the bullet on the NIP. The second and third cases show differences in compensatory claims for people who are born at different times (intragenerational differences) or suffer harms at different times (intertemporal differences).

Let us begin with the first case. Imagine that we want to distribute money from a climate loss and damage fund to cover the negative effects suffered by climate change victims. Consider the following example:

[2]We set aside compensation claims between states. For discussion of whether the NIP applies to collectives such as states, see, e.g., Butt (2008) and Heyd (2024).

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Compensation 1: Anna was born in 1950. A flood following from extreme rainfall caused by climate change destroys her house in 2025. Is Anna owed compensation, and if so, how much?[3]

Three features of the case are important for our purposes. First, the flood and the resulting damage to Anna's house are caused by cumulative emissions from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in 1750 until the day of the flood[4] and nothing else. Second, every unit of emissions equally contributes to the damage to Anna's house. That means that a ton of CO_2 emitted in 1750 contributes as much to the damage as a ton of CO_2 emitted in 1990. This is so since the most important type of greenhouse gas, CO_2, stays in the atmosphere for hundreds of years and continues to contribute to global warming well after it has been emitted.[5] Third, we adopt the normative assumption that if someone is harmed due to climate change, they are owed compensation.

The third point is crucial since, if we bite the bullet on the NIP, then Anna cannot be owed compensation for damage caused to her house by emissions occurring before she was born (under a purpose-oriented scheme focused on climate change) since these have affected her identity. As the NIP tells us, because those emissions determined her identity, they cannot harm her. In other words, losses and damage caused by those emissions do not constitute climate change-related harm, as they have not made Anna worse off than she would have otherwise been. Now, emissions after 1950 did not affect Anna's identity, since she was already alive, and thus, she is owed compensation for the harm associated with climate change. Figure 1 visualizes this:

As we can see from Figure 1, Anna was only harmed by part of the emissions. Plausibly, she would be owed compensation in proportion to the fraction of emissions that harmed her, namely, the emissions after her birth. According to Our World in Data, around 10% of total emissions happened before Anna's birth and 90% after (Ritchie et al. 2023). A plausible scheme would thus give her compensation for 90% of the damage to her house. Had the flood happened later, she would receive more since the ratio of non-identity-affecting to identity-affecting emissions would be more favorable for her. If the flood had happened earlier, she would have received less compensation.

As we can see, if we bite the bullet in Compensation 1, Anna would receive almost as much compensation as if we did not bite the bullet. Thus, biting the bullet on the NIP does not make much difference. In fact, this case could be the closest application and illustration of Tank's Minor Difference Claim.

[3]This example is intended as illustrative of a broader class of cases. The emission shares and their distribution over time do not necessarily match real data and are in some cases stipulated, for instance where future emissions are concerned or with backloaded impacts, where few estimates are available. Furthermore, in what follows, we are primarily concerned with rapid-onset climate impacts which are sudden, acute weather events and disasters driven by climate change that unfold abruptly, causing immediate disruption (e.g., floods, storms, landslides, wildfires), rather than slow-onset processes such as sea-level rise, which may raise partly distinct issues for compensation.

[4]That even very recent emissions contribute to impacts applies for those impacts that track changes in atmospheric surface temperature, which responds relatively quickly to emissions. For example, heatwaves may be caused by recent temperature changes and thus by relatively recent emissions. We discuss lagged impacts in later examples.

[5]Other greenhouse gases, like methane, only stay in the atmosphere for some decades. Thus, only recent emissions, but not early emissions, of methane contribute to global warming and climate change impacts. CO_2 contributes 64% of global warming, and methane 19%. For simplicity's sake, we leave these complications to the side.

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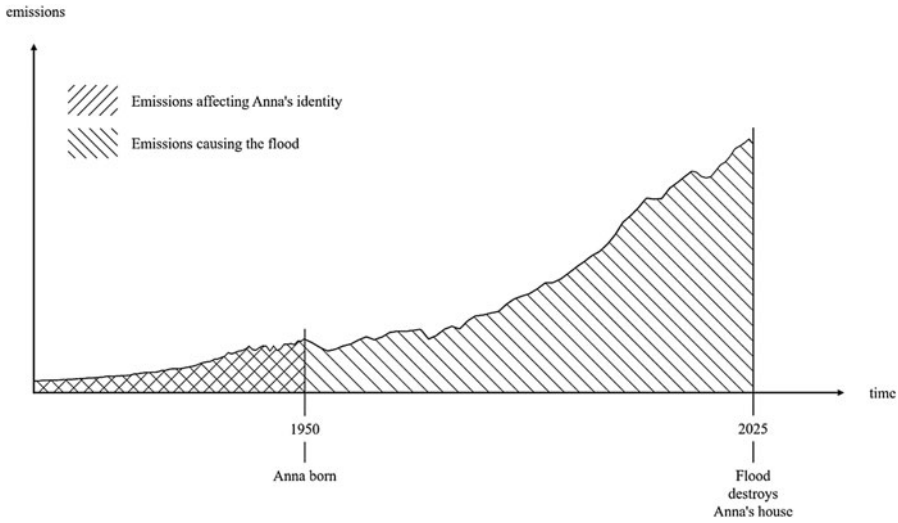


