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Intergenerational policy and the study of intergenerational relationships: a tentative proposal

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Introduction

In this chapter a proposal to conceptualise the idea of 'intergenerational policy' will be submitted for discussion.[1] This is an idea that has recently been referred to in scholarly as well as in political writings, mostly with the reservation that it needs further clarification. It has to be understood that, given their fundamental importance for social and individual development, intergenerational relations are likely to have been institutionalised early in human history. This may have been the case, initially being seen as customs and practices, but then also becoming formulated law as states began to emerge. Thus seen, the phenomenon of intergenerational *policy* is nothing new.[2] It has existed – at least *implicitly* – since time immemorial.

At present, however, intergenerational relations receive special attention in the context of current demographic developments and its connections to the labour markets, the welfare state institutions and the educational system. Of particular interest are the linkages between private intergenerational relations and affiliations and those in the public context of social welfare under conditions of demographic transformations. Also, intergenerational dynamics and their potential for conflict have become key themes in the media. This is the breeding ground for the *explicit* formulation of an intergenerational policy.

On more theoretical grounds, intergenerational policy can be seen as an element of the concern for a contemporary understanding of socio-cultural integration both in theory and in reality. In this way it is an issue at the crossroads between cultural theory and social practice and also, more specifically, between social policy and the theoretical and empirical analysis of intergenerational relationships (as documented in this volume).

A systematic approach can be furthered by addressing three questions and issues, respectively:

1. Do intergenerational relationships bear in themselves qualities that provide a rationale for giving them special political attention under the conditions of contemporary social life? This question will be discussed under the label of

'foundations', introducing the concept of 'generative socialisation' in connection with human development.
2. Which are the normative principles that can serve as criteria of such efforts? And in turn, which normative orientations (or values) may be strengthened by the idea of an explicit intergeneration policy? This issue will be examined under the heading 'normative criteria', referring especially to the idea of participatory justice and the right of personal development.
3. Can already existing social programmes and activities be given additional weight if they are connected to the idea of intergenerational policy, and which new programmes and activities may be proposed? In the section on programmes and activities some answers by ways of concrete examples will be provided.

For all that, it should be considered that – as elsewhere in policy – convictions, interests, power and domination are at play in intergenerational policy. At the same time, these can also be arranged according to membership in a particular generation. It should equally be recalled that policies and politics are arenas for rhetorical debates.[3]

Generally speaking, it should also be remembered that 'generation' and 'gender' are inextricably linked. Nonetheless, there are also some important differences. Thus, although life expectancy for all people has increased, it is still differs between women and men. Accordingly, gender proportions vary among the elderly and among generations. With respect to the formation of intergenerational relations among relatives and in specific professional fields, something like a *gender paradox* can be identified that persists until the present. The day-to-day arrangement of (kinship) relations between the generations was and is regarded – to some extent even today – as primarily a job and a duty for women (see also Chapter Eleven). The formal rules, however, are still informed by men in many domains, as was traditionally the case. Intergenerational policy is well suited for giving additional momentum to gender equity and mainstreaming. On a more general level, both gender and generational policies can be subsumed under the analytical concept of 'identity politics' as an element of socio-cultural integration.[4]

Foundations: 'generative socialisation' and human development

What is meant by 'generations' and 'intergenerational relations'?

First, in everyday life as well as in science and policy, the concept of *generation* is used to distinguish young and old. Second, people speak of generations in family and kinship, where individual affiliations are coupled with social roles such as 'child', 'parent', and 'grandparent'. Third, there are historical and contemporary diagnostic attributions for particular *generations*, such as the '68 Generation, the Baby Boomers, or – in terms of media familiarity – the 'Internet generation'. Fourth, we speak of generational affiliations in terms of membership in

organisations or belonging to a firm. Fifth, most forms of education are linked to intergenerational relations – between parents and children, between teacher and pupil, between master and apprentice and between mentor and protégé.

