

## RESEARCH ARTICLE



### Intergenerational justice, social cohesion and sustainability: a systematic review

Gina Tomé, PhD<sup>1</sup> | Adriano Almeida, MSc<sup>1</sup> | Cátia Branquinho, PhD<sup>1</sup> | Sandra Isabel Estevão, MSc<sup>2</sup> | Fábio Guedes, MSc<sup>1</sup> | Tânia Gaspar, PhD<sup>1</sup> | Lúcia Ramiro, PhD<sup>1</sup> | Margarida Gaspar de Matos, PhD<sup>1</sup>

#### Abstract

The future generations' dependence on the present generation with regard to choice behaviour has strengthened since the mid-twentieth century due to developments in the technological, demographic and social domains, raising the question about whether present generations have acted fairly or complied with their obligations towards coming generations. The main goal of this paper was to conduct a literature review that sheds light on the research carried out on intergenerational dialogue.

In the research for studies on intergenerational dialogue, two databases were considered: EBSCO and Science Direct. The year of publication of the collected papers was limited to publications released between 2015 and 2020. The research returned a total of 4063 scientific papers pertinent to this work that were furthered narrowed to a total of 12 articles.

So far, literature on the Intergenerational Justice or intergenerational dialogue does not explore how intergenerational dialogue can help to resolve issues of unfairness across generations. Our suggestion is to decrease intergenerational distance from a social and historical point of view; to increase awareness and care in living and future cohorts in order to avoid this problem in the future; to foster intergenerational dialogue, cohesion and co-action.

**Key words:** Cohort, Equity, Intergenerational fairness, Intergenerational justice, Intergenerational dialogue, Social cohesion, Sustainability

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Global and intergenerational issues may have similarities and differences that are worth emphasizing in order to improve our understanding of the nature of the issues at stake and policy options, as well as to verify the consistency of our views in both domains (Gosseries, 2014). The non-existence of co-occurrence between remote generations produces the question of whether obligations of justice are obtained between non-overlapping generations.

Schmitt, Hinner, and Kruse, (2015) believe that

intergenerational dialogue is essential for personality progress in younger and older people, for intergenerational solidarity, for the national and cultural identity, and for the social change. Nevertheless, generations vary in attitudes to society and history. In their work, they observed that intensifications in generativity were significantly associated with respective improvements in self-acceptance, perceptions of purpose and meaningfulness in life, well-being, life satisfaction and approaches concerning their own ageing.

Distance between some of the generations grows ambiguity as to the effects of our actions or the

<sup>1</sup>FMH/Universidade de Lisboa, ISAMB/Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal.

<sup>2</sup>FMH/Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal.

Supplementary information The online version of this article contains supplementary material, which is available to authorized users.

Gina Tomé, PhD et al., 2021; Published by Innovative Journal, Inc. This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License

(<https://doi.org/10.15520/jassh.v7i6.606>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

nature of future generations' preferences or their background (Gosseries, 2008). The future generations' dependence on choice behaviour of the present generation has strengthened since the mid-twentieth century due to developments in the technological, demographic and social domains, raising the question about whether present generations have acted fairly or satisfied their obligations towards future generations (Silva & Ribeiro, 2017).

With the widening of the distance of human action to the point of entry into an era whose most significant consequences will have repercussions for generations not yet born, the reflection on intergenerational justice becomes essential (Silva & Ribeiro, 2017).

Gosseries (2018) considers that studying both whether present–past difference can be unfair and the nature of the injustice at stake wants some definitions, and