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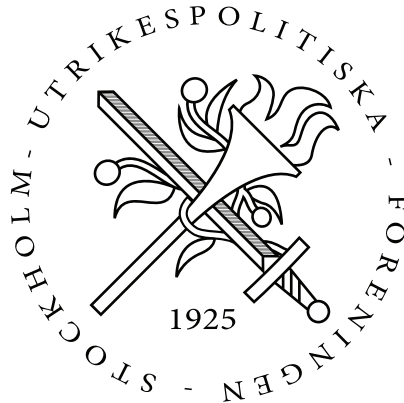
**The Environment**

## A WORD FROM THE EDITORS...

**E**nvironmental degradation presents a truly monumental challenge for humankind, not just in the arena of international politics. The cross-disciplinary nature and global scope of the problem exacerbates the difficulties we are facing in attempts to change our behaviour and means we have to spend more time discussing the nature of the problem and proposing possible solutions. It is to this debate that this edition of the Stockholm Journal of International Affairs contributes.

The texts provided in this edition highlight just a small part of a broad, complex subject area and are done so in an attempt to introduce those unfamiliar with the subject, and to further educate those who already are. Max Lempriere has provided an introductory article outlining the broad nature of the debate for those who need some grounding. Other articles visit familiar themes - such as the Arctic - whilst others touch on lesser known problem areas such as the environmental damage caused by the agricultural industry.

We hope you find the articles we have selected stimulating and thought-provoking. As always, if you have any comments or feedback please contact us at [redaktor@ufstockholm.se](mailto:redaktor@ufstockholm.se), otherwise visit our constantly updated blog at [ufstockholm.se/journal](http://ufstockholm.se/journal)



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# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CLIMATE DEBATE: THE PROBLEM WITH CAPITALISM

Perhaps it is time to relinquish our love of production, consumption and disposal. In this introductory essay, Max Lempriere sets the tone for the rest of the edition, for those unfamiliar with the debate.

*MAX LEMPRIERE*

**I**n coming years we, as a species, will have to face up to some important, inevitable and profoundly difficult realisations regarding the world in which we live. Those of us working within Environmental sciences, whether on the natural or social level, understand the dangers that we face. Patrik Eriksson of Greenpeace talks of “dark times in the world” and Professor Andreas Duit of the Stockholm Resilience Centre – a leading research institute in the field – talks about environmental degradation being “dead serious”. The coming years will see this realisation spread from the insular world of academia outwards to broader public rhetoric, a process being spearheaded by people like Eriksson and Duit. What is required of us as a worldwide community is nothing short of complete cultural, economic and social revolution, an undertaking never before seen at any time in the history of humanity. But what is it exactly that is the problem? What is it that is degrading within our environment and how can we find the fix?

**ON A BROAD** level we can divide the environmentalism camp into two categories,

at least when it comes to the politics of environmental degradation. On the one side are those who would position themselves more towards the right of the political spectrum. These are the individuals who suggest that we can carry on with what we are doing, but we must do so in a more sustainable manner. Mr Eriksson, as an example of this position, says that “we can have growth and environmental protection”. So, we can carry on producing cars, for example, but those cars must run on renewable energy. Implicit in this approach is the idea that capitalism can be used to solve the problem. Market driven technological innovations will allow us to overcome the depletions in energy reserves, or the destruction of the environment.

On the other side are those who would align more with the left of the spectrum. These individuals would say that we cannot have growth and environmental protection because the two are mutually exclusive. In order to protect the environment we have to stop consuming and stop producing.

