

Professor Dr. Dr. Jörg Tremmel: Research contributions

Tremmel has published in major national and international peer-reviewed journals and with distinguished publishing houses (inter alia *Cambridge University Press, Routledge, Edward Elgar*). In total, Tremmel's publication list encompasses seven monographs, eight edited anthologies, 27 journal articles and 32 chapters in anthologies (thereof 4 encyclopedia entries). Below the most salient ones over the last ten years (2022-2012).

1. Research Contributions Over the Last Ten Years

Examples of refereed contributions

Tremmel, J (2021): The Four-Branched Model of Government: Representing Future Generations. In: Cordonier Segger, M-C / Szabó, M / Harrington, AR (eds): Intergenerational Justice in Sustainable Development Treaty Implementation. Advancing Future Generations Rights through National Institutions. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp 754-780.

This chapter first elaborates on the reasons for the endemic presentism in democracies. It argues the case for offices for future generations (OFGs) that are tasked to represent future citizens of the respective state. Due to diverging political traditions which have materialised in diverse political architectures, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution; rather, it seems apt to conceive of such a representative body differently for each country. Nevertheless, this chapter seeks to find some commonalities for the general design of OFGs. One common trait is that these institutions should have the right to initiate legislation rather than the right to delay or prevent it. In the last section, such OFGs are defended against three counter-arguments: the non-existence problem, the non-identity problem and the ignorance problem.

Tremmel, J (2021): Intergenerationelle Gerechtigkeit und Armut (engl. translation: Intergenerational Justice and Poverty). In: Schweiger, G / Sedmak, C (eds): Handbuch Philosophie und Armut. Stuttgart: J.B.Metzler, pp 312-319 (reprinted in Italian: *Lessico di Etica Pubblica* 2/2019).

The interaction between intergenerational justice and (intragenerational) poverty is a complex topic at the interface of philosophy, politics, economics and law. Empirical questions are relevant: How much have (average) living standards increased over time? How much has inequality increased? Does inequality automatically increase when there is general social progress? If rising general social progress and rising inequality inevitably go hand in hand, should we dispense with general social progress altogether? This last question is answered in the negative. Instead, a morally legitimate way to counter rising inequality is proposed, primarily through alterations to inheritance and gift tax. Testators should be encouraged to transfer inheritances, especially business assets, to charitable foundations.

Tremmel, Jörg (2020): Normative Politische Theorie: Wissenschaftstheoretische Grundlagen und Anwendungen am Beispiel des politischen Mordverbots. Wiesbaden: Springer VS (325 pages; ISBN 978-3-658-02729-2). The habilitation was originally written in German. This book is currently updated and translated into English and will appear in 2023 with the title "Procedural Ethics. How do we know what is right or wrong?"

"Politicians should not use violence when competing for political office." This is a normative-evaluative hypothesis – in this case a correct one. But what makes it a correct one? This habilitation first addresses, in general terms, the ontological status and the cognoscibility of the 'rightness' of normative hypotheses. More specifically, it discusses the distinct methodologies of both normative and empirical research. Focusing on normative hypotheses, the veil of ignorance, the Categorical

Imperative, the independent observer procedure and the discourse ethics procedure (with its idea of the ‘forceless force of the better argument’) are explored as test criteria for normative hypotheses.¹

Tremmel, J (2019): Whose constitution? Constitutional self-determination and generational change. In: Ratio Juris. Vol. 32 (1), pp 49-75.

Constitutions enshrine the fundamental values of a people and they build a framework for a state’s public policy. With regard to generational change, their endurance gives rise to two interlinked concerns: the sovereignty concern and the forgone welfare concern. If constitutions are intergenerational contracts, how (in)flexible should they be? This article discusses perpetual constitutions, sunset constitutions, constitutional reform commissions and constitutional conventions, both historically and analytically. It arrives at the conclusion that very rigid constitutions are incompatible with the principle of intergenerational justice. Recurring constitutional reform commissions in fixed time intervals would give each generation of citizens a say without leaning too much to the side of flexibility.

Tremmel, J (2018): Zukunftsräte zur Vertretung der Interessen kommender Generationen. Ein praxisorientierter Vorschlag für Deutschland (engl. translation: Future councils for representing the interests of future generations. A feasible proposal for Germany). In: Mannewitz, T (ed): Die Demokratie und ihre Defekte (engl. translation: Democracy and its deficiencies). Heidelberg: Springer VS, pp 107-142.