Figure 1. Compensation 1.

However, not all cases are like Compensation 1. Recall that in Compensation 1, the flood that destroyed Anna's house was caused by all emissions right up until the flood occurred. That is realistic for climate impacts that are driven by atmospheric temperatures. Atmospheric temperatures react relatively quickly to emissions, so even recent emissions have an influence (Ricke and Caldeira 2014). However, some parts of the climate system involve considerable time lags between emissions and temperature changes (IPCC 2021, pp. 629–642). For instance, deep ocean temperatures respond only over much longer timescales, reflecting emissions from the more distant past rather than recent ones (IPCC 2021, p. 39). Additionally, climate impacts are not only driven by temperature levels, but also by dynamic processes such as atmospheric circulation, precipitation patterns, and storm dynamics, which may themselves reflect longer-term changes in the climate system (IPCC 2021, pp. 1777–1787). As a result, some climate impacts are likewise temporally lagged.[6] For example, a coastal flood extreme weather event caused by a storm surge may depend crucially on elevated sea levels, which in turn are partly driven by long-term deep ocean warming and ice sheet responses to past emissions. In such cases, the flood occurs suddenly, but its underlying drivers were set in motion by earlier emissions and not recent emissions. This time-lag between emissions and climate impacts makes climate change a backloaded phenomenon; that is, a

[6]The IPCC report typically describes these temporal dynamics in forward-looking terms, explaining how the climate system will react in response to how much greenhouse gases we emit in the future and emphasizing that certain components of the climate system will continue to respond to emissions in the further future. For example, the IPCC report states that "some aspects of the climate system, including the terrestrial biosphere, the deep ocean and the cryosphere, respond much more slowly than surface temperatures to changes in greenhouse gas concentrations [. . .]. For example, global mean sea level will continue to rise for thousands of years, even if future CO_2 emissions are reduced to net zero [. . .]" (IPCC 2021: 39, also cf. 2021: 629). Our use of these dynamics is complementary: we draw on the same underlying mechanisms to explain how present impacts may be primarily driven by earlier, rather than recent, emissions.

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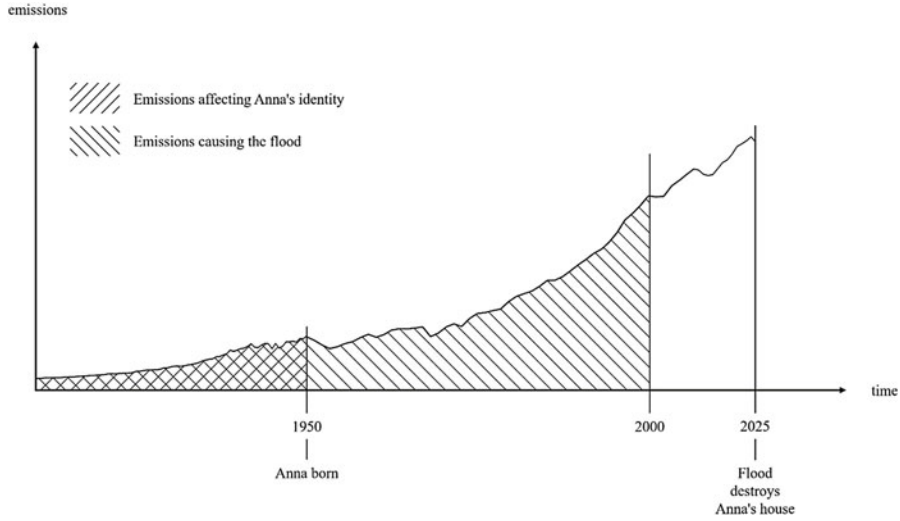


Figure 2. Compensation 1 (backloading).

phenomenon whose concrete instances are often the result of past emissions, not current emissions (Gardiner 2006, p. 403). Stephen Gardiner identifies the backloaded nature of climate change impacts as one of its central morally relevant features.

