



Doing the right thing for future generations by developing resources or opportunities? A philosophical analysis

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The most obvious reason for asking the question about our obligations to future generations comes from a commonly accepted perception that what we are doing today will have noticeable impacts on the quality of life available to them. Sustainability used as a yardstick and interpreted in the strict sense of resource efficiency or development, which is distributed from generation to generation, so that everyone's wellbeing is judged fair, led to different types of sustainability namely, Weak and Strong. Thus, resources that are valuable to the point of which they produce prosperity acquire different meanings. In this paper I will argue that while apparently a reasonable moral claim, and a practical way of analysis, sustainability encounters major problems and may end up inconsistent.

With reference to approaches by T. Page and B. Norton, I will argue that it is preferable to start our rationale with a concept of a just protection of fundamental opportunities and from this initial starting point support steps toward intergenerational efficiency. Moreover, by analyzing Dworkin's "problem of distributional equality" I will show that there is a difference between treating people equally, in relation to one or another commodity or opportunity, and treating them as equals.

The above approach does not imply that we have to dispose of some of the familiar analyses of the goal of sustainability as an expression of intergenerational justice, for example the obligation not to act in ways that jeopardize the capability of future generations to meet their needs. But this would suggest rethinking and expanding what counts as a point of reference for realizing that objective.