Introduction

*Why Approach Intergenerational Justice
from Intercultural Philosophy?*

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This anthology is published under the auspices of the award-winning research network "Nature, Time, Responsibility" (NTR), which began its operations in 2011 and is led by Hiroshi Abe (Kyoto University, Japan), Matthias Fritsch (Concordia University, Montreal, Canada), and Mario Wenning (Loyola University, Spain). NTR promotes sustained intercultural dialogue on the topic of moral, legal, and political responsibilities to future generations and to nature across time.

The primary objective of this anthology is to make intergenerational justice an issue for intercultural philosophy, and, conversely, to allow the latter to enrich the former. In times of large-scale environmental destabilization, fairness between generations is an urgent issue of justice across time, but it is also a global issue of justice across geographical and nation-state borders. This means that the future generations envisioned by the currently living also cross these borders. Thus, different philosophical cultures and traditions of thought should converse to reflect on what is fair to future people. In the remainder of this introduction, we will detail these claims and give an overview of the volume's chapters.

Intergenerational Justice

In recent years, the global public has become increasingly aware that the actions of the current generation, in particular via global heating and environmental degradation, will have adverse effects on future generations. As a result, policymakers and citizens struggle to formulate and enact policies that enshrine sustainable societal practices that are fair to future generations. Several theories of intergenerational fairness have been put forward since the 1970s. In English at least, the large majority of extant theories have been drawn from

the Western moral and political tradition (for edited anthologies that provide good overviews, see Laslett and Fishkin 1992; Dobson 1999; Tremmel 2009; Gosseries and Meyer 2009; Meyer 2016; Gonzalez-Ricoy and Gosseries 2017; Gardiner 2021).

Justice between generations can serve as a key issue in uniting the global public. We might not have to decide what "nature" is and whether it holds intrinsic moral value to argue that sustaining it is morally demanded for the sake of future generations (Gardiner 2011). Some scholars argue that sustainability should be understood as an issue of intergenerational justice (Holland 1997, 1999; Habib 2013). Famously, the Brundtland Commission defines sustainable development as meeting "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987, p. 53). Arguably, however, discussions of sustainability fail to be sufficiently informed by moral-philosophical accounts of justice between generations (Gosseries 2008, p. 62), despite the promise such accounts may hold in highlighting the stark injustices to future people while also motivating different cultures and value orientations around concern for descendants.

To address these issues, however, the accounts of justice between generations should not be based on a single tradition or culture of morality, however diverse that tradition may be internally. Scholars have suggested that many Western accounts suffer from so-called "ontological problems" and motivational weaknesses (the failure to adequately explain our motivation to be responsible for future generations; for critical overviews, see Page 2006; Callicott 2013, esp. chapter 10; Fritsch 2018, chapter 1). The main traditions of "Western ethics" in the intergenerational context rest on moral ontologies that are rather individualistic and assume dichotomies between the generations, as well as between the self and others or humans and nature. In contrast, many non-Western traditions promise to offer insights comparatively free from such assumptions because they conceive of humans as members of communities across generations and within a shared cosmos (Hu 2018a, 2018b). Thus, it is worthwhile to seek out novel solutions from heretofore neglected traditions of thought, in particular in view of the long-standing approaches to intergenerational ethics in, for example, Chinese Confucianism (Ames 2011) and Daoism (Girardot et al. 2015), African thought (Behrens 2012), and Indigenous traditions (Jojola 2013; Watene and Yap 2015; Whyte 2018; Watene, Chapter 1).

Another reason to put Western ethics in dialogue with non-Western traditions is based on the nature of the problem itself. Of course, we live in a time in which most human beings are interconnected economically, technologically, and politically. But also, many of the problems faced by theories of sustainability and intergenerational ethics, especially climate change and

the environmental crisis more broadly, are intrinsically global problems that call for global solutions: that is, solutions to be supported by different moral cultures and political traditions from around the world. Addressing the massive environmental challenges demands collaborative initiatives from global civil society. These initiatives must emerge in dialogue among and across the many cultures that make up the currently living generations. Such dialogue, we contend, should also concern the very normative framework on which it is based. Possible attempts at mitigation, adaptation, and compensation when it comes to climate change and environmental destabilization are best borne by a truly intercultural and dialogically achieved consensus. Agreements motivated exclusively by self-interest tend to come apart more quickly and may not persuade members of different cultures. Ongoing support for the actions required, including changes in quotidian spheres, ought to be embedded in different life-worlds with their own histories, languages, norms, and cultural experiences without, thereby, denying some shared moral dimensions.

