



# Debate Cards

## Ecocentric sustainability

The notion that nature has an intrinsic value whether people are observing it or not is a so-called **ecocentric perspective**. The opposite is an **anthropocentric perspective** which assumes that all values come from peoples' views.

**Position #1:** argue for a sustainable development from an ecocentric perspective ('preserve nature for nature's own sake').

**Position #2:** argue for a sustainable development from an anthropocentric perspective ('preserve nature for the peoples' sake').

## Really tall buildings

In urban planning, one must take many different actors into account and urban development includes many compromises. For example, really tall buildings (skyscrapers) are often debated in many cities. Efficient land use is weighed against increased complexity in infrastructure and that the skyline is changing. Should we build more really tall buildings in the town (or nearest town to) where you are right now?

*Position #1:* argue for more really tall buildings being built.

*Position #2:* argue against more really tall buildings being built.

## Should we tax the cars or the emissions?

Many agree that it is good to introduce taxes to reduce emissions from cars in cities. But how such taxes would be designed or implemented are often highly debated.

**Position #1:** argue that it is most effective to **tax emissions**, for example through a tax on fossil fuels. After all, it is not the cars that are the problem, but the emissions.

**Position #2:** argue that it is actually the **use of cars that should be reduced**, and that it's therefore more effective to introduce for example tolls at strategic locations in the cities.

## Social responsibility of corporations

There may be many reasons for a company to work for reducing their environmental impact and improving working conditions – even if these measures entail costs for the company in the short term. The opinions are however divided over the **responsibility** private companies have to contribute to a sustainable development, if this happens at the expense of profit.

**Position #1:** argue for why companies actually have a special responsibility, even if it means to partly sacrifice their ability to make a profit.

**Position #2:** argue against that private companies would be subject to such a moral responsibility.

## The moral of sustainability?

Some people believe that it is morally wrong to drive the car when you can take the bus, and that one should try to reduce how much one flies. Others argue that the environmental problems from emissions are important, but that it is not a moral issue for the individual, but a system issue.

**Position #1:** argue that it is the individual's responsibility to reduce his or her own environmental impact.

**Position #2:** argue that this is **not** the individual's responsibility, but an issue for those who design the social system.

## Global tax on CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions

Some people argue for a global tax on CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions, which is now becoming increasingly accepted as an instrument to meet the climate challenges. However, it is a huge challenge to construct a tax that would be fair for all stakeholders and countries.

*Position #1:* argue for a global tax on CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions that is **equal for everyone** who emits. Such a proposal may be expected to put pressure on companies in developing countries.

*Position #2:* argue for a global tax CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions that is **higher per tonne of emissions** coming from countries with a high GDP/capita. Such a proposal may be expected to put pressure on companies in rich countries.