

**Intergenerational Justice and the Rights and Duties of Procreators
Conference
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Abstracts

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***Can An Appeal to Rights Solve the Paradoxes
in Population Ethics?***

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Already in his seminal work on population ethics, Derek Parfit (Parfit 1984) dismissed an appeal to the rights of future people as a solution to the Non-Identity Problem and the impossibility results in population ethics (see e.g., (Arrhenius 2000b, 2000a, 2011)) and most contributors to the debate have concurred (e.g., (Heyd 1992, 2009; Boonin 2014)). Contrariwise, some philosophers (e.g., (Archard 2004; Woodward 1986; Magnusson, n.d.)) have recently suggested that an appeal to future people's rights, and especially children's rights, can help with these problems. I shall suggest that these proposals are sufficiently structural similar to some earlier proposals in the literature on population ethics, such as Fred Feldman's desert-adjusted utilitarianism, to share the same counterintuitive implications as these theories.

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***Responsibilities to Future Generations:
How to think about Procreative Choice***

Simon Caney

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A number of philosophers and environmentalists have argued that in light of our responsibilities to future generations prospective parents have duties to limit their procreative choice. They argue that would-be parents are subject to equal limits on their procreative autonomy. The Equal Limits View comes in different versions. Some propose a duty to have one child per person; others hold that the limit is a child per couple. Some hold that the duties are enforceable, whereas others do not. In my paper I explore what would need to be true for these kinds of claims to be correct. My aim is to identify the necessary conditions for these (distinct) versions of the Equal Limits View to hold. Once we lay out all the conditions that need to be met, I submit, we find that none of the arguments given for the claims stated above hold. Furthermore, we have reason to be sceptical that any such argument could succeed. In addition to criticising the Equal Limits View I put forward an alternative approach to realizing intergenerational justice. This requires agents to live within ecological limits but grants them choice.

When is it reasonable to procreate?

Elizabeth Finneron-Burns

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In this paper I develop a contractualist theory that balances a future person's reason for wanting the opportunity to live a sufficiently good life against the reasons a current person might have to provide it. Applying this theory to the question of procreation, I make three claims: 1) we are never morally required to procreate; 2) we are not morally required to create the best possible child; 3) it is sometimes permissible to procreate even if we know the child will have less than a sufficiently good life.

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The Complaints of Posterity

Niko Kolodny

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It would be wrong for us not to address climate change, because either future people will worse off (i.e., deprived), or because, beyond some too near date, there will be no future people. If we don't, and there are future people, then, it's very natural to think, those people, the Lows, can complain about what we failed to do. "What will we tell our great-grandchildren?" is one way of making our responsibility vivid. Derek Parfit famously argues that this is confused. How can the Lows complain, so long as they are not so badly off that they can regret their existence? If we had addressed climate change, *different* future people, the Highs, would have been better off. The Lows would never have existed. Instead, it seems, it would be wrong because it would be wrong to benefit people less when we could benefit people more. However, I think, this puts us on a road to (something like) the repugnant conclusion: that it would be wrong to bring about future people, the Few, when we could instead bring about many more people, the Many, who are much worse off, but not so much that they should regret their existence. After all, bringing about the many seems to benefit people more. Is there another way? When we cause someone, Futura, to be, Futura can ask: "Why did you have me live this life?" As Seana Shiffrin has suggested, we may owe her a further justification, beyond simply that she is not so deprived as to regret her existence. One such justification is that, had we not caused Futura to be, humanity would have died out, which would have been a great loss, as well as a loss to all those who ever lived. Another such justification is that, had we not caused Futura to be, *someone else*, Possibilia, would have lived a *worse* life than Futura or anyone else now lives. "If it wasn't you, it would have been Possibilia, and she would have had an even worse life. Whatever complaint you have, her complaint would have been yet stronger." We can give the Highs this sort of justification. But we cannot give the Lows that sort of justification. So the Lows do, as it first seems, have a complaint about our failure to address climate change. "What will we tell our grandchildren?" isn't confused. It's the right (albeit rhetorical) question to ask. Moreover, we can give the Few that sort of justification. But we cannot give the Many that sort of justification. So we avoid the repugnant conclusion. Indeed, it is wrong to cause the Many to be, when we could instead cause the Fewer to be.