Agreements on these measures, then, or at least an overlapping consensus around global governance, should result from intercultural dialogue on normative frameworks in justice between generations. As recent international climate change negotiations show, we need global understanding and agreement on how to inherit as well as pass on humanity's shared environment. Global cooperation, especially if it demands support for large-scale societal changes, ought to be embedded in different life-worlds with their own self-understanding in view of nature and relations with ancestors and descendants. We need intergenerational justice not just within nations, but also at the global level.

This intersection of the spatial and the temporal, the intra-generational and the inter-generational, may also remind us, in what we may call a scale critique (Woods 2014) of cultures, that the separateness of traditions, languages, nations and cultures looks different from longer cross-generational perspectives (see also Gardiner, Chapter 10). Over longer timelines, the unique characteristics of different cultures and "nations" emerge and consolidate themselves in exchange with others. Going sufficiently far backwards and forwards in time, we witness peoples and cultures become transformed by these exchanges. Through migration, commerce, cultural exchange, biological reproduction, warfare and other forms of contact, peoples and cultures merge with and divide from one another. We should keep this scale critique in mind in particular in a time of environmental destabilization, which itself suggests that the time and space we inhabit is indeed scaled: sustained and upset by long-term, distant effects usually – in day-to-day lives that often live off fossil-fuel infrastructure – shielded from view, but now coming to haunt taken-for-granted life-worlds

and inherited self-conceptions. In this sense, both climate change and the inter-
generational perspective it demands render dubious all forms of xenophobic
particularism, nationalism, and narrow-mindedness. For example – and given
the call for intercultural philosophy in this book, this is not a random example –
we should take seriously current research that shows how the idea of philoso-
phy as essentially Western, allegedly born in ancient Greece, is a post-Kantian
construction allied to European colonialism and imperialism (see, e.g., Park
2014; Elberfeld 2017; Ambrogio 2020).[1] Scale critique informed by both the
long-term view of intergenerational justice and intercultural philosophy rejects
such Eurocentrism, which conveniently forgets the North-African, Asian, and
other non-European sources of ancient Greek philosophy itself (Yoyotte 1969;
Rutherford 2016), as well as the existence of modern philosophy outside of
"the West," also, thereby, making it easier to neglect different forms of philos-
ophizing the world over (Van Norden 2017).

For these reasons, this volume stages intercultural philosophical dialogue
between various Indigenous, African, Asian, and Western traditions, in view
of formulating adequate frameworks, instruments, and approaches in policy
and governance for justice between generations. We add a few more thoughts
on conducting philosophy interculturally.

Intercultural Philosophy

Comparing cultural traditions has become an increasingly accepted mode of
inquiry in the humanities. The term "comparative philosophy" has been com-
monly used in the English-speaking world. We decided to adopt the term "intercul-
tural philosophy" instead, which has been more common in the German-speaking
tradition since it emphasizes a normative dimension and the task of thinking
in-between and beyond cultural traditions (Mall 2000). Comparing different
cultural, linguistic, and philosophical traditions entails a moral commitment to
dialogue. According to the Vienna-based journal polylog, intercultural philoso-
phy is defined as the "endeavour to give expression to the many and often mar-
ginalized voices of philosophy in their respective cultural contexts and thereby
to generate a shared, fruitful discussion granting equal rights to all, particularly
including Asian, African, and Latin American perspectives" (Polylog, 2023).[2]

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[1] See also the massive work undertaken by Rolf Elberfeld and the Koselleck-Project "Histories
of Philosophy in a Global Perspective" www.uni-hildesheim.de/en/histories-of-philosophy/
[2] Unfortunately, due to various limitations, the inclusion of Latin American voices has not
yet been possible here, but took place at NTR7 at Loyola University in Sevilla 2022, and is
planned for future NTR publications.