What do these different notions and usages have in common? Lacking the space for a detailed outline of the history of the term, this chapter[5] will take an unconventional approach by beginning directly by proposing a definition and adding some explanations afterwards. By the same token, it should be noted that it is a *heuristic* definition, in which what can (presumably) be observed is described with established concepts.[6] The proposal is:

> The concept of generation refers to those facets of social identities that are connected to age, belonging to a demographic cohort, the duration of membership in an organisation or the experience of historical events, and concurrent processes of socialisation, implying that these aspects influence the thinking, feeling, wanting and acting of individual and collective actors.[7]

In this definition, a connection is highlighted between generation as well as intergenerational relationships and the constitution of identities. Or, phrased in a slightly different way, it is assumed that generational affiliations are constituting and expressing facets of the identity of individuals and – under certain conditions – also the identity of collectivities. This is a view that is different from the widespread focus on generations as social entities, often used in analogy to social classes.[8] This relevance for the constitution of identities is obvious in the case of intergenerational relations within families and kinship. Formally, by birth, children are given a name and a social place in the succession of generations; moreover, their identities are built and shaped socially and culturally in the processes of socialisation. Since family and kinship are embedded in larger social and cultural ecology, for example communities, these social systems also have an impact on identity formation and consciousness in connection with processes of socio-cultural integration and their contradictions.

Although this emphasis on the connections between generation and identity may seem somehow unusual, a closer reading of the famous essay of Karl Mannheim – considered a major reference in generational theory[9] – uncovers a (implicit) recourse to identity as well. This is the case in the last of Mannheim's three stages towards a definition of *generation*. Here common consciousness is of key importance. An implicit reference to identity can also be assumed in the understanding of generations as 'communities of experience', as can be found in the historical sciences (Jureit, 2006). This argumentation may be expanded: under the social, political and cultural conditions of contemporary 'post-modern' sociality, individuals have multiple generational affiliations, each of which can form socially framed aspects of identity.

The 'consciousness' or 'experience' of belonging to a generation in a segment of social life logically requires the idea of a *difference* from those who belong

to another generation of the same category or the same system of relations. In the case of 'parents' and 'children', that is of the family, this can be observed yet again – just as with teachers and pupils in school. But it is also true, although less accentuated, for seniors and non-seniors in sports clubs and analogous roles in the workplace, as well as for adults and children in society.

From this, it follows that any affiliation to a generation fundamentally implies a boundary from or – more precisely – a distinguishing from one or more other generations with respect to the characteristic facets of identity and their associated behaviours. That is *one* side. The *other* side contains a logical necessity of community and connectedness because generations are integrated in a cross-generational succession. This simultaneity of unity and diversity is a major structural feature of the concept of generation and may be considered an aspect of its specificity. The tension between the two in daily life can take the form of an oscillation between closeness and distance, between autonomy and dependence or between support and control. In this way, existing patterns of behaviours and of relationships can be confirmed and new ones can arise. These processes can be further analysed from the perspective of a theory of intergenerational ambivalence (see also Chapter Three). Because the concept of generation also includes the idea of a break, of discontinuity, it now appears that intergenerational relations can be seen not only as determined and definitive but also as 'open' in principle, and therefore as having the potential to be changed.[10]

In the practice of daily life, the constitution and articulation of identities comprises a mutual teaching and learning in social contexts. It thus finds concrete form in processes of *socialisation* that include not only micro-social but also macro-social areas of life, because socialisation re-concretises socio-cultural structures in dynamic interactions. In view of intergenerational policy, it is important to regard and characterise these processes of socialisation not as unilateral transfers from parents to children, that is, from old to young. There are also possible influences of the children on the parents or – more generally – of the young on the old (see also Chapter Six). In addition, a third matter should be of concern: the mutual embeddedness in a sequence of generations. This can also be paraphrased dramatically as 'ties of destiny'. This applies fundamentally in the arenas of private as well as public life. As a result, it also distinguishes the processes of socialisation in which generational membership and generation-specific ascriptions of identity are at work and have practical implications. To highlight this, it is useful to introduce a conceptual distinction and to speak of *generative socialisation*.[11]