What are the normative implications if climate impacts are backloaded? Figure 2 illustrates a modification of the Compensation 1 case we discussed earlier. In this new case, the relevant impact is backloaded, meaning that only emissions up to a certain point in the past influence whether the impact occurs.

Figure 2 shows that the flood that destroys Anna's house is caused by emissions that occurred only until 2000. These emissions were already sufficient to set the relevant processes in the climate system in motion that result in the flood in 2025. In other words, the impact in 2025 was already locked in since 2000. Emissions between 2000 and 2025 did not play any role in the occurrence of the flood.

In that case, Anna would receive less compensation if we bite the bullet on the NIP than if we do not since relatively more emissions causing the flood happened before her birth than after. Let us say that 50% happened before her birth and 50% after her birth. Presumably, she is then only owed compensation for 50% of her house. Because of backloading, the NIP might thus make more of a difference than we initially thought. Nevertheless, one might still believe that such an implication is not enough to affirm that the NIP makes a not-so-minor difference and believe that the Minor Difference Claim still captures well the practical implications of the NIP for compensation duties.

However, some impacts may be backloaded even more. Figure 3 illustrates a case in which only emissions before Anna's birth are already sufficient for the flood.

This constitutes a pure non-identity case: Anna might not even be owed any compensation at all because all the emissions causing the flood have also affected her identity. Depending on the exact nature of backloading in each specific case, biting the bullet on the NIP might thus make more of a difference to compensation claims.

These cases show that the backloaded nature of climate change impacts might imply that biting the bullet on the NIP has more important consequences for climate

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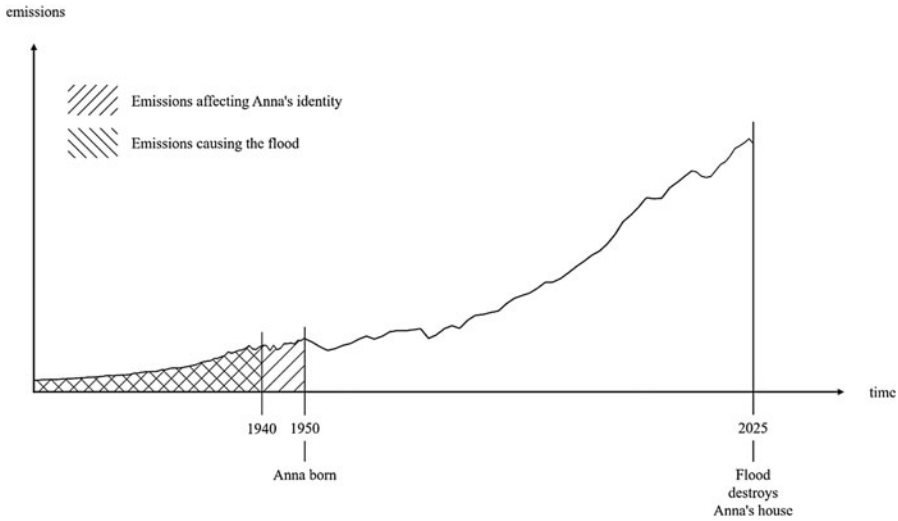


Figure 3. Compensation 1 (full backloading).

change-related duties than not doing so. More specifically, climate impacts may be caused by emissions-generating activities from the further past that also affected the identity of today's victims. In these cases, depending on the severity of backloading, biting the bullet on the NIP might make a not-so-minor difference.

The NIP can also make a not-so-minor difference to compensation claims in other kinds of cases. Consider the following:

> **Compensation 2:** Anna and Bob are neighbors. Anna was born in 1950, Bob was born in 1990. A flood caused by climate change destroyed both their houses today and to the same extent. What compensation are Anna and Bob owed?

Let us assume, for the sake of simplicity, that backloading plays no role here. The amount of compensation owed to Anna and Bob still depends on when emissions occurred. In other words, what they are owed depends on when they were born. Anna was born in 1950. Thus, emissions before 1950 affected her identity, and she is not owed compensation for the part of the harm caused by these emissions. Emissions after 1950 did not affect Anna's identity, and thus, she is owed compensation for this part of the harm. As stated in the last example, 10% of global emissions have been emitted before 1950. This means that for the remaining 90%, Anna can claim compensation. Bob, however, was born in 1990. Around 50% of emissions happened before 1990 and affected Bob's identity (Ritchie et al. 2023). Bob thus can only claim compensation for the 50% that happened during his lifetime and did not affect his identity. Figure 4 visualizes the case.

