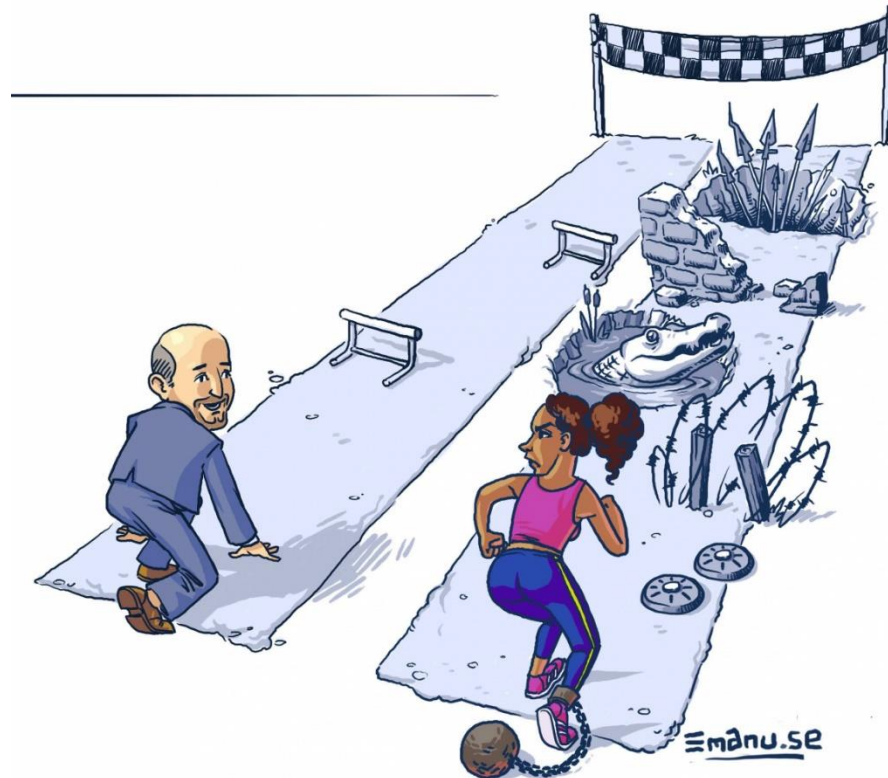


The Task (5' reading)

PBL Pre-discussion “Privilege and the veil of ignorance”



“What’s the matter?
It’s the same distance!”

Image credit: [Emanu](#)

Almost all societies on Earth are heterogeneous to some degree, and most societies include individuals who experience unequal treatment based on specific individual characteristics and their (assumed) belonging to associated groups. Characteristics like gender, race, religion, wealth, social status, sexual orientation, body shape and so on can be important determinants of how someone is treated within a society. A common problem is that the rules, values, and laws of societies are often shaped by those with power, wealth, and influence. These actors often benefit from protecting the status quo that perpetuates inequality and privileges some groups over others, resulting in laws that reserve rights and benefits for the well-positioned. Yet our societies may not even recognize privilege and its sources, and even different academic disciplines may speak of and address privilege in wildly different ways—making interdisciplinary exploration of the topic a complex but rewarding journey!

You have the advantage of writing your own Global Studies constitution and setting down the rules for our (small) society. How can you ensure that our rules don’t disadvantage some? What would help us travel the same distance, as the cartoon above suggests, given the different characteristics we have? How would thinkers of different intellectual traditions advise you in this challenge?