The fact that intergenerational relations always involve a greater or lesser degree of socialisation is thus an insight that is useful as a reference point for justifying and practicing intergenerational policy or, more precisely, a possible concept of intergenerational policy. It can be distinguished from other kinds of conceivable ideas, such as those which would choose the approach of diagnosing inequality between generations.[12] For the approach advocated here, the following proposition is crucial: *Intergenerational policy is almost always linked to generative socialisation; in other words it is associated with processes of learning, of education and personality development.*

This approach is compatible with a socio-economic perspective by the understanding that the shaping of intergenerational relations encompasses the development and accumulation of *Humanvermögen*, which can be translated roughly as 'human capacity'. The term 'capital' is avoided because *Humanvermögen* denotes not merely an asset that can be expressed in monetary value (as is the case with 'capital') but also the skills to master the requirements of daily life, intrinsic, to shaping relationships and networks and to conducting a responsible life. The central idea of intergenerational policy can thus be linked with those discourses which are aiming for a synopsis of the economic, socio-cultural and ecological aspects of individual and collective human capacity and agency.[13]

Still another characterisation views intergenerational policy as aiming to promote *generativity*, if the term is understood in a comprehensive manner. First, the demographic literature refers to generative behaviour, such as the readiness to become parents and the possibilities of realising this goal. Second, following a well-known proposition by Erik Erikson, this term has taken on developmental-psychological relevance (Erikson, 1986). As one ages, according to Erikson, there is an increasingly significant commitment to look after the welfare of future generations, a task that can be explained in anthropological terms. However, it still seems reasonable to take a *third* step in the understanding of generativity. This means seeing generativity as a uniquely human ability that consists in the members of generations *mutually* being able to care about their welfare. It is not just a case of the elderly generation being concerned for the younger but also the reverse. It is incidentally noteworthy that there appears to be no other species in which the younger members of the community care for the older ones. Therefore, such mutual concern and responsibility can also be formulated as an ethical postulate. Viewed from this perspective, the idea of 'generativity' is not only a theme of the *analytical foundation* of intergenerational policy but also of its *ethical and political justification*. In addition, it is related systematically to the concepts of *Humanvermögen* and of 'generative socialisation'. The later may also be seen as a key concept for the contemporary study of the processes of socio-cultural integration.

Normative criteria: justice and participation

Intergenerational policy defined

Based on the foregoing considerations, the following *descriptive definition* of intergenerational policy is proposed:

> Intergenerational policy includes all to institutionalise intergenerational relations between the priorities of the private sphere and a constitutional public sphere, as well as the generative processes of socialisation associated with them. Moreover, it should be clarified to what extent, intentionally or not, measures of other policy realms are important in shaping intergenerational relations.

This definition focuses on the aforementioned understanding of intergenerational relationships. Based on these premises, the question then arises: on what idea can the programmatic of intergenerational policy be oriented as a general postulate? Here most authors refer back to the idea of *justice* including 'fairness' and 'equity'. More recently, theoreticians of a theory of justice refer explicitly to its role for generational orders, most prominently Rawls (1971).[14]

Lacking space again for a detailed discussion, a brief argument only will be presented here, one that since ancient times has been recognised as a central theme of all discourses that relate to the organisation of human societies. The problem in the foreground is how goods and resources should be distributed and how a balance of interests should be achieved between social groups, between communities and between individuals and the state. In that process, two sides of justice can be distinguished: social *regulation* and individual *virtue*. This point is important in light of our reflections on intergenerational policy. Yet there is also an inner connection between individual behaviour and social structures in different walks of life. Accordingly, it can be said: 'Justice [...] denotes the basic rules of living together that are capable of ethical justification with respect to external cooperation and conflict [...]. [Justice] is the main standard for an ethical justification (or criticism) of the rules or forms of order in human interaction' (Vogt, 1999, pp 189 f).

Even today, Aristotle continues to be the most important reference for all theories of justice. According to present day understanding, we may distinguish two dimensions or categories.