Whilst the two camps I have presented represent the extremes of an otherwise multi-faceted discussion, they do highlight

an interesting point to consider when thinking about discussions on the environment, which you should bear in mind when you read through the articles presented in this edition. That is, all discussion on environmental protection, environmental degradation and so forth is essentially a discussion on the merits, consequence and capabilities of capitalism as a system of production. Some see capitalism as the cause of the problem but put their faith in capitalism as the bringer of solutions. Others argue that capitalism will fail as our environment (and particularly our natural resources) depletes. The extent to which our understanding of the nature, value, necessity and usefulness of the environment is intertwined with trains of thought cultivated and nurtured by capitalism is often underestimated. In this sense, the environment has no intrinsic value independent of our knowledge base; a tree is not simply a tree, but rather a harbinger of - or inhibitor to - capital or potential. A decision thus to save a tree has, as a result of capitalism, become a decision to forego its embedded capital, or to divert its embedded capital towards other ends. The decision to save that tree is not one to be taken lightly therefore, given the ferocity of capitalism. We should always remember that our existence in a capitalist world driven by discourses of profit, loss and growth not only underpins our approaches to environmental protection, but underpins the way in which we understand, relate to or otherwise comprehend the problems posed to us by environmental degradation.

**PRACTITIONERS IN** the field offer different outlooks on what the future will hold in a changed climate and a degraded

environment. More pragmatic observers suggest that, at the least, we will suffer changes in the weather, bringing changes in food production. Less pragmatic observers will go further to suggest that these basic changes in weather patterns will bring about food shortages, mass migration and, ultimately, violence. Whatever your personal view on what the future will hold, one thing unites all voices in the field. That is, the age of cheap consumerism, readily available resources (particularly oil), and brash waste disposal is coming to an end. The natural world will force us to evaluate our lifestyles and to adopt different patterns of existence, whether we like it or not.

Market driven approaches that seek to offer solutions to environmental degradation are seen by many as the ideal-type. However, we should not expect the market to do anything other than derive a profit and

*“These are dark  
times in our  
world”*

we would be wrong to assume that environmental protection is a profit making industry all of the time. Similarly, we must come to the conclusion that sustainable consumption and sustainable production are, largely, oxymoronic. Production itself is unsustainable by its very nature. Demand is increasingly induced through advertising and marketing to the extent that we buy increasing amounts of products that we don't need. Production, however green, still requires inputs of depleting natural resources, still emits carbon dioxide as a by-product and still requires resources intensive modes of distribution in order to bring it to the shelves of our resource intensive market places, albeit at re-

duced levels when compared to ‘conventional’ production channels. In this sense, when confronted with a choice of whether to keep your over-polluting muscle car or trade it in for a hybrid ‘green’ car, the environmentally sound choice is to keep the muscle car, given the immense amounts of energy required to make any car, green or not.

The most ecological consumption choice when considering the environmental impact is not to consume at all.

**HEREIN LIES THE** problem that plagues any attempts to respond to environmental change. Capitalism thrives on a linear cycle starting with extraction of raw materials, moving through production, then distribution, then consumption, then disposal. Given that this cycle is linear and open ended, in order for capitalism to survive the process must be continuous. Demand, when it falters, must be created artificially by convincing consumers to buy products they neither want nor can afford. The fact that this system is linear rather than closed is also the cause of environmental damage. Resources that regulate the delicate ecosystems are being torn out of the ground and deposited in landfill sites via consumers and producers all in the drive for profit. To overcome environmental damage requires us to close off this linear process and to ensure that resources are not dug up in the first instance or, where they are, that they are constantly recycled until the end of the working life, rather than simply being disposed of as they lose their appeal amidst a sea of newer, shinier products on the market.

To do this, though, requires the state to intervene and jeopardise the profit making

function of the market. It requires government to stand up to industry and regulate its ability to derive profit from environmentally damaging practices.

This is not possible for two reasons. The first is that the firms that comprise these industries act together to form powerful, rich and influential lobby groups who have often thwarted any efforts by leading industrial countries to legally restrict, amongst other things, carbon emissions, mineral depletion, ecosystem destruction, deforestation and so forth. The second impossibility is, more chillingly, that without the market and, thus, without environmental degradation governments would lose a major portion of their tax revenues. So, together, a government

has a vested, prolonged interest in encouraging environmentally damaging practices.

*“The most ecological consumption choice is not to consume at all”*

Perhaps this is the reason why change off the ground has been so sparse and that when we have seen agreement, we have often

been disappointed with poor compliance rates and poor implementation. The future, then, is murky and unpredictable. There are a couple of definites, though, that can help our understanding of where we are going as a species. The first is that oil, the main determinant of economic growth in every sector – the life blood of capitalism – will run dry in the not too distant future. Perhaps this will be the salvation of the environmental movement because it is at this stage that we will have no choice but to change our ways.

