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Issue 01/2008 - Groundwork for Intergenerational Justice (pdf)

Main Articles

1) Page, Edward & "Three Problems of Intergenerational Justice"

Abstract: Intergenerational justice raises profound questions about the appropriate scope, pattern and currency of distribution. In this short article, Prof. Page evaluates three arguments for restricting justice to dealings amongst contemporaries and argues that each can be overcome without abandoning the central tenets of liberal egalitarianism.

2) Partridge, Ernest & "Just Provision for the Future"

Abstract: Can individuals of one generation devise rules of just provision for all successor generations, despite a profound and unresolvable ignorance of life conditions of future people whose lives are not concurrent? Prof. Partridge argues that it is both possible and morally required to devise such rules. He then proposes seven rules of just provision for the future.

3) Wolf, Clark & "Justice and Intergenerational Debt"

Abstract: Many of our obligations to future generations can be understood in terms of the intergenerational benefits and debts we pass on. This article proposes that we can think of environmental debts on the same way as financial debts, and that this will help us to understand our most important obligations of intergenerational justice.

Book Reviews

1) Dobson, Andrew / Eckersley, Robyn (eds.) (2006): Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 262 pages, ISBN: 0-521-54698-2, price: \$31,99. Reviewed by Michelle Wenderlich

2) Nelson, Julie A. (2006): Economics for Humans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0-226-57202-4, ISBN-10: 0-226-57202-1, 164 pages, price: \$16.00. Reviewed by Michelle Wenderlich

Issue 03/2005 - Institutionalisation of Intergenerational Justice (pdf)

Main Articles

1) Birnbacher, Dieter “Responsibility for Future Generations: Scope and Limits”

Abstract: Due to technological progress it is ever more possible to assess economic, ecological and other risks for future generations. Thus, we are obliged to face the responsibility and to care for the realisation of intergenerational justice. In the following, Birnbacher approaches the actual procedures including ethical appropriateness. Concerning daily decisions, we especially have to overcome our daily pragmatism and convenience in order to take moral responsibility for future generations.

2) Dierksmeier, Claus “John Rawls on Rights of Future Generations”

Abstract: According to Dierksmeier, John Rawls’ theory on justice for future generations fails to explain the need to guarantee the rights of future generations. Intergenerational justice cannot exclusively be explained by rational choice theory and sheer human self-interest. In contrast, a moral-base, metaphysical explanation is essential to justify generational justice.

3) Agius, Emmanuel “Intergenerational Justice”

Abstract: The article postulates a well-considered use of science and technology at the service of all humankind - guided by the ethical principles of intergenerational solidarity, co-operation, sharing, justice and equity. In this light the concept of “common heritage’ is introduced and the implementations of the Rawlsian “just savings principle’ on generational justice is criticised. Finally, a relational theory of intergenerational justice is proposed.

4) Wallack, Michael “Justice Between Generations: Limits of Procedural Justice”

Abstract: Michael Wallack investigates the difficulties of liberal theories with respect to the field of justice between generations. He criticises Rawls’ remarks on Intergenerational Justice and offers as a solution the Principle of Minimum Irreversible Harm (MIH). He then evaluates Beckerman’s thesis on the impossibility of a theory of intergenerational justice.

5) Lumer, Christoph “Principles of Generational Justice”

Abstract: From a philosophical point of view, the implementation of generational justice needs to be based on a moral framework. For this purpose, Christoph Lumer develops in his article five principles. The validity of these basic axioms is then tested with a special focus on the gap between rich and poor countries.

6) Häberle, Peter “A Constitutional Law for Future Generations - The "other" Form of the Social Contract: The Generation Contract”

Abstract: To realise and assure generation protection, a reform of the social contract into a “generation contract’ and its constitutional anchorage is needed. The essay examines already existing forms of explicit as well

as more implicit generation protection in numerous constitutions. Moreover, it sets a theoretical framework for analysing and evaluating already existing text passages and is therefore a basis for future constitutional changes.

7) Bourg, Dominique “The French Constitutional Charter for the Environment: An Effective Instrument?”

Abstract: After briefly situating the French Constitutional Environment Charter in the international law context, Bourg introduces the institutional process used to draw up this text and the connections it has with the general theme of future generations. Then, he analyses three articles of this Charter and points out some of the reasons leading to believe its effect will be limited.

8) Tremmel, Jörg “Establishing the Rights of Future Generations in national Constitutions”

Abstract: Today's generation has the capacity to affect the future more than ever before in the history of mankind. This article justifies the need to institutionalise Intergenerational Justice. Focussing on changes with regard to national constitutions, it deals with Beckerman's argument that future generations cannot have rights.

9) Gosseries, Axel / Hungerbühler, Mathias “Rule Change and Intergenerational Justice”

Abstract: The impact of rule changes is relevant in two respects. Firstly, it makes us considering the application of justice principles which often result in a special kind of sacrifice, namely the transition losses. Secondly, it permits tackling the complex problem of generational justice. Having introduced a ‘morality-test’ for rule changes, composed of the concepts ‘legitimacy’ and ‘predictability’, the validity of that test is checked: Three sample rule changes serve as case studies where compensation of transition losses is relevant to fulfil the claim of generational justice.

10) Ederer, Peer / Schuller, Philipp / Willms, Stephan “The Economic Sustainability Indicator”

Abstract: Ederer, Schuller and Willms present the ‘Economic Sustainability Indicator’ developed by the German think tank Deutschland Denken! e.V.. The authors criticize that welfare institutions, i.e. public pension systems, disability insurance, poverty alimentionation and health care, are products of the 19th and 20th century which have not been adapted to today’s reality.