The *first* is procedural justice (*iustitia legalis*). Formulated in modern terms, it demands that the rules of social order be applied to all parties fairly and (in that sense) equitably.

The *second* dimension is directed at the content and encompasses two forms of justice, namely:

- Commutative justice (*iustitia commutativa*) implies that the equivalency of goodness is worth striving for in relation to the performance of those involved. In more recent political science and economics literature, this is also referred to as 'performative justice'.
- Distributive justice (*iustitia distributiva*) or 'civil equality'. Here the state distributes justice according to the position, 'value', or merit of the person concerned. For this purpose, the term 'needs-based justice' has gained currency.

The practical problem with both these concepts of justice is that they are inextricably linked with the interests of those who formulate them. In the words of the socio-ethicist Wolfgang Huber: 'The notion of what justice is always depends on the perception of that injustice which should be overcome'. That is because '[i]njustice is a category that, to a great extent, is historically determined'. In a general sense, however, it can be understood 'as a denial of recognition. It is declined or withdrawn where respect for human dignity is denied, where the

right to life and bodily integrity is violated, where freedom of access is obstructed and where equality and social participation are denied by force. That is why, in their individual and social aspects, human rights are important indicators of such injustices' (all quotes: Huber, 1996, p 184).

In this way, the possibility is opened up for an enhanced understanding of intergenerational justice. It can now be linked to reflections about what constitutes processes of generative socialisation associated with generations and intergenerational relations and with their experiences and patterns. The point is to see the experience of and dealing with differences between people as an inescapable condition of individual and social development. This is particularly evident in those anthropologically significant differences that arise in distinctions between people of different generational affiliations. As a result, social conditions should be produced such that these precise differences might be used in individual and collective development. This in turn implies that distributive and commutative justices are conditions necessary for participatory justice. Yet, at the same time, this postulate allows conclusions to be drawn for distributive and commutative justice.

These considerations permit us to make the following *programmatic* definition of intergenerational policy: *Pursuing intergenerational policy implies creating social conditions that make it possible to form, now and in the future, private and public intergenerational relations and the processes of generative socialisation with the objective of benefiting the free development of personality in responsibility for others and for oneself as well as to do what is conducive to social cohesion and societal development.*

We have now viewed the *framing conditions*, that is the social structures and processes that are directly or indirectly relevant for intergenerational relations and the constitution of identities in societies. In the end, how these are formed is the *responsibility* of the individual, yet the individual must be capable of perceiving this responsibility in him or herself and vis-à-vis others.

Making an appeal to human rights considerations is useful in order to pragmatically resolve such ambivalences in the postulate of intergenerational justice – ambivalences that may arise also from the tension between the interests of people living today and in the future. In human rights and its implied reference to *human dignity*, we can see an attempt to describe the positing of overarching norms within the scope of a long-term validity extending into the future. Consequently, it can be assumed that such arrangements of intergenerational relations among generations alive today should also be reasonable for future generations.

Excursus and/or illustration: what is the relationship between intergenerational policy and political decision making?

If policy (and policy-making) is observed from the standpoint of implementing individual and collective interests, the question arises how generations (or their representatives) might assert *themselves* as political forces and actors. Discussions on this matter are not without controversy. There is a strong faction which claims that the older generation has gained importance over the past decades, parallel

with the processes of ageing. It is alleged that, on the whole, social security systems and infrastructural facilities for the elderly benefit senior citizens at the expense of younger generations. Among others, this factor is correlated with the increasingly greater influence of seniors in political decision-making.[15] To put a point on it: it has been hypothesised that the elderly are primarily interested in optimising short-term advantage and that their numerical weight is therefore detrimental to medium- and long-term projects (see also Chapter One). In this connection, the age composition of members of parliaments should also be taken note of.

Accordingly, it has been proposed that the increasing numerical influence of the elderly in elections and referendums should be relativised by (for instance) restricting voting rights according to age. Since such changes would likely not be approved, others have considered raising the (proportional) voting power of the 'non-seniors'. The idea of a 'family franchise' has also been repeatedly proposed.