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Do Parents Act Unjustly Towards Non-Parents When They Have More Children Than They Can Afford?

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This paper defends the Parental Provision View – the view that parents who choose to have children have a pro tanto duty of justice not to visit the costs of that decision on their contemporaries, and in particular, on non-parents – against five key criticisms. First, it argues that critics’ appeal to the socially-shared nature of the costs of a non-parent’s upbringing *at most* generates, not a general obligation on the part of the non-parent to share the costs of others’ children, but rather an obligation to repay society for the costs of this upbringing. Second, while some critics have argued that the Parental Provision view is fundamentally at odds with egalitarian justice, this paper argues that egalitarian justice is in fact a key premise of most Parental Provision Views. Third, it argues that the distinctions between those who put others morally “on the hook” by, say, reducing someone to poverty by burning her home and those who put others morally “on the hook” by having children they cannot afford are not sufficiently weighty to undermine the Parental Provision View. Fourth, the paper argues that, once we properly understand the concept of the cost of lifeplans, it becomes clear that non-parents do have *an egalitarian* complaint against parents who have more children than they can afford. Finally, it argues that the positive externalities caused by previous children cannot in general be used to dismiss non-parents’ objections against being put “on the hook” when parents have children that they cannot afford.



Egalitarianism, Optimum Population Size, and Parental Duties

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Despite some recent exceptions (Temkin, 1996; Tännsjö, 2008; Arrhenius, 2013; Mosquera, 2017; Olsaretti, forthcoming; Arrhenius & Mosquera, forthcoming) egalitarians of almost all sorts have traditionally been insensitive to the question of how variations in population size may affect the egalitarian value of a population. This is a mistake, given that population size is subject to variation due to, among other things, individual choice and the implementation of different policies. One of the consequences of this is that our egalitarian principles may be obsolete and we may need new egalitarian principles that are sensitive to this. Given this, optimum population size something that egalitarians should be concerned with, too? That is, is there an optimum population size that best realises the aims of egalitarianism? This paper argues that, if population size can determine the egalitarian value of a population, procreative duties might in some cases need to incorporate concerns about which population size best realises egalitarian values.



Ancestors and Descendants

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Abstract

The creation and development of minors are controlled by two kinds of production factor: germ-line genetic information (GLGI) and various types of nurturing input (NI) including gestational, nutritional, pastoral, medical and educational ones. These production factors can vary in their value. This paper explores the implications of a particular Luck Egalitarian conception of justice – *Left Libertarianism* – for intergenerational rights and duties, by focusing on the rights and duties pertaining to these production factors as deployed in the activities of procreation and parenting. Broadly speaking, those implications are that all minors’ ability-levels (health + talents) should be of equal value at the threshold of adulthood.

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***Replacement migration, intergenerational justice
and parental duties***
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Europe is currently facing two challenges: population ageing and migration management. Some researchers and policy-makers advocate migration as a way to secure the sustainability of the welfare system. Although increased migratory flows are unlikely to suffice to offset the effects of ageing on the dependency ratio, they could be part of the solution. The aim of this paper is twofold. First, it argues that, provided certain empirical hypotheses are true, the current generation has a duty of intergenerational justice to adopt replacement migration policies. Suppose that, in European countries, intergenerational justice requires the current generation to preserve the capital and institutional conditions necessary to maintain just institutions for its descendants. And suppose these conditions include demographic conditions. The current generation has thus a duty of intergenerational justice to adopt demographic policies that would result in a population size and age structure such that the sustainability of just institutions would be guaranteed. Replacement migration is one of these demographic policies. Second, the paper examines whether, and to what extent, the duty to facilitate replacement migration policies should be discharged by parents. To address the specific issues raised by migratory policies, the paper shall bracket out procreative duties and focus on parents' obligations after children are born. It will discuss in turn the obligations of residents' parents and of would-be migrants' parents, focusing in particular on their educational tasks (broadly understood). Finally, two challenges to the claim that parents have a duty of intergenerational duty to facilitate replacement migration will be addressed. The first is a version of the demandingness objection. The second is the potential conflict between parents' duty to the next generations in ageing countries and their duty to the next generations in "young" countries.