Compensation 2 shows that if we bite the bullet on the NIP, then the later people are born, the less compensation they are owed. If backloading was not enough to show that biting the bullet on the NIP makes a not-so-minor difference, Compensation 2 makes the case stronger for this conclusion. In a nutshell, if we accept the NIP, people born at different moments in time would be owed different amounts of

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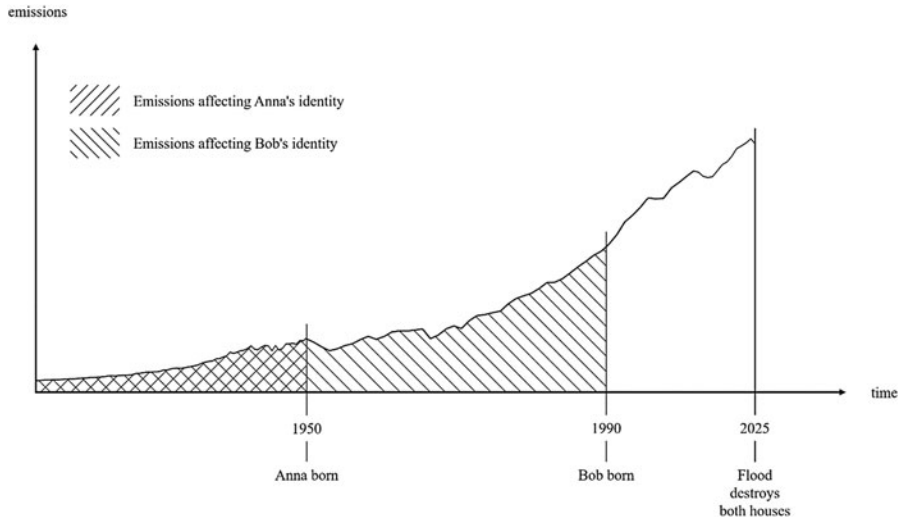


Figure 4. Compensation 2.

compensation for the same impact. This would not be the case if we did not bite the bullet on the NIP, or at least not if we could find a solution that can explain the possibility of counterfactual harm in these scenarios. These intragenerational differences surely constitute a not-so-minor difference.

Finally, we argue that biting the bullet on the NIP generates not only intragenerational differences in compensatory claims but also intertemporal differences. Consider the following:

> **Compensation 3:** Chris and Dora are neighbors. Both were born in 1990. Floods caused by climate change destroyed Chris's house in 2025 and Dora's house in 2035. The floods are of exactly the same strength, the damage to each house is exactly the same, and Chris and Dora suffer the same harm. What compensation are Chris and Dora owed?

Let us continue to assume that backloading does not play a role in this case for the sake of simplicity. A person-affecting approach that bites the bullet on the NIP would again consider only the emissions that are not identity-affecting. Half of the overall emissions that led to the flood in 2025 were emitted before Chris was born in 1990, and half have been emitted after. Thus, Chris can claim compensation for the damage from the 50% of emissions that happened during his lifetime. However, Dora can claim more compensation since in 2035, more emissions causing the flood will have happened during her lifetime. Let us say it is 60% by then. In this case, if we accept the NIP, Dora would be owed more compensation than Chris. Figure 5 visualizes the case.

Again, here, the NIP seems to make a not-so-minor difference. Particularly, accepting the NIP brings about intertemporal differences in compensation claims that would be absent under a person-affecting view that manages to overcome the NIP. Surely, these intertemporal differences constitute a not-so-minor difference in the implications of the NIP for our real-world climate duties.