As problematic as these proposals are from the standpoint of democratic legal principles ('age limits'?) and practical feasibility ('family voting rights'?), it should not be overlooked that generation-specific participation in a society's decision-making is an essential part of a generation's political activity. On the subject of age restrictions, the active exercise of suffrage and political participation in government ministries and commissions, not to speak of regulations concerning retirement, should also be mentioned. Conversely, there have also been attempts to lower the voting age. When discussing the political rights of foreigners, it has been considered whether it would be appropriate to distinguish between immigrant generations. Looking at intergenerational policy in terms of shaping future living conditions, it is also important to note the existence of proposals that political commissions should be formed for dealing explicitly with future developments.[16]

Another important theme is how political parties, in their programmatic agendas, specifically address the various age groups in terms of electoral tactics. In particular, political parties will attempt to find strategies for appealing to the growing population of 'those who are older' (who tend to participate in voting and elections to a greater extent than younger people) and to those in the middle stages of life (who are heavily burdened). The central theme of intergenerational policy, emphasising the mutual dependency of the generations and the developing relationships between them, can provide an impetus for alternative strategies and social policies.

Programmes and activities

Providers, arenas and topics

Given the omnipresence of intergenerational relations, the beginnings of activities, measures and programmes can already be discerned in all policy domains: in family, education, health, labour market and environmental policy as well as (more generally) in the realm of social, cultural and legal policy. Particularly relevant at the present time are regulations making it possible for women – and more recently,

men – to reconcile the demands of their career with those of private childcare and eldercare. There are numerous initiatives to promote such 'intergenerational dialogue'. In the area of migration policy, attention has been paid to those problems which can arise in everyday life between different immigration generations, both at the family and community levels. In light of such programmes, the criticism is sometimes made that intergenerational policies are not effective.

Against that, the objection can be made that the consequences of many policy measures for intergenerational relations are still frequently overlooked, especially when the effects are adverse. One example is the strict regulation of the retirement age, because the relevant laws ignore the fact that the decision to go into retirement is often related to the option of actively helping out younger people, as in the role of grandparent (see also Chapter Nine). Another example are statutes concerning the choice of performing military or alternative (civil) service. In terms of fiscal policy, the long-term intergenerational perspective is too often neglected when compared with short-term needs. In view of this disdain (or even disregard) of intergenerational relations and their significance, intergenerational politics thus has an *advocacy function* as well.

But even more is at stake here. If we focus on participatory justice, on the continuous promotion of an independent and socially competent personality for all stakeholders in all areas of life – children as well as parents, the young as well as the elderly – then it becomes clear that intergenerational politics in practice resembles in many respects a *cross-sectional or transversal policy*. It is concurrently an aspect of institutionalised integration. To promote and raise public awareness of this potential is important for the practice of intergenerational politics.

- Institutional actors in intergenerational policy are both *governmental* and *non-governmental* providers. Intergenerational policy is therefore well suited to introduce new impetus into the debate over the so-called 'limits of the welfare state'. Such momentum is particularly important in the domain of schooling, which nowadays often includes the job of caring and supporting children from disadvantaged backgrounds as in 'all-day schools' (*Ganztagesschulen*). From the perspective of intergenerational participatory justice, the idea of an 'educational treaty' (*Bildungspakt*) seems attractive. What it implies is the co-operation of children, parents, teachers and other professionals, something that can also be encouraged by methods such as *Mitbestimmung* (co-determination) and the sharing of experiences.[17] All this highlights the potential of kinship and private networks and of related initiatives. It further applies to many facets of caregiving, as well as in local socio-cultural and migration policy initiatives. At the same time, this does not entail approaching private, personal motivation or ability merely as a resource for providing financial relief to public budgets. Rather, making use of intergenerational relations on account of its networking with different domains of life provides another (though not the sole) reason to develop new forms of co-operation and social networking.

