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Qeios

Peer Review

Review of: "Carbon Inequality: Resolving Contradictory Results From Two Different Approaches"

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1. Independent researcher

The article is written in a transparent style and is easy to read. Tracks from former thorough work are clearly recognisable: the HDI/footprint approach and the inevitable overshoot because of population numbers, and the role of upper middle-income countries in GHG emissions.

In the first part of the article, the authors compare the per capita approach and the per country approach concerning GHG emissions, with an outcome that could be paraphrased as: results of the per capita approach are soft and thick, whereas per country results are hard and thin.

The per capita measurements leading to the champagne coupe model contain different methodological flaws, whereas the more robust country approach provides a different picture and delivers more reliable data. Although between-country economic disparities have decreased in the last decades and within-country ones have become increasingly relevant today, per capita GHG emission data are hard to assess. It is not just consumption; one also has to take public spending as well as investments into account. And how do you define investments?

Per capita data on GHG emissions may have become more and more relevant, but countries have the sovereignty and therefore the responsibility to act and define their policies.

After a critical comparison between two methods with different outcomes, the article touches on ethical issues. It is not completely clear if we face a political pamphlet or a sound economic analysis of the consequences of the reduction of investments. One could argue that any reduction of investments will have a positive outcome if GHG emissions are at stake.

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Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.