Dialogical engagement across cultural, linguistic, and philosophical traditions is intended to correct ethnocentric biases and embraces the plurality of visions of what it means to be a human being in a shared world. Intercultural philosophy, thus understood, requires respect, openness, and interest in learning from other cultural traditions. The focus of intercultural philosophy is not on eradicating cultural otherness, but on taking the other seriously and thereby opening up "a liminal landscape which simultaneously connects and separates" (Waldenfels 2011, 71). While comparative approaches have gained traction in recent decades, those engaged in cross- and transcultural theorizing are often situated at the margins of academic discourse. Before the recent growth of comparative or intercultural philosophy, mainstream philosophy in the West was frequently equated with the study of Western sources and conducted in Western languages, such as Greek, English, French, or German. Conversely, the systematic study of non-Western realities was relegated to area studies programs. One drawback of having situated the study of non-Western traditions in, for example, Sinology, Japanology, Indology, or African studies departments was a tendency to treat complex traditions as homogeneous entities. Certain essential identity traits were attributed, often unreflectively, to entire cultures that were regarded as static monolithic entities without internal dynamics and external relationships. As indicated, modern European philosophers, beginning with Kant and Hegel, contributed to a systematic exclusion of Africa, Asia and precolonial American traditions from what they considered serious philosophy. While there were exceptions to the trend, and some philosophers emphasized cosmopolitanism and had an avid interest in world history, mainstream philosophy was normatively biased. It was common to conceive of Western modernity as the measure and endpoint of historical evolution processes.

The systematic exclusion of Africa and Asia, as well as Indigenous traditions, from hegemonic philosophical discourse did not remain uncontested. It gave rise to a tendency to either idealize or dismiss the cultural other. From a normative perspective, viewing the cultural other has been used to either embrace or reject potential contributions to civilization processes. The Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire, for example, praised Chinese culture for its civility while Montesquieu highlighted the existence of oriental despotism. The binary dichotomy between "Sinophilia" and "Sinophobia" made a nuanced cross-cultural dialogue difficult.

While the early modern philosophical engagement with non-Western traditions was based on exotic orientalizing fantasies and the high-modern engagement served to differentiate the allegedly superior West from an inferior other, current approaches in post- and decolonial philosophy turn to formerly marginalized belief and knowledge systems to critically work through the legacy

of ethnocentrism and Eurocentrism. Contemporary scholars have started to reengage with perspectives from Asia and the Global South in an attempt to contribute to a broadening and deepening of transcultural perspectives. In part, the motivation to correct conceptual blind spots in mainstream Western philosophizing has contributed to a change in attitude. Rather than epistemic assertiveness and arrogance, there is a growing sense of humility and a willingness to learn from previously marginalized conceptions by formerly colonized peoples. The goal of advancing the project of global epistemic justice and contributing to the continuing task of decolonizing hegemonic knowledge systems (Chimakonam 2017; Mignolo & Walsh 2018) can be seen as a continuation and extension of comparative and intercultural philosophy.

The two most significant methodological challenges that have been identified by comparative approaches consist, first, in the question of relativity versus universality in cross-cultural comparison and, second, in the challenge of interpretation and translation across cultural and linguistic boundaries (Ma and van Brakel 2016). It is not realistic to adequately compare cultural traditions in their entirety to settle the question of whether they are to be seen as largely different or the same. From where would such a comparison take place? It is impossible to completely step out of determinate cultural contexts to compare cultures as if they were planets. Which values should intercultural comparison rely on? The attempt of comparing an entire culture A and a culture B has given rise to overgeneralizations. These lack sufficient detailed engagement with differences within cultures and commonalities between them. Often, intracultural difference is more significant than intercultural diversity. The movement from apparent universality to diversity or the reverse movement from apparent diversity to universality, in addition to being overly schematic, hardly does justice to the complexity of cultural practices and beliefs and the entanglement between cultures. As the chapters in Part I and Part II of this volume demonstrate, there are significant differences as well as overlaps in distinctive Indigenous and East Asian perspectives on intergenerational and environmental justice.