- Most practical programmes of intergenerational policy require members of three generations to co-operate. In 'intergenerational dialogues' between old and young, for instance, those 'experts' who facilitate these programmes are usually of the middle generation. Those involved thus represent the ways that different life horizons and different cultures are confronted with intergenerational ambivalences. This comprises another aspect of generative socialisation that can help strengthen social cohesion.
- Within domains of state activity, especially administration, the postulate of intergenerational policy underlines in its own way the need for interministerial networks and working groups, given the ubiquity of intergenerational relations. This is something that affects co-operation on a variety of levels, such as the nation-state and municipality. The latter is an important site for projects that in part support and in part complement intergenerational relations, both private and public.
- Demographic and socio-cultural changes, upheavals and tensions that trigger an *explicit* intergenerational policy-making can be observed in all countries. Understandably, they are varied in their forms and degrees of urgency. But it turns out that both similarities and differences drive any number of international co-operative initiatives, by once again mixing together governmental and non-governmental institutions and participants. If this idea succeeds in re-focusing the basis for human rights in conjunction with practical forms of participation, then it has the potential to become a 'grassroots' civil-social movement or a force for international co-operation and understanding. It also has the advantage of focusing efforts on the practical shaping of relationships.[18]

Here we should also add the suggestion to make use of the integrative and innovative potential of the intergenerational perspective for achieving theoretical and practical synergies between the primarily science-oriented postulate of 'sustainability' and models of human development that are found in psychology and sociology. This also underscores the cross-sectional character of intergenerational policy.

Three programmatic statements

This section will conclude with some bold 'statements' that are intended as an attempt to formulate both priorities and potentials.[19] This process will involve switching from a primarily analytical mode into an advocacy one.

Intergenerational policy implies a comprehensive educational policy

Currently, there are three revolutions in education underway throughout the world: that of early childhood, that pertaining to a new view of ageing and – often overlooked – that involving professional and non-vocational training in the middle phases of life. In each of these educational reforms, all life stages

are affected: people of different generations within families, kin, organisations and society, and also people of both sexes. In all cases, the dissemination and acquisition of skills, knowledge and experience are closely linked to the formation of intergenerational relations at the personal level. Everywhere we find the aforementioned accumulation of human capacity (and not merely human 'capital'), that is, the promotion of life and relationship skills and the willingness to take on responsibility. Factually speaking, these are strong arguments against a one-sided orientation in preschool, continuing and geriatric education – an orientation that would stress only the economic benefits or applicability of skills.

Providers of such activities are not only state systems of education but also private educational organisations and spontaneous initiatives, especially with respect to those activities which can be summarised under the label of 'intergenerational dialogue'. If put in the context of intergenerational policy, these revolutions in education reinforce engagement in civil society as well as social participation and social cohesion. At the same time, they serve as an instance critical of a unilateral instrumentalist understanding of education.

Intergenerational policy implies 'temporal policy'

Generations and intergenerational relations relate to the fundamental temporal dimensions of individual and communal co-existence within the horizon of the past and future. In particular, however, these also refer to the shaping of our present daily lives. To develop their personalities and become socially engaged, people require a certain degree of temporal autonomy. Yet they also need reliable structures, especially with regard to schooling and social security. The perspective of intergenerational policy, in argument and in practice, is based on those initiatives and measures that – in everyday life and the life course – enable a better balance between work and family activities in all phases of life. But this perspective additionally emphasises respect for specific, age-related experiences of time. This is especially important for children.[20] Hence, intergenerational policy is a strong argument *for* flexible regulations concerning the retirement age. Yet intergenerational policy is also a stark reminder of the temporal dimensions of state financial policy and thus a strong argument *against* neglect in the maintenance and amelioration of social infrastructure and particularly the areas of education and research.