The second is that extreme, freak weather will become the norm and, with it, we will see changes in the way things are grown, where they are grown and who grows them. One thing we need to do in the future is to

talk. Talk about the environment and what we, as a planet, are doing to it. Demand from politicians that the responsibility to overcome environmental degradation is not limited to the individual level, because we are all in this together. Tell them it is naïve to place the burden of action upon individuals. It would be absurd for a politician to place the burden to keep inflation low on consumers by telling them that they should control their own wages, and work on their own to keep prices low so why do governments insist on telling individuals that they should work to keep carbon emissions low? We need to instead demand that industry change its ways. Most importantly, we need to convince more and more people without access to the necessary information and decision-making channels of immediate danger we are all in. This edition seeks to become one step in this long, arduous discussion •



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# THE MELTING ARCTIC, THE ARCTIC COUNCIL AND THE ALMIGHTY BLACK STUFF

We have reached the stage in the the warming of the planet where the private sector now has a vested interest in further warming as melting sea ice in the Arctic continues to present irresistible business opportunities.

*ANDREAS KIDANE*

**T**hings are heating up in the Arctic... literally and metaphorically. The ice cap continues to melt, and competition among nations for its resources is intensifying. The melting of the Arctic is revealing bounty that was unobtainable until recently, petrified in ice and permafrost. What exactly does the Arctic have that is so sought after? Natural gas reservoirs, untapped mineral deposits, untouched fisheries and potential travel shortcuts. As glaciers thaw and icebergs dissolve, the Arctic is becoming as much a cause for potential conflict as it is a potential treasure chest.

**THE GAMES HAVE** begun. Oil companies are already queuing for the rights to explore Baie de Baffin, a gas-rich stretch of sea on Greenland's western coast that has recently thawed just enough for drilling. Canadian and American diplomats have returned to an old disagreement on navigation rights to a recently liquefied sea route through the Canadian Arctic that would slash travel time for long-distance freightliners. And the row

is not just between Greenland and Canada and the U.S.: Denmark and Russia have both laid strong claims on the North Pole and its fisheries and its unconfirmed natural gas deposits, putting the very ownership of the pole into question.

Our beloved Wikileaks has confirmed the seriousness of the bickering. Cables released this past spring reveal that U.S. officials are worried. A State Department cable from 2009 quotes the Russian ambassador to Denmark as saying: "While in the Arctic there is peace and stability...one cannot exclude that in the future there will be a redistribution of power, up to armed intervention."

What do world powers do when big issues need addressing? They hold a summit in an obscure yet exotic location, of course. Nuuk (a.k.a., Godthåb), the capital of Greenland, is no Yalta or Camp David, but it sure is exotic and it sure is obscure. That's where the eight-member Arctic Council met this past May. Seven foreign ministers attended, including Sergey Lavrov of Russia and U.S.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the most senior American diplomat to ever attend a session of the Council.

**CLINTON BEGAN HER** floor time at Nuuk with the diplomatic niceties that she is so good at observing: climate change is a serious problem, we must preserve the environment for our posterity, international cooperation on the issue can actually bear substantial fruit, the sky will fall if we don't do something now, etc. With the formalities out of the way, Clinton began to talk turkey:

"The challenges in the region are not just environmental. The melting of sea ice, for example, will result in more shipping, fishing and tourism, and the possibility to develop newly accessible oil and gas reserves. We seek to pursue these opportunities in a smart, sustainable way that preserves the Arctic ecosystem and environment. The Arctic Council is the preeminent inter-governmental body – a place where we can solve shared problems and pursue shared opportunities."

But forget what the former First Lady said or did while at Nuuk. Her being there in the first place is the main point. The message from Washington is clear: the Arctic Council can and must be the forum in which conflicts over the region are solved.