In addition to the issue of conceiving of different cultures from the perspective of either cultural particularism that overlooks commonality or a universalism that is blind towards cultural difference, the second central methodological challenge faced by comparative or inter-cultural approaches consists in the difficulty of translation. The challenge of the translation and interpretation of concepts across diverse traditions arises at the level of everyday concepts such as soft and hard, abstract concepts such as cosmos and nature, and at the level of core ideas such as equity, sustainability, or harmony between generations. Philosophers of language have not only pointed out that the conceptual register of a language influences perception,

reflection, and communication. They have also revealed the problem of possible incommensurability arising from conceptual diversity (Wong 1989). While we do not deny the extent of conceptual diversity and the importance of cultural context for cross-cultural encounter, we believe that such encounter is, while often difficult, indispensable in a highly interconnected world that is facing severe ecological threats.

We do not pretend that a world civilization with a shared sense of future-oriented environmental responsibility will come about, yet we consider the task of practicing intercultural philosophy to be a crucial, and perhaps necessary, precondition for the future survival of humanity and its habitat on earth. The present volume also does not pretend to be a handbook that would offer an exhaustive overview of intercultural as well as intergenerational justice. Rather, the chapters are interventions that seek to offer diagnostic and potentially therapeutic contributions to the environmental crisis that we identify as being both a reason for as well as an effect of a crisis of intergenerational relations. As stated, we believe that a transcultural approach provides promising resources to tackle the entanglement of environmental and intergenerational crises.

The unique selling proposition of the book is the combination of an intercultural approach to the topic of intergenerational ethics. In English there are a number of books and edited collections on non-Western environmental philosophy (Ames and Callicott 1989; Parkes 1991; Tucker and Berthrong 1998; Callicott and McRae 2015; Chang 2019; Abe, Fritsch and Wenning 2022). However, despite an obvious need, to our knowledge there are to date no edited volumes or monographs addressing intergenerational ethics and politics from an intercultural perspective. We have reason to hope, then, that the chapters in this volume will be of interest in beginning to address this gap.

Overview of the Chapters

Part I: Indigenous Philosophies on Justice Between Generations

The volume begins with "Indigenous Philosophy and Intergenerational Justice" by Krushil Watene. While the importance of Indigenous socio-ecological values to our search for answers to environmental problems cannot be overstated, it is also important to inquire into what we may learn from them in concrete terms, as, for example, in respect to the relationship between the past, the present, and the future. In this first chapter, Watene instructs us in Indigenous philosophies pertaining directly to this concern. Focusing on the notion of Māori

philosophy whakapapa (or "to place in layers"), for instance, Watene contends that Māori people apprehend all things within an all-encompassing spatiotemporal network of relationships. Based on this relationalist view of the world, Māori philosophy teaches us how different narratives can make us aware of a variety of intergenerational connections and help us not only to protect, but also to recreate and reinforce them.

The second chapter, "Climate Ethics and Intergenerational Reciprocity in Indigenous Philosophies" by Matthias Fritsch, also takes off from Indigenous concepts, especially the Māori idea of intergenerational time as a double spiral connecting past and future as well as time and space or lived time and the land. The concept of spiraling time has been used by some Indigenous scholars to criticize mainstream views that locate the dangers of climate change entirely in the future, thereby severing environmental degradation and the exploitation of the land from the history of colonialism. Motivating care for future generations merely by projecting impending climate horror scenarios, even if these are said to have already begun, tends to betray a privileged, often settler-colonial perspective. On the basis of this critique, Fritsch then argues for a view of intergenerational relations according to which present generations owe to descendants in part because they received a gift from ancestors. Indigenous views of generational relations, such as some interpretations of the well-known Haudenosaunee seven-generation model, are, thus, more suitable for the two-fold task of assuring a sustainable future for the generations who follow our own, while taking into account the past history of colonization. Fritsch proposes a social ontology of "asymmetrical reciprocity," thereby advancing a model for decolonizing the future by promoting the differentiation of the past as the condition for the present.

The third chapter, "Intergenerational Justice and the Environment in Africa," also revisits Indigenous philosophies of intergenerational relations, this time with a focus on Africa. In his chapter, Workineh Kelbessa maintains that in many African worldviews, contemporary people have an obligation to respect their ancestors that, in turn, obliges them to ensure the continuing health and viability of the environment for the sake of future generations. Thus, the "anamnestic solidarity" of the living with the generations to come has its original roots in the memory of their ancestors. To put it another way, African moral values do not require the current generation to reward its forbears directly for all that they did for the sake of their offspring and the generations to follow; rather, the current generation rewards its ancestors indirectly by fulfilling its obligations to its own successors. In the special emphasis they place upon the importance of returning favours to people of the past by passing them forward to future generations, African concepts of intergenerational

justice remind us of Fritsch's notion of asymmetrical reciprocity. In light of Kelbessa's account, we might add that it is characteristic of African philosophies to place a significant emphasis on comprehensive considerations that encompass not only the continued survival of humans, but also the well-being of non-human generations and of Mother Earth.

