

Generating Justice: The social, legal, political and ethical issues of ensuring justice across generations

Principal Investigator: Professor Dave Archard (Philosophy, Queen's University Belfast)

Co-Investigators: Dr Pete Shirlow (Law, QUB); Professor Madeleine Leonard (Sociology, QUB); Dr. John Barry (Politics, QUB); and Dr Siobhán McAlister (Criminology, QUB)

Project administrator: Barbara Neeson - b.neeson(at)qub.ac.uk

SUMMARY

This project will explore the social, legal, political and ethical issues of ensuring justice across generations. It will examine what justice requires of the present generation, what can be claimed against past generations, and what can be demanded by future generations. Its distinctive character and originality lies in the fact that it will examine these issues in three distinct areas: of criminal, reparative, and social justice. It will do so with a view both to understanding what problems are particular to each and to learning from comparisons between them. Thus the key research questions are:

- (1) What are the responsibilities of the current generation for the injustices of previous generations, especially in the context of post-conflict societies such as Northern Ireland?
- (2) How should we understand and evaluate the transmission of social, economic advantage and disadvantage across generations?
- (3) What is the proper understanding of legal liability for the wrongdoing of the present generation within a plausible theory of socialisation and familial education?

The project is interdisciplinary and will draw on staff at Queen's University Belfast from the subjects of Philosophy, Law, Politics, Criminology, Education and Sociology.

Leading academics with expertise in the three areas of the project will be invited to attend the relevant events. The project will take the form of three two-day workshops in each of the three areas, and a final conference designed to draw together the threads of the workshop discussions and oriented to the design of further research.

The three workshops are envisaged as follows:

(A) POST-CONFLICT JUSTICE (9th and 10th May 2013)

- (1) Responsibilities for past injustice (Looking back): Who should pay, and how, for the injustices of the previous generation? How do we now memorialise the wrongs of the past and what place is there for reparation, reconciliation and forgiveness?
- (2) Responsibilities for future justice (Looking forward) : How can and how should the present generation avoid repeating the injustices of the past? What is the role of children and young people as 'custodians' of cultural heritages and identities that dispose to continuing conflict?

Participants include: Pete Shirlow (QUB), Eve Gerrard (Manchester); Lucy Allais (Sussex); Louise Mallender (Ulster); Jeremy Watkins (QUB)

(B) INTER-GENERATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE (24th and 25th June 2013)

- (3) How do young people accept, reject, challenge and modify the memories of the previous generation and how do such inherited memories affect their encounters with significant others and the possibilities of future reconciliation?
- (4) The crimes of the present generation within the context of the present (II): can we hold parents vicariously liable for the behaviour of their children? How should we understand the criminal responsibilities of children?

Participants include: David Archard (QUB); Madeleine Leonard (QUB); Siobhain McAllister (QUB)

(C) THE INHERITANCE OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE (30th and 31st May 2013)

(5) Intergenerational social justice (I): what is owed by the current generation to future generations, with particular emphasis upon the problem of environmental degradation across time?

(6) Intergenerational social justice (II): how should we understand and evaluate the role of the family in the transmission of advantage and disadvantage?

Participants include: Ed Page (Warwick); Alexa Zellentin (Graz); Matthew Matravers (York); Adam Swift (Warwick); Kerri Woods (Leeds)

The final conference will be entitled 'Generating Justice: The Problem of Intergenerational Justice'. It will comprise keynote addresses from invited speakers on each of the six sub-themes with respondents drawn from QUB.