11) Jávör, Benedek “Institutional Protection of Succeeding Generations – Ombudsman for Future Generations in Hungary”

Abstract: Benedek Jávör describes one possible way to institutionalise generational justice, namely by establishing an ombudsperson for future generations. In Hungary, this idea was initiated by the NGO ‘Protect the Future!’ of which Jávör is a founding member.

11) van Opstal, Rocus / Timmerhuis, Jacqueline “The Role of CPB in Dutch Economic Policy Making”

Abstract: The article discusses the role of the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) in economic policy making in the Netherlands. Having outlined the history of the CPB and the formal status it has within the government, its independent position is highlighted, which is rather unique in international comparison. Moreover, the work of CPB is described, focusing on studies that also affect future generations.

12) Shoham, Shlomo / Lamay, Nira “Commission for Future Generations in the Knesset – Lessons Learnt”

Abstract: In their article, Shlomo Shoham and Nira Lamay relate to the realisation and the respective circumstances of the Commission for Future Generations in the Israeli Parliament. It is explained that the Commission for Future

Generations of the Knesset is a worldwide unique establishment, which is, by definition, designed to protect the rights of future generations at the parliamentary and governmental level.

13) Tiihonen, Paula “The Committee for the Future - Future policy”

Abstract: Tiihonen discusses origins, history and main tasks of Finland’s Committee for the Future. She gives account of concrete policy schemes and issues that the Committee has dealt with, presents an excerpt from the background paper of the latest future dialogue and, finally, tries to evaluate the work of the Committee.

Book Reviews

1) Beckerman, Wilfred: A Poverty of Reason: Sustainable Development and Economic Growth. The Independent Institute, Oakland, California: 2003. Reviewed by Julia Scheide

Issue 02/2004 - Justice, Ethics, Ecology (pdf)

Main Articles

1) Beckerman, Wilfred “Intergenerational Justice”

Abstract: Recent interest in environmental problems and the impact that we are making on the environment has stimulated considerable interest in the problem of justice between generations. But it is well known that any attempt to construct a theory of justice between generations encounters special difficulties, such as those set out by Rawls. One might well ask, at the outset, therefore, as does Brian Barry, whether there is really any need for a theory of intergenerational justice and whether, instead, one could not be satisfied with defining our obligations towards future generations on the basis of common humanity. Barry believes that there is such a need. And, like Rawls and other philosophers, he believes that in spite of the difficulties such a theory is possible. The argument of this paper is that it is both unnecessary and impossible.

2) Tremmel, Jörg “Is a Theory of Intergenerational Justice Possible? A Response to Beckerman”

Abstract: This article devises a theory of intergenerational justice, and thereby shows that such a theory is possible. It is not necessary that future individuals have rights for a theory of intergenerational justice to be functional. Traditional, well-established theories of justice which are based on the idea of reciprocity can be applied to the intergenerational context.

3) Gosseries, Axel “Constitutionalizing Future Rights?”

Abstract: The article addresses two challenges to the meaningfulness of ascribing rights to future people: the non-existence and the non-identity arguments. As to the former, he shows that there is an easy answer to it. The non-identity challenge is admittedly a more serious problem. A solution is proposed however, with implications for the way in which future rights should be phrased.

4) Wallstrom, Margot “Environmental Policies in Europe”

Abstract: Environmental policy is one of the EU's success stories. Over the last 30 years, major progress has been made in establishing a comprehensive framework of environmental legislation and in ensuring that it is implemented effectively throughout Europe. Thanks to EU environmental legislation, considerable improvements have been made, for example, in cleaning up the air that we breathe or the quality of water in our rivers. But we still face major problems and in some areas the state of the environment is actually getting worse than better. Sustainable development that ensures a healthy environment for future generations is the overriding objective. We still have a long way to go before we achieve that goal.

5) Luubers, Ruud "The Making of the Earth Charter"

Abstract: We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

Book Reviews

1) Peter Laslett, James S. Fishkin(eds): Justice between Age Groups and Generations, Yale University Press 1992, 243 pages, ISBN 0-300-05073-9. Reviewed by Diederik van Iwaarden

2) Bruce E. Auerbach: Unto the Thousandth Generation Conceptualizing Intergenerational Justice, Peter Lang 1995, 269 pages, ISBN 0-8204-2228-2. Reviewed by Maarten Malczak

3) Andrew Dobson: Green Political Thought 3rd ed., Routledge 2000, 230 pages, ISBN 0-541-22203-6. Reviewed by Diederik van Iwaarden

4) Paul Wallace, The Agequake: Riding the Demographic Rollercoaster Shaking Business, Finance and our World, Nicholas Brealey Publishing London in 2001, 266 pages, ISBN: 1-85788-193-1. Reviewed by Gerfried Zluga

Issue 03/2002 - What is Generational Justice? (pdf)

Main articles

1) Tremmel, Jörg "General Justice: a Leading Concept for the New Century"

Abstract: This article analyses the difference of intergenerational and intragenerational justice. Furthermore, it discusses the meaning of the concepts of Generational Justice and Sustainability and shows the development of that concepts throughout the years. It is also interesting to see, how each country created its own definition of sustainability and how they

have been implemented the concepts.

2) Weiss, Edith Brown "Intergenerational Fairness and Rights of Future Generations"

Abstract: Here, the editor gives a short overview about the effects of intragenerational injustice to the future generations. This leads to the question which possibilities future generations have to claim the duties from the present generation. This leads to the question if there is a possibility to institutionalize rights for future generations.

3) Wolf, Clark: Poverty, Fertility and Opportunity: Factors for Intergenerationally Sustainable Development

Abstract: In this article the conflict between the Brundtlandt definition of sustainability and the reality of the economic needs is discussed. Furthermore the economic situation of the poor especially the women and children in poor countries in relationship with sustainability is the topic of this article.