Intergenerational policy implies human rights policy

The postulate of participatory justice is a strong, foundational justification for intergenerational policy and as such draws attention to transnational orientations and conventions on legal policy. This is expressed in an exemplary manner by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Correspondingly, it postulates the recognition of the right to freely organise intergenerational relations from the standpoint of children as well as parents. It further assumes the recognition and

protection of these relationships in legal proceedings and in social welfare. Seen thus, the Convention illustrates the applicability of universal human rights in the context of intergenerational relations of all persons at all stages of life, as well as how these relations are relevant for the development of an autonomous and socially competent personality. It can be used as a reference for other international agreements, serving to implement them in international civil and social law as well as in national policy.[21]

The implications of current intergeneration relations for intergenerational relations in the future and vice versa

Given the ambiguity of the concept of generation, the wide range of concrete intergenerational relations and the many facets of their relevance for individual and social development, the proposal presented here represents only one among several approaches to the idea of intergenerational policy. Its focus on generative socialisation, participation and human development is partially due to its place in research on intergenerational relations. It attempts to show that the concern for policy implications reciprocally promises new stimuli for the theoretical and empirical study of intergenerational relationships in the wider context of contemporary psychological, social and cultural sciences, and especially in regard to the concern of a contemporary analysis of the contradictory processes of socio-cultural integration.

An alternative proposal might focus on economic issues, such as the problem of public spending and debt-making or the investment in infrastructures. A different line of argumentation can be developed among ecological issues, such as the use of natural resources and the preservation of the environment. Globalisation and international migration recommend themselves as additional points of departure.

All these approaches have in common that they remind us of the interests of future generations. The position outlined in this regard in this chapter can be summarised in two maxims that symmetrically refer both to the future and the present. We may postulate that *the interests of future generations are best guaranteed if current intergenerational relations are organised fairly, that is, if they can be lived by all people in all life stages in a manner that is responsible and supportive of personality.* This extends our vision into the future. If we read this maxim reflexively, we become aware how this perspective is relevant for the present: *If we are considering the interests of future generations, that in turn creates meaning in our lives, reinforcing the acceptance of differences while providing impulses for socio-cultural integration in the general context of activities in government and civil society as well as in the business of everyday life. Such a perspective therefore has implications for the well-being of present-day generations.* In this way, we are reminded of the fundamental – both unchanging *and* historically contingent – challenges of intergenerational policy, and of the importance of the study of intergenerational relations within the horizon of understanding the anthropological realities of human existence.

Notes

[1] I first worked on the idea of 'intergenerational policy' (*Generationenpolitik*) together with Ludwig Liegle as part of a textbook on *Intergenerational relations in family and society* (Lüscher and Liegle, 2003, Chapter Six). Ludwig Liegle also made helpful comments on this text. It is a significantly revised and updated version of a contribution to an edited volume published by the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences, titled *Auf dem Weg zu einer Generationenpolitik* [*On the way to an intergenerational policy*] (SAGW, 2010) as part of the activities of its network on 'intergenerational relations'. The Cluster 'Cultural Foundations of Integration' at the University of Constance provided support for the editorial work and translation of this text. In this context, I would like to thank Stefanie Trautwein for her help as a student assistant and Dr David Brenner for his sensitive and professional translation.

[2] This text was originally written in German and is therefore rooted in the German social culture and its respective terminology. This is to be noted especially in regard to some key terms for which an immediate translation is not possible, among them *Politik* and *Bildung*. The term *Politik* encompasses two meanings, namely 'politics' in the sense of the struggle over divergent interests and general values, and in the sense of the organisation of activities from the perspective of commonly agreed upon goals. *Bildung* means both formal and informal education (that is, socialisation) in view of the comprehensive development of the social self or personality within the context of a given culture.

[3] On the rhetoric of generations, see Lange (1999) and Bräuninger et al (1998). Major themes are the conjuring up of a war between generations or an appeal to intergenerational solidarity.

[4] 'Identity politics' is defined here as actions and programmes that aim to help individuals and social groups – especially minorities – to express their identities in equal, democratically accepted ways. See also Calhoun (1994) and Sampson (1993).

[5] On this, see the attempt in Lüscher and Liegle (2003, chapter 2) as well as the multilingual compendium *Generations, intergenerational relationships, generational policy* (Lüscher et al, 2010). For an illustration from a historiographical point of view, see Jureit (2006).

