

Why Fly? The ethics of long-distance leisure travel

Dr. Dick Timmer | Technische Universität Dortmund

dick.timmer@tu-dortmund.de



Should I refrain from long-distance leisure travel?

- Yes, because it leads to a lot of harmful CO₂ emissions (**'climate argument'**).
- No, because long-distance leisure travel is good for me! (**'wellbeing argument'**).

X is good for you if it ...

LDT is good for you *if* ...

1 satisfies your preferences →

you want to fly.

2 gives you good
experiences →

it makes you happy.

3 gives you access to
important goods →

it gives you pleasure, knowledge,
or something else that is valuable.

Flying *can* be good for a traveller. So what?

- It is not always good for me:
 - Do I really want to fly or am I misled by advertisement?
 - Does flying make me happy or can I get more satisfaction in a different way?
 - Do I gain new knowledge from visiting tourists traps or residing in a luxury resort?
- We must balance wellbeing with other values:
 - Environmental concerns, wellbeing of others, etc.
 - The reasons for LDT *sometimes* but not *always* outweigh the reasons for not flying.

Two guidelines

- **Self-knowledge.** Because I know myself better than any other person, I am in the best position to see if flying is good for me. Therefore, I should have an honest and self-critical mindset.
- **Frequent flyers.** The more often I fly, the more difficult it becomes to justify flying by saying that it is good for me.

Bibliography

- Timmer, Dick, and Willem Van der Deijl. 2023. „Why Fly? Prudential value, climate change, and the ethics of long-distance leisure travel“. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 26:689–707.