With the U.S. voting in the affirmative, the Council passed its first serious resolution – an agreement setting forth the search & rescue responsibilities of member states. Sure, it's not a momentous piece of legislation, but it's actually legally binding, and that's a big first. The treaty – a brainchild of the American and Russian delegations – is more a template for future agreements than it is an accomplishment in and of itself. The Council clearly has plans for the future.

**PERHAPS AS GREAT** an achievement as the aforementioned resolution is the Council's vote to establish a permanent secretariat in Norway at Tromsø. The headquarters, to be completed and operational by the end of 2012, is another great step forward for the organization. The transient Arctic Council will finally have a permanent home. Again, plans for the future.

Let's not be too optimistic about the Council's potential and let's not be fooled by the diplomatic jive of its member states. Back to Wikileaks. Several State Department cables from mid-2006 and early 2008 show the U.S. desire to warm up to the Greenlanders (no pun intended). One cable in particular details the American objectives for Greenland. Authored 17 November 2007 by James P. Cain, the U.S. Ambassador to Denmark, the cable is frank: "a closer relationship with Greenland's leadership" is required, for the territory is of "real security and economic interest." Here's more:

"To help Greenlanders secure the investments needed for such exploitation, I recently introduced Home Rule Premier Hans Enoksen and Minister of Finance and Foreign Affairs Aleqa Hammond to some top New York financiers. The establishment of a permanent diplomatic mission to Greenland is recommended".

Can the Council really counterbalance the ambitions of its most enterprising members and their deep-pocketed friends? This could become a real mess. Curtis Davis, research director for Greenpeace USA, says that the cables show the severity of the situation and the weakness of the Council, considering the moneyed interests involved:

"Tensions are higher than we thought. The Arctic Council is woefully unprepared to regulate the corporate interests that strive

to get in there [the Arctic]. When the corporate interests and the government interests align, the government does the corporate interests' bidding. This is a problem".

But things might not be so clear-cut, and members of the Arctic Council might not be so certain in the aims. Other leaked cables reveal apprehension in U.S. diplomats when it comes to competition for resources, even when the closest of allies is the competitor. A cable dated 31 July 2006 and sent from the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa shows this apprehension: "The [Government of Canada] is taking aggressive steps to secure sovereign rights over seabed resources.... Some sort of firm response is required." It's not often that the State Department can only think of "some sort" of response when dealing with a "real security and economic interest" – especially when great potential for profit is present.

**MY TWO CENTS?** Scrap the whole thing. Stop talking about who is entitled to this and who owns that. It's all a waste of time. Trying to bring the frozen wastelands of the Arctic into the global economy involves the risks of both massive environmental damage and international conflict, while the potential profit – the unconfirmed potential profit – is likely to be small in the grander scheme of things. Two arguments for leaving the Arctic be:

First, the thinking of the energy industry – those who would profit from drilling and mining in the Arctic – is as follows: the burning of fossil fuels has caused and continues to worsen global warming; global warming melts the Arctic ice; melted Arctic ice means more drilling and mining and, eventually, more burning of fossil fuels; and so on in a

convenient and lucrative cycle. This is nuts. The Arctic is melting and, according to the majority of scientific opinion, it is doing so at a rapid rate. We have all heard what will become of the world when ice melts and sea levels rise even the slightest bit.

“

*What do world powers do when big issues need addressing? They hold a summit in an obscure location.*

”

Sure, not everyone is convinced that the climate change we are experiencing is man-made. Scientific consensus has been wrong before, and history tells us that the planet has and does go through climate phases. But what if the scientists are right and the Earth is not going through some adolescent-like phase? The damage could be grievous and entirely irreversible. The smallest probability of such damage should be enough to convince us, and that small probability undisputedly exists.

In the nineteenth century, the European powers vied for influence and territory in Asia and Africa. Result: World War I. In the first half of the twentieth century, world powers elbowed for influence and territory in Europe and elsewhere. Result: World War II. In the second half of the twentieth century, two super-powers jostled for influence and territory around the world. Result: the Cold War and its many proxies. Competition among powerful nations over influence

and territory leads to armed conflict – this we know. We have no reason to believe that competition for the Arctic will be any different.

