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WINS Seminar

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Title of presentation: Human motivation and the problem of climate change

Abstract

Understanding human motivation is essential for designing institutions and policies to deal with the problem of climate change. In particular, living generations are being asked to make sacrifices to mitigate global warming and preserve a viable climate for future humanity. This, essentially is a moral commitment and not one that fits well with the (neo)classical view of self-interested 'economic man'. Many economists have responded with modified, 'other-regarding' utility functions. But it is argued here that these too are inadequate, because they devalue the real meaning of moral commitment. Modern evolutionary research supports a much more nuanced view of human motivation that is vital to understand institutions and for the development of policies to address climate change.

Short bio

Geoffrey M Hodgson is a Research Professor in Hertfordshire Business School, at the University of Hertfordshire in the UK. He is the author of over 100 research articles in academic journals and of several books, including *Conceptualizing Capitalism* (2015 – winner of the Schumpeter Prize), *From Pleasure Machines to Moral Communities* (2013) and *Darwin's Conjecture* (2010 – with Thorbjørn Knudsen). He is Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Institutional Economics* and Secretary of the World Interdisciplinary Network for Institutional Research (WINIR).