This article develops a tailor-made institution for the representation of future generations for the German political system. For this new institution, called the Future Council, the numerous advisory councils that already advise German policymakers today are to be redesigned and partially merged. Instead of having the right to block legislation or even repeal legislation that has already been passed, the new Council for the Future is to be able to introduce draft legislation into parliament. Until now, only parliamentary groups or a certain percentage of elected representatives have been allowed to do this under parliamentary rules of procedure. This practical proposal incorporates path dependencies, prevents the creation of an additional veto player and renders the accusation of an ‘ecodictatorship’ groundless.

Tremmel, J (2018): The Anthropocene concept as a wake-up call for reforming democracy. In: Hickmann, T / Partzsch, L / Pattberg, P / Weiland, S (eds): The Anthropocene Debate and Political Science. Routledge Environmental Research Series. London: Routledge, pp 219-237.

According to the current geological-stratigraphical history of Earth, we still live in the Holocene epoch. The upcoming declaration of the Anthropocene must have immense repercussions on the self-concept of man. The impact on leading theories and frames in politics still needs to be measured out. Among the questions my paper seeks to answer are: What is an adequate self-concept of mankind in the Anthropocene? (In this context a comparison of the tales of Gulliver in Lilliput and Heracles is evocative.) What implications will (and should) the declaration of the Anthropocene have for the discourse about sustainability/sustainable development?

Tremmel, J (2019): Gerechtigkeit zwischen den Generationen (engl. translation: Justice between generations). In: Schweiger, G / Drerup, J (eds): Handbuch Philosophie der Kindheit (engl. translation: Handbook of childhood philosophy). Stuttgart: J.B.Metzler, pp 371-379.

The etymological roots of the term ‘generation’ refer to the kinship relations within the family. While familial generational conflicts are already addressed in the Bible, most of the recent literature on intergenerational justice has appeared on the relationships between chronologically understood ‘generations’. The handbook article lays out a theory of duties between family members.

¹ *Some testimonials:* <https://uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/wirtschafts-und-sozialwissenschaftliche-fakultaet/faecher/fachbereich-sozialwissenschaften/politikwissenschaft/institut/lehrende/weitere-professuren-und-privatdozenten/privatdozentinnen-und-dozenten/apl-prof-dr-dr-joerg-tremmel/zur-person-von-apl-professor-dr-dr-joerg-tremmel/wissenschaftliche-monographien/>

Tremmel, J (2018): Fact-insensitive thought experiments in climate ethics – Exemplified by Parfit’s non-identity problem. In: Jafry, T (ed): The Routledge Handbook of Climate Justice. London: Routledge, pp 42-56.

More than some other fields of ethics, climate ethics is related to pressing real-world problems. Climate ethicists have a responsibility to be precise about the status of the problems they discuss. The non-identity problem (NIP) plays a prominent role in the climate ethics literature. In a widely discussed statement, Derek Parfit claimed that a risky climate policy is not harmful for (distant) future people. But this ignores the “insignificant-causal-factors rejoinder”. The Parfitian assertion is still treated as serious problem to theories of climate justice in key philosophical texts, and this may mislead climate policy decision-makers. Philosophers should acknowledge that the NIP, when applied to climate change, is ‘just’ a thought experiment and should communicate it in this way to people outside the philosophical community.

Vanhuyse, P / Tremmel, J (2018): Measuring intergenerational justice for public policy. In: Poama, A / Lever, A (eds): Routledge Handbook of Ethics and Public Policy. London: Routledge, pp 472-486.

Vanhuyse and Tremmel review dominant approaches to evaluate the intergenerational dimension of public policies. The article distinguishes between justice over complete lives (analysis of birth cohorts), and at a given moment in time (analysis of age groups). The result is that it is not *prima facie* problematic if at one given point in time different age groups receive an unequal treatment from the state. But if such inequalities are perpetuated across different birth cohorts over the entire life cycle, then this does point to intergenerational inequities.

Tremmel, Jörg C. / Robinson, Katherine (2014): Climate Ethics: The Climate Change Conundrum. London: Palgrave Macmillan I.B. Tauris (241 pages).

Back cover: “Climate Change is perhaps the most important issue of our time and yet despite the urgency of the problem, the measures necessary to mitigate it have not been implemented. Jörg Tremmel and Catherine Robinson identify the reasons behind this crucial paradox and propose a way forward. In the first part of the book the authors provide an accessible account of the basics of climate change. In clear terms they explain the science behind climate change and demystify the complicated terminology that often hinders the understanding of the subject. In the second part of the book the authors introduce the concept of climate ethics, and explore its importance at a personal, national and international level.”