**WE HAVE SEEN** in the past decade great progress in the search for a cure to our fossil fuel addiction. Electric cars are on the verge of breaking into the mass market, and hybrid cars are aggravating heavy-footed drivers around the world. The wind, the sun and the atom are heating our homes and offices better than ever before. Petroleum could well become an obsolete commodity in our lifetimes. A complete ban on both mining and drilling in the Arctic is the best way forward. For a few barrels of the black stuff, it's just not worth the trouble.

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Corrections

**B**ecause of a problem with the printing of the last issue, a number of copies of the Stockholm Journal of International Affairs contained spelling mistakes. If you were one of the people who received an erroneous copy, then we offer our apologies.

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# THE ARCTIC: A BLANK PAGE

Tommy Löfgren explains the outcome of a UF endorsed seminar on the 'Arctic' held at Stockholm University before the Summer break.

*TOMMY LÖFGREN*

All of a sudden the Arctic has become a region of accelerating interest. One starts to wonder why – what's the rush? – and the answer is that contemporary reports on climate change has not only revealed previously unknown threats but some exciting opportunities as well. We are commonly aware that rising sea levels threatens to drown low leveled cities. However, melting ice has also benefited mobility and unblocked transportation routes in the Arctic region. It is now, for the first time, possible for ships to pass through the Northwest Passage. Even if global warming is damped we can expect marine transportation to become a frequent phenomenon in the area. This increased access combined with new technology has also made it economically feasible to go after the oil that's located beneath the ice.

**WHERE THERE ARE** threats and opportunities, there's also interests. Some of these interests were recently expressed during the international conference "The Arctic and the European Union" hosted at Stockholm University and in Rovaniemi. The topics spanned vastly from biology

and nished concerns about invasive species; to a hi-tech demonstration of a satellite that's able to monitor and measure changes in the area covered by ice and snow; to the utility of ship logbook data in order to approximate the scale as well as direction of transportation in the Arctic (in this case the activity outside of Canada). Most presentations had a non-normative approach, that's argumentation focused on how things are rather than how they should be. A notable exception was Swedish Member of the European parliament Isabella Lövin who raised fears about exploitation of oil and other resources in the Arctic. She said, provocatively, that the countries that are most prone to urge developing countries to save the environment by preventing their forests from being cut down are the same ones that are the keenest to race for the oil. She wanted the development process to be put on hold since we don't know the consequences of, for example, an oil leak under the ice.

**THERE ARE TWO** important issues associated with the availability of the new Arctic ocean. First, more transportation means greater risks and a comprehensive law code

has yet to be developed at phase with the expansion of activities in the region. Anne Choquet of Bretagne-Ouest University gave some insights about this work in progress. General rules about international waters seems to prevail today but a tailor-made framework will be necessary in the future.

The second problem is that there is a lot of confusion concerning territorial claims and lack of governance. There hasn't been any demand for authority in the past because the area was more or less useless from a political point of view. Countries have now started to pay attention (even remote China has acquired an icebreaker for its navy) both from an economical trade point of view and from a power perspective. Russia did put its national flag on the North Pole in 2007 (which is located deep under the water!) and has claimed ownership over a new territory as big as California. Russia has also begun patrolling the Arctic waters. At the moment the Arctic region is a wild west and I notice a parallel to the development in space during

the last century: initially there were no ownership or rules in the case of space exploration either and countries (e.g. Russia and America) competed in getting their presence there first. Eventually the power struggle ebbed away and we saw the appearance of the symbolically beautiful International Space station.

**THE ARCTIC IS** pretty much a blank page right now, countries don't have a strong historical attachment to the area, so unbiased cooperation should be possible and hopefully results in something constructive maybe even commonly operated like the space station. The other scenario is that the region becomes just an extension of existing power resources – altering international power balance in favor of northern countries which can make the most legitimate claim for the area – and conflicts will eventually arise because of the big stakes involved. I hope for the former scenario •



Global Warming Santa

# CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Mohamad Zakaria explains the consequences of climate change on emigration, human health, and employment in a region that is often left unexplored in environmental discussions.