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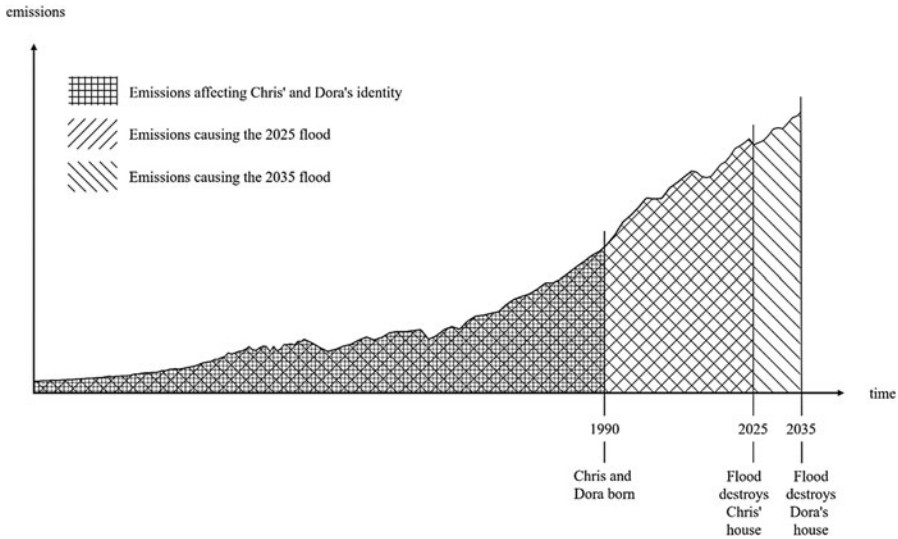


Figure 5. Compensation 3.

Together, all these cases show that the NIP makes a not-so-minor difference to our climate change-related duties, at least in the context of compensation, as we defined it here. As we have shown, if we assume that climate change is significantly backloaded, then the NIP makes not-so-minor differences to our climate change-related duties of compensation. Further, the NIP makes a not-so-minor difference to our climate change-related duties of compensation because it brings about intragenerational differences in compensatory claims that would be absent without the NIP. Finally, the NIP makes a not-so-minor difference because it brings about intertemporal differences in compensatory claims that would be absent without the NIP. We believe that all these differences are individually sufficient to reconsider the Minor Difference Claim. But even if one does not believe that, we find it highly plausible that all of them combined constitute a sufficient reason to reconsider the Minor Difference Claim and embrace the Not-so-minor Difference Claim.[7]

3 Conclusion and outlook

The NIP has long been taken to be a problem for our climate ethics. According to the NIP, emissions-generating activities that are intuitively harmful might not be so because they also determine the identity of those whose well-being seems to be affected. If that is true, we would not have any climate change-related duties under a person-affecting view of morality. Now, Tank has warned us that we are at a point where we should challenge this conclusion. Climate change is no longer a purely intergenerational problem (i.e., some emissions-generating activities that harm people largely do not determine their identity). If that is the case, then we do not necessarily need a solution to the NIP to defend robust climate action duties because the NIP makes, at most, a minor difference to our real-world climate change duties.

[7]We do not claim that the inequalities illustrated here are necessarily problematic, though we suspect they may be; assessing this is beyond our scope. What matters is that these examples show how accepting the NIP affects the distribution of climate-related compensation duties.

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While we agree that this is true for some climate change-related duties (e.g., the NIP makes a small difference for our duties to reach net-zero emissions), we do not think this is the case for compensation duties, as understood in the way the NIP and discourses on climate loss and damage funds presuppose them. In this paper, we have shown three things that, together, back up our Not-so-minor Difference Claim. First, we have shown that accepting the NIP would probably make a difference to the extent of compensation claims because of the backloaded nature of some climate impacts. Second, we have shown that the NIP triggers what we call intragenerational differences (i.e., that if we accept the NIP, the extent of compensatory claims would vary across people who are born at different moments in time). Third, we have shown that the NIP triggers what we call intertemporal differences (i.e., that if we accept the NIP, the extent of compensatory claims would vary between people depending on when they suffer impacts). All these cases together ground our Not-so-minor Difference Claim: the NIP makes a substantially bigger difference to compensation duties than is assumed by the Minor Difference Claim.

Let us finish this paper by laying out the way forward. The most straightforward implication of our paper is that a "biting the bullet" strategy for responding to the NIP would have important practical implications for how compensatory claims ought to be addressed in the context of climate change. According to the results of our paper, that strategy would imply that compensatory schemes need to account for differences in compensatory claims depending on several variables, such as when people are born, at which point in their life they are hit by the effects of climate change, and how backloaded a climate change-related event is. Some might find these implications implausible or counterintuitive, as they might think that, in these cases, people ought to be entitled to the same amount of compensation. In that case, the implications laid out in this paper take us to square one: if one finds these results too implausible to be accepted, one must offer a solution to the NIP that circumvents these problematic implications or other similarly implausible ones. A different alternative could be to adopt a view on compensation for climate change that is not subject to the NIP in the first place, such as the distributive justice view mentioned above. However, in our view, such a strategy might require abandoning a purpose-oriented understanding of compensatory schemes such as the loss and damage fund.

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