

# THE FREE RIDER

REDUCING EMISSIONS IS GOING TO WEAKEN US.

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Fig.3.  
The 'Free rider' excuse

Chemineau From Lamb WF et al. (2020)

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“Reducing emissions is going to weaken us. Others have no real intention of reducing theirs and they will take advantage of that.”

This excuse puts forward a zero-sum-game view of global climate mitigation. If we adopt policies to reduce emissions, others will actively take advantage of us, for example by increasing production and employment in dirty sectors.

- It encourages mistrust towards foreign nations when the evidence of global climate deals is that most countries are committed to reducing emissions – albeit they are not yet doing enough to meet their targets
- It supports a race towards the bottom and ignores the fact that if we all do nothing our climate will heat to such an extent that the world becomes unliveable for humans. In that scenario everyone loses
- Many forms of reducing carbon emissions bring other benefits. For example, switching our energy supply from fossil fuels to renewables should mean prices are no longer linked to external factors like the war in Ukraine or the whims of an oil sheikh. It would create thousands of secure jobs and as it's cheaper to produce it should lower energy bills
- The cost of *not* reducing carbon emissions is much higher than the cost of any changes needed for climate mitigation. The damage through storms, lost productivity, heatwaves, droughts and floods would cost trillions of pounds