*MOHAMAD ZAKARIA*

Globalization has its positive as well as its negative effects on humans and the environment. However, globalization has had its environmental costs. The release of carbon dioxide due to transportation, energy production and manufacturing has increased in the last few decades at an exponential rate. Over the past 100 years, the global mean temperature has increased by 0.6 °C, and in Europe it has increased by about 1.2 °C. There is increasing scientific evidence that most of this warming can be attributed to the emission of greenhouse gases and aerosols by human activities. Changes in temperatures and rainfall will have negative impacts on agriculture and will also disturb the natural ecosystem. Climate change is identified as ‘non-military’ threats to national and international peace and security and is considered as a possible cause of increased national and international tensions through the increase of socio-political tensions and environmental inequities both within and between states.

It is in each country’s national interest to cooperate in finding policies to for climate change mitigation and adaptation, at least in the long run.

**DISCUSSIONS ON THE** effects of climate change in Western media tend to

underanalyse its impact on Middle Eastern states, yet the truth is that most countries in the Arab world are not preparing for the consequences of climate change on employment and availability of resources. Autocratic rulers have, thus far, proved unwilling to join in the global discussions and in many cases do not seem aware of the risk accompanying climate change. Basic democratic and transparent political practices have often not been allowed, denying citizens the ability to pressure their rulers to cooperate in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. Most Arab autocrats are guilty of not responding to the needs and desires of their citizens and, in the process, have created cultures of corruption and bad management. In most countries across the region (with some exclusion of the oil-rich Gulf states), a skilful graduate usually faces difficulties in getting a well-deserved job if he/she does not have the “proper contacts” with people from within the governments and also without being a member in the governing political parties. Moreover, freedom of expression and the right of free, transparent election are among the basic human rights that most Arab countries do not guarantee to their citizens at all.

**THE HIERARCHICAL**, inherited leadership in most of the Arab countries are change-resistance and lack intelligent long-term thinking in response to climate change and its effects on future employment in the region. They see the world in a way that is 30-40 years out of date and fail to realise that the aspirations of their nationals today are different to those in the 1960's-1970's. Therefore, they are neither inspirational nor transformational leaders but are merely dragging their nations and countries backwards, not forward.

Some consequences of climate change are already appearing in the region, including the depletion of water, agricultural resources, environmental immigration and international displacement. Resource-wars are becoming more and more likely - especially over water resources in an area that has been already in short of water or sound water management. Part of the regions have seen widespread flooding, bringing risks of displacement, crop-failure, a rise in water-borne diseases and an increasing likelihood of conflict. Having all that in mind, the Arab countries in the Middle East should be amongst the first countries in being interested to find sustainable solutions including appropriate mitigations and adaptations policies through international cooperation to combat climate change effects. However, the reality is different.

The Arab countries have different levels of cooperation in the international efforts to cooperate in combating climate change.

**WHILE SOME OF** the Arab countries have been recently more cooperative in in-

ternational efforts, some others have been obstructing the efforts. Some other Arab countries do not put the climate change policies at the top of their agendas but regard it as secondary issues in importance, mainly due to their reliance upon oil exports for financial wellbeing. There is, in many cases, a incentive to increase climate changing behaviour in order to export more oil. Saudi Arabia, a leading member of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), has been involved in the international climate change negotiations.

OAPEC has been taking a negative stand in the negotiation. Its members claim that binding climate change policies and low carbon fuel will negatively affect their economies and thus they demand compensation for that loss if any binding international climate change agreement will be agreed upon and ratified. Environmental groups accuse prominent country within the OAPEC for deliberate obstruction of the climate change process. The Climate Change Performance Index, which ranks 57 industrialised countries and emerging economies according to the quality of their climate policy has consistently ranked Saudi Arabia last.

**AND HEREIN LIES** the problem. If progress in Middle Eastern climate change policy is to be seen in the future, we must find a way to work around the economic impact such policy will have on oil exporting nations. Until we start to fully estimate the impact oil has on the negotiating position of Arab nations, we cannot fully understand the future of international climate negotiations •

*“Resource-wars are becoming more and more likely”*

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The role of the food industry in environmental degradation is often under-estimated. Here we see how pollution occurs and what is being done about it.