Tremmel, Jörg (2013): Climate Change and Political Philosophy: Who Owes What to Whom? In: Environmental Values. Vol. 22 (6), pp. 725-749.

Abstract: “Next to the expanding bookshelves in the natural sciences and in economics, there is a growing library on the ethics of climate policy. This comes as no surprise when we consider that anthropocentric climate change is one of the greatest problems for the future of mankind. Its impacts are potentially catastrophic and this implies that existing political institutions need to be changed. Climate change poses a serious problem for established ethical theories. In this article, I examine the problems facing the evolving field of climate ethics and the ensuing debates in the academic and political arenas. I then apply four concepts of justice – pure distributive justice, international justice, historical justice and intergenerational justice – often employed in debates on climate change and demonstrate the emissions’ distribution outcome according to the respective arguments. I discuss the merits and drawbacks of each perspective and briefly outline the normative justifications brought forward by the participants of international climate negotiations. I conclude with a synthesis of the arguments into what I consider to be the most reasonable, fair approach to the politics of climate change on a global scale.”

Tremmel, Jörg (2013): The Convention of Representatives of all Generations under the ‘Veil of Ignorance’. In: Constellations. An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory (Wiley-Blackwell). Vol. 20 (3), pp. 483-502.

Abstract: „If justice is conceived as impartiality, ‘veil of ignorance’ theories are helpful tools for deducing principles of justice. In an intragenerational context, principles of justice are chosen by rational and self-interested individuals who have no knowledge of their role in society, their talents, their genetic endowment, their personal identities, or their natural or social advantages as long as they are under the ‘veil of ignorance.’ In the analogous intergenerational situation, representatives from all generations come together under the ‘veil of ignorance.’ They do not know which generation they will belong to once the ‘veil’ has been lifted. Nevertheless, they know the course of history—not in detail, but in general—up to the point of his existence. The main result of this thought experiment is that of the possible extent of obligations to future generations (i.e. the pattern of justice with the options: the same; the same or better; better), the application of the ‘veil of ignorance’ yields “better” as an answer. We owe future generations more than is usually assumed.”

Examples of non-refereed contributions

As founder and director of the Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations (FRFG), Tremmel is responsible for the think-tank’s series of policy papers (most of them in German, see here: <https://t1p.de/kxrj>). Tremmel co-authored a number of them, including in the last years:

- Pandemics and Intergenerational Justice. Vaccination and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (2nd edition 2021)
- Generationengerechte Klimapolitik (2nd edition 2021) (engl. translation: Intergenerationally just climate policy)
- Seven Building Blocks for an Intergenerationally Just Democracy (2nd edition 2020)
- Generationengerechte Gestaltung von Künstlicher Intelligenz (1st edition 2020) (engl. translation: Designing AI intergenerationally equitable)
- Rente und Pensionen (2nd edition 2020) (engl. translation: Pensions and Retirement)
- Newcomer quotas in political parties and parliaments (2nd edition 2019)

2. Most significant presentations/speeches

1. Upcoming: Invited expert at a public hearing of the German Ethics Council on the topic of climate ethics/climate justice in the Bundestag, 23 Feb 2023
2. Keynote at the major philosophical event in Italy (www.festivalfilosofia.it), *Constitutions as non-tyrannical contracts between generations*; in Modena, 17 Sept 22
3. Keynote: *Intergenerational Justice in times of existential risks*, Curious2022 ([/www.curiousfutureinsight.org/](http://www.curiousfutureinsight.org/)) in Darmstadt, 13 July 22
4. Keynote: *Democracy Updated*; Workshop “Will the Future Blame Us? Bringing Future Generations into Today’s Politics”, organized by Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (19 April 2018 London)
5. Two presentations at the 27th Convention of the German Political Science Association „Grenzen der Demokratie“ (25-28 Sep 2018 in Frankfurt am Main): *Normativ abstinente Politikwissenschaft?* and *Der Impact von existierenden Expertengremien auf zukunftsorientierte Gesetzgebung: das Beispiel WBGU* Speech: *Drei Implikationen des Anthropozän-Denkrahmens für die Technik- und Umweltethik.*
6. Keynote: *The Wisdom of many? Individual-led and Group-led Institutions for Future Generations*; Workshop “Democracy and Future Generations” by the Institute for Futures Studies (7-8 Dec 2017 Stockholm)