[6] On this understanding of how terms are defined, see Lüscher and Liegle (2003, chapter 2) and Lüscher (2012).

[7] This definition as well as those that follow can already be found in the same or slightly different formulations in the compendium cited earlier (see note 5). There they are also integrated into a broader conceptual context.

[8] It should be clear that identities are understood here as dynamic, for example, in flux and not as fixed entities. Again, the limits of space do not allow a detailed discussion of the concept of identity, and here it must be limited to a simplified comprehension of identity as the point of reference for self-reflective and responsible action. Basically, this view can also be applied to collective identities. For the analysis of the contradictory temporal aspects of these processes see King (2010).

[9] Mannheim (1928). Here, as is well known, we find a staged differentiation of 'generational location – generation in actuality – generational unit'. *Generational units* are formed within the generation in actuality and are characterised as 'not only experienc[ing] an informal participation of different individuals in mutuality. Rather, they also imply events that are given differently in actuality. Yet they also imply a united reaction, that is, a resonance and figures that are shaped in a related sense, that is, figures of individuals (who are to some extent linked) of a certain generational location' (Mannheim, 1928, p 547). Within the framework of the same generation of actuality, multiple generational units – diametrically opposed and in conflict – can thereby be formed.

[10] For a deeper analysis of the temporal aspects of generations and the resulting 'rivalry of time' see King (2010).

[11] For a detailed discussion of this concept see Liegle and Lüscher (2008) as well as the definition in Lüscher et al (2010, D11ff).

[12] According to Preston (1984), this is a viewpoint which was represented early on and without making reference to the term but to the object. Actual or perceived inequality is also the reference point of an alarming generational rhetoric, where notice should be taken of the danger of massive conflicts, even a 'war of generations'. By contrast, solidarity in the intergenerational relations of families can often be observed (see also Chapter Twelve). In the view of the present author, neither one nor the other is satisfactory, simply because the current diversity and intertwining of intergenerational relations has been not been analysed with sufficient distinction – either theoretically or empirically (see Bräuninger et al, 1998).

[13] A prominent representative of this line of thinking is Sen (1999). It is further noteworthy that three authors – French sociologist and social theorist Pierre Bourdieu, American sociologist James Coleman and American political scientist and philosopher Robert D. Putnam – in whose works the idea of 'social *capital*' plays an important role, also largely agree that 'relationships matter', according to the comprehensive portrayal by John Field (2008, p 1). However, none of these authors takes a closer look at intergenerational relations. For a comprehensive treatment of the concept of human capacity, see also Kaufmann (2009).

[14] For a fuller discussion, see the entry in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2008) and Tremmel (2009).

[15] On this issue, the works of Preston (1984) and Thomson (1989) have had considerable influence.

[16] For example, the political scientist Masserat (2000) points to what he calls the 'sustainability dilemma': 'the political representatives required to fulfil the short-term interests of current generations. The balancing out of interests is inevitable when contemporary conflicts are externalised, either (a) towards the outside (for example, into the South: over-exploitation of natural resources, defence and the export of rubbish); or (b) into the future (for example, the deterioration of the biosphere through over-exploiting environmental resources and habitats and thus impairing the rights of future generations

to exist)'. He therefore puts forward for discussion whether the two-chamber system might be extended by a third chamber whose members would be elected for longer terms and thus could also develop longer-term perspectives. This is the direction also taken by proposals to form 'councils for the future' (*Zukunftsräte*).

[17] On the idea of an 'educational treaty' (*Bildungspakt*), see also the expert report of the Wissenschaftlicher Beirat of the German Ministry for Families (BMFJFS, 2006).

[18] For a deeper discussion of the connections to family see Lüscher (2012).

[19] In this context, see the Schweizerische Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften (2012); see also Wissenschaftlicher Beirat of the German Ministry for Families (in press).

[20] In particular, see the 'Eighth German Family Report [8. Deutscher Familienbericht]' (BMFSFJ, 2012).

[21] A detailed analysis of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children, in light of its relevance for intergenerational policy, is provided by Krappmann and Lüscher (2011).

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