ALEXANDRA BRO

**T**he current famine in the Horn of Africa, to a certain extent the result of lack of rain and extreme drought, has been perceived by aid workers as the worst they have ever witnessed. As complex a political situation this may be – with several factors to consider – it does remind us of what a future with climate change may look like.

**THE DEBATE** regarding the actual impact climate change had on this catastrophe – and others – will most likely continue, but disregarding these uncertainties, one cannot deny the terrifying consequences extreme weather conditions have on human lives. As we have seen, climate changes will most likely affect areas least capable of handling it and people least responsible of its causes.

Yet, this is far from new or surprising information. However, what the famine in the Horn of Africa is evidence of is the intrinsic connection between our environment and food security. At a first glance, it seems obvious that our natural surrounding affects what we eat. What is not as self-evident is that what we eat also affects our natural surroundings. Today, livestock occupies around 30 percent of the planet's surface and this number seems to be increasing. Still, far

too often, this aspect is left out or simply ignored from the conventional debate on global warming. Considering the environmental impact this sector has, discussions about food and the production of it should definitely be higher up on the agenda.

Today, the livestock sector produces about the same amount of greenhouse gas emissions as the transport sector, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In developing countries, livestock production is one of the major income contributors and in dry areas, possibly the only channel of livelihood. If this sector changes and expands, these areas are thus highly sensitive. In order to produce enough feed crops and pasture for the growing number of livestock, deforestation becomes a necessary evil. After a long period of overgrazing and compaction, large areas of land become degraded, even leading to desertification; thus useless for future grazing.

**FURTHER, CONSIDERING** the large amount of people worldwide lacking access to fresh drinking water, it seems somewhat ironic that approximately 10 percent of the world's water use is consumed within the livestock sector. Not only does

the sector consume enormous amounts of water, but it also contributes to water pollution due to chemicals and hormones used as well as animal waste and fertilizers used in feed crops. Feeding animals with antibiotics and hormones, traces of these will naturally be found in their waste - making its way into our water and land and, ultimately, into our bodies.

These environmental damages are increasing as the world's population increases and demands on food rise. Perhaps not that surprising, the food demanded today are largely meat and dairy products (more specifically poultry and pigs) putting even more pressure on the livestock sector. In order to meet these demands, the industry has been forced to adapt and alter its way of doing business. The solution has been to increase the number of factory farms in order to raise more animals while keeping the economical costs on the same level as before. Today, animal protein is cheaper than ever. In order to understand in what way and why this is one need to know how this development occurred.

In *Eating Animals*, Jonathan Safran Foer focuses on the tremendous change that the American farming factory underwent during the twentieth century; a revolution well executed by a handful of businessmen, scientists and the government. The idea of family farms – happy cows and pigs, running around freely in a smiling farmer's beautiful back yard – is a picture consumers are exposed to when buying their everyday groceries; on the milk box, on the egg cartoon, on their package of ham. This could not be farther from reality. Today, family farms are almost extinct and have been replaced with an increasing number of factory farms – run

by a decreasing number of companies.

The possibility of factory farms took its start back in the 1920s when it was discovered that adding vitamins A and D in animal feed made it possible to grow animals without the need of giving them adequate exercise and sunlight. No longer was it necessary to keep the animals outdoors at certain times of year, but instead they could be held indoors throughout the entire year. This meant that more animals could be raised at a faster speed than ever before: thus increasing the profit.

The development took its second big step in the 1940s when antibiotics were introduced. As animals are kept indoors, in confinement, the risks of spreading diseases are higher. By including antibiotics in the feed, the spread of diseases is held under control. It also stimulates their growth, practically altering their genes.