7. Speech: *Methodologische Fragen klimaethischer Forschung*. Workshop „Klima- und Energiegerechtigkeit“ by Kolleg-Forschergruppe „Grundfragen der Normenbegründung“ of the Uni Münster (6-7 July 2017 Münster)
8. Keynote: *The difficulties of ‘rights talk’ in the face of the perfect moral storm*. Symposium “What’s So Disturbing About Climate Change? Assessing the Normative Dimensions and Risks” (26 June 2016 Essen)
9. Keynote: *Representation of Future Generations*; ENRI-Programm “Rights to a Green Future” der European Science Foundation (28 Nov 2014 Soesterberg, NL)
10. Speech: *Parliaments and future generations*; Workshop “How can institutional mechanisms safeguard for tomorrow, today?” by the Oxford Martin School (21 Oct 2014 Oxford, UK)
11. Speech: *The Extension of Democracy*”; Conference “Model Institutions for a Sustainable Future: a comparative constitutional law perspective” (organised by Marcel Szabó, Hungarian Ombudsman for Future Generations; 24.-26.4 2014 Budapest)

Tremmel provided hundreds of newspaper & blog articles, and dozens of TV and media interviews in the last six years. Samples provided upon request.

Most Significant Career Research Contribution (over the lifetime)

1) *Founding of FRFG* (www.generationengerechtigkeit.info; www.intergenerationaljustice.org)

Tremmel’s most significant contribution in knowledge production and dissemination was the founding of FRFG in 1997. After more than twenty years of development, FRFG entertains a great number of knowledge dissemination and mobilization activities, inter alia:

- academic awards in English and German
- policy papers, interviews, talk-show participations, open letters, social media posts...
- a bimonthly newsletter (only in German)
- meetings with politicians in Germany (including two chancellors, three presidents and many ministers)

As a result of profound research and effective dissemination of the research results, FRFG was dubbed the “best-known extra-parliamentary think tank on intergenerational justice” by the German journal *Wirtschaftswoche*.

2) *Maintenance of the journal Intergenerational Justice Review* (igjr.org)

Tremmel is editor-in-chief of the journal *Intergenerational Justice Review*. This open access journal (ISSN: 2190-6335) is published bi-annually in cooperation with the Intergenerational Foundation, London. The journal publishes articles representing the state-of-the-art in the philosophy, politics and law of intergenerational relations. The editorial board comprises over 50 international experts from ten countries, and representing eight disciplines. IGJR is indexed, inter alia, in the *Directory of Open Access Journals* and in *SSOAR*. At its inception, Tremmel secured funding from the German Research Foundation (DFG).

3) *Opus magnum* monograph of 2009/2012:

Tremmel, J (2012/2009): A Theory of Intergenerational Justice. London: Earthscan Publishing (280 pages). (English 2009, German 2012)

The appeal to ‘our obligations to future generations’ is one of the most forceful, emotional and effective arguments available to politicians and citizens and is the cornerstone of all modern policies aimed at sustainable development. Yet, the exact nature and extent of these obligations are unclear – who owes what to whom, exactly, and why? This highly accessible book provides an

extensive and comprehensive overview of current research and theory about why and how we should protect future generations.²

4) *Most cited anthology (2006)*

Tremmel, J (ed) (2006): Handbook of Intergenerational Justice. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar (350 pages)³

This *Handbook* provides a detailed overview of various issues related to intergenerational justice. Comprising articles written by a distinguished group of scholars from the international community, the *Handbook* is divided into two main thematic sections – foundations and definitions of intergenerational justice and institutionalization of intergenerational justice. The first part clarifies the basic terms and traces back the origins of the idea of intergenerational justice. It also focuses on the problem of intergenerational buck-passing in the ecological context; for example in relation to nuclear waste and the greenhouse effect. At the same time, it also sheds light on the relationship between intergenerational justice and economics, addressing issues such as public debt and financial sustainability. The innovative second part of the volume highlights how posterity can be institutionally protected, such as inserting relevant clauses into national constitutions. Reading this volume is the best way to gain an overall knowledge of intergenerational justice – an extremely salient and topical issue of our time.

² *Some testimonials:* <https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/fakultaeten/wirtschafts-und-sozialwissenschaftliche-fakultaet/faecher/fachbereich-sozialwissenschaften/politikwissenschaft/institut/lehrende/weitere-professuren-und-privatdozenten/privatdozentinnen-und-dozenten/extraordinary-prof-dr-dr-joerg-tremmel/professor-and-team/monographs/>

³ According to several databases, it is one of the most cited books worldwide in the field of future ethics/intergenerational ethics.