Following Kelbessa's chapter, the fourth chapter "Reasonabilism, Homeostasis and Intergenerational Justice in African Thought" also thematizes African Indigenous thought, bringing it directly to another question of central relevance to this section of the volume: What ought to be the principle of governance if there is to be justice between generations? Focusing on the Igbo philosophical tradition, Joseph C. A. Agbakoba's chapter contends that the principle governing the relationship between things in the universe, as well as between human generations, should be that of dynamic harmony or homeostasis. According to this idea, the various roles that each of us plays in society are indeed different from, but should be complementary to, each other, and must be both supple and just in their responses to the changing situations and contexts of the complex web of interpersonal and intergenerational relations in which human beings find themselves. Agbakoba, thus, argues that justice based on dynamic harmony, or harmonious justice between generations, consists in complementarity between the living (or the present generation), the living-dead (or ancestors), and the yet-to-be-born (or future people).

Part II: Intergenerational Ethics in Dialogue with Confucianism and Daoism

As we all know, turning policies and institutions of environmental justice between generations into reality requires global cooperation. It is no exaggeration to say that one can hardly enter into serious deliberations regarding international negotiation and conflict resolution in these areas while excluding China from the conversation. Thus, we should ask how people who are members of or significantly influenced by Chinese civilization tend to see intergenerational justice from the perspective of their own rich and unique traditions. In order to address this question, Part II of the volume provides four chapters dedicated to classical Chinese ethics across generations.

The first chapter, "Ghosts and Intergenerational Justice: A Confucian Perspective" addresses Confucianism, which has held a position of centrality in the establishment and maintenance of core Chinese values. The authors of the chapter, Yat-hung Leung and Mario Wenning, explore a unique feature of the Confucian view of ancestor ghosts and spirits. According to their reading, it is characteristic of Confucius to think of ghosts and spirits neither as fully

existent (in the same way as the living are existent) nor as non-existent, but as "subjunctive" beings that are, so to speak, "as if (ru 如)" present when we participate sincerely in ritual exercises, commemorating and thereby expressing our gratitude, piety, care and respect toward the dead. According to Leung and Wenning, this conception of an "as if" attitude toward the spirit world is also significant for intergenerational justice, because it teaches us that, as the current generation, we live within a web of interdependence that laces us together with our ancestors and with future people "as if" they were present; and that we thereby incur an obligation to keep in mind the consequences of our own actions for both past and future people.

In the second chapter of this section, "Intergenerational Ethics and Sustainability: A Confucian Relational Perspective," Marion Hourdequin provides a new model of intergenerational ethics inspired by early Confucianism. Her model contrasts sharply with the dominant rights-based philosophies of sustainability, focusing on the following three points instead of discussing distributive justice and trade-offs between generations: first, it offers not an individualistic, but a relational conception of the person; second, rather than postulating a conflict of desires and needs between different generations, it emphasizes a gratitude for the care one has received, which (reminiscent of Kelbessa's and Fritsch's indirect reciprocities) can weave people into communities extending backward and forward in time; and third, it does not require trade-offs between present and future well-being but, instead, a shared commitment to a sustained and flourishing community across generations.

The third chapter, "Moral Motivation for Future Generations, Naturally: A Mencian Proposal," advances an alternate, Confucian-inspired approach to intergenerational ethics that could be read as a challenge to Hourdequin's account in a specific respect. Generally speaking, ethics across generations is confronted by the vexed question of how to build bridges between people at great distance from one another, given the various generational differences and the spatial, temporal, social, and cultural gaps between them. The author of the chapter, Jing Iris Hu, answers this question by arguing that Confucian moral naturalism can motivate us to care about others across time, space, and culture because it focuses on emotions and normative sensibilities shared by people in the past, present, and future – no matter whether such normativity is rooted in basic, human, psychological characteristics, as Mencius proposes, or whether it is something to be cultivated through socialization, as Xunzi maintains.