**IN FACT**, chickens have grown so tremendously in size that it is impossible for them to live and move they are supposed to. In order to solve this problem, more drugs are given to them. In practice, this altered the entire sector. Confining it to chickens, there are today more than fifty billion chickens that are factory-farmed globally. Before the discovery of vitamins A and D, there were none. In the United States, these numbers represent 99 percent of the total amount of chickens raised. The same thing applies to pigs; factory hog farms are expanding and in general we are moving towards to an industry only consisting of factory farms. Even if these specific numbers are confined to the United States, there is a growing fear that other countries will follow the same path. Rising incomes and changing eating hab-

its in Asian and African countries are putting greater pressure on the meat industry. Worldwide, around 80 percent of animals from the livestock sector are raised in this type of industrial system. In China, more than 50 percent of their water consumption goes to farmed animals, while they are suffering from water shortage.

**IF WE KEEP** doing business as usual, this means that challenges to the world's sustainability will keep increasing. As consumers, we need to push for greater regulations and more environmentally friendly

alternatives to the current procedures used. But more importantly, we have the possibility to make a contribution every time we go to the grocery store. Being able to choose what we want to eat also requires us to make this choice with the above figures in mind.

With the words of Jonathan Safran Foer, “most simply put, someone who regularly eats factory-farmed animal products cannot call himself an environmentalist without divorcing that word from its meaning” •



## FURTHER READING

The texts presented opposite are intended as introductory texts to an otherwise complex field. They address the issue of the environment and environmental degradation in a competent and cross-disciplinary way but are by no means intended to represent the entire debate. However, they do address a number of important issues, some of which have been discussed in this edition. There are, in addition to these texts, numerous dedicated journals that report more recent research. These include, amongst others, *Environmental Politics*, and *Global Environmental Politics*.

Dryzek, John (2005) *Debating The Earth: The Environmental Politics Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Giddens, Anthony (2009) *The Politics of Climate Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Lovelock, James (2006) *The Revenge of Gaia* (London: Basic Books).

Gould, Kenneth Pellow, David Schnaiberg Allan (2008) *The Treadmill of Production: Injustice and Unsustainability in the Global Economy* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers).

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## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

**C**hange. The summer is soon officially over, the color of the leaves is slowly turning, and a new semester is in front of us. In addition to new courses and a fresh start at the university, the autumn also means a new exciting term with the association.

The summer's horrendous deeds at Utøya, reminds us of that even if some things change, other don't. Extremism and violence is still here. We agree with the Norwegian prime minister that such atrociousness can only be fought with more democracy, more diversity and more tolerance among us.

Therefore we would like to, in this column, encourage you all to keep or start your commitment with student organizations. The core of the Stockholm Association of International Affairs is to make people from different academic backgrounds, social class, and culture etc. come together and discuss questions that are important to us. At our seminars we preserve the right of the spoken word, and we invite people to broaden the debate on international affairs. Our members travel to distant places make the world come closer and more understandable.

After the attack at Utøya, experts and

news media quickly linked Norway's changing role in the world and its presence in Muslim countries as being the reason for the attack. But when the threat as is often portrayed didn't come from outside but from within it became clearer than ever that problems don't go away by ignoring them. There are profound cracks in our society and we all have a responsibility to address the questions that can either divide us or unite us. As a student organization, one of our most crucial tasks is to uphold the freedom of speech. Let's use that right, as it isn't a certainty for all, and discuss the large challenges we are facing.

Join us in our important work by taking part in the discussion. Only by continuing to believe in and fight for democracy, tolerance and diversity can we defeat extremism, hatred and violence. Today is a good day to start.

**Evelina Irstad**

*President*

**Charlotta Bobjer**

*Vice President*

# Coming Up At UF..

*21st September 6:30 - 9pm*

**Autumn Meeting** of UF for election of new board members and a chance to find out what we have been doing this year.

*27th September 12 - 1pm*

**Fredrick Reinfeldt** talks to UF about Sweden's place in the world. Don't miss this rare opportunity to pose your questions to our Prime Minister.

*5th October 7-8pm*

**'Get Active Night'**, with a chance to meet the current and new board members and listen to Sara Bondensson talk about her work in Israel and Palestine

*19th October 3- 4.40pm*

**Office Hans Håkansson** will share his mind blowing story of when Swedish armed forces, outnumbered, stood group for 13 hours straight against an Albanian mob during the Balkan War.



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