The fourth chapter in this section turns our attention away from Confucianism and towards an alternative philosophy of ancient China, which also laid many important foundations of Chinese culture: Daoism. In this chapter, titled "Transience, Responsible Transformation, and Deep Time in Daoist

Thought," James Miller questions the ability of Confucian intergenerational ethics to motivate us to take long-term responsibility toward future people. Rather, in his view, Confucianism primarily emphasizes the obligations of descendants to take care of their ancestors, including ancestors from the distant past (see also Abe, Chapter 9). In this regard, Miller sees Daoism as a complement to Confucianism, especially in reference to the Daoist commitment to transience. Transience is here taken as the very condition of possibility for the perpetual processes of transformation that characterize all life and differentiate the living from the dead or inanimate. In this sense, transience helps us to realize that cosmic "deep" time not only inscribes itself in human history, but also indwells our own "porous" bodies, in whose exposedness or openness the barriers between present and future people are dissolved.

Part III: Humanity Facing the Near Environmental Future

The third and final part of the volume turns to the question of what we should do now in order to be able to cope with the environmental challenges confronting us and those that follow in the near future.

With the themes and discussions of the preceding chapters in mind, the opening chapter "Double Intergenerational Responsibility: From a Western-Eastern view," by Hiroshi Abe, emphasizes that, for the purpose of taking seriously our responsibility toward the future, we, as the currently living, must also bear a responsibility that is oriented toward the past. Drawing upon the work of Hans Jonas and the Japanese philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji, Abe seeks to show that our responsibility toward the future, which he formulates as a "foreseeing-care-prevention" type of responsibility, comprises an obligation to the past: a type of responsibility guided by the historical wholeness of human beings, and that therefore renders us accountable to the authority of our ancestors. At the same time, this past-oriented, historical vector of responsibility, which Abe calls a "letting-the-dead-be" type of responsibility, also presupposes the "foreseeing-care-prevention" type, since it would not be possible for our ancestors to be kept "present" in the future unless we, the people of today, are held, and hold ourselves, responsible for the existence of generations to come. In this reference to ancestors as key to the relation to future generations, we once more hear references to Watene, Kelbessa, Fritsch, Hourdequin, Leung, and Wenning.

Looking back on the history of global politics over the last few decades, however, one must reluctantly admit that the effects of its policies have been too small to achieve substantial improvements in mitigating climate change. As is often said, in theory there is no difference between theory and practice,

while in practice there is. How, then, can we effectively put ideas of intergenerational environmental justice into practice? Stephen M. Gardiner's chapter "Guidelines for a Global Constitutional Convention for Future Generations" maintains that the massive policy failures have resulted from a lack of institutions that are in a position to effectively implement intergenerational concerns, and a deep denial of this lack. Building upon his previous work, in which he diagnoses a major "tyranny of the contemporary" – to which modern institutions have succumbed and that they therefore perpetuate – Gardiner proposes a set of ten initial guidelines for how to go about constituting a global constitutional convention whose overall aim would be to develop new institutions to protect future generations and further their interests. This proposal can, thus, be understood as implementing the intercultural dialogue on intergenerational justice that this volume calls for, while at the same time opening the question of cultural difference for the convention.

The final chapter, titled "Philosophy for an Ending World" can be read as addressing "future ethics" in a double sense: an ethics which factors future generations into our current moral decision-making and an ethics that future people themselves will hold. In this chapter, Tim Mulgan shows that thought experiments help us to concretize future ethics in the first sense, for these imagined experiments enable us to ask how future people might evaluate our moral legacy and, thereby, to regard the interests of future people as in competition with, rather than subordinate to, our own present interests. Taking as its object the notion of an unavoidable and imminent – but not immediate – extinction of humanity, Mulgan's own thought experiment raises questions that are germane to future ethics in the second sense: What ethical values might ensure that the people of the last generation, at humanity's end, could enjoy morally worthwhile, meaningful lives? What would or should be an ideal ending for humanity?

In drawing our introduction to a close, the editors of this volume hope that the diverse cultural perspectives from which the chapters consider the central theme of justice across generations will invite as many readers as possible from many a different background to engage with the important and urgent challenge of finding solutions to the problems that the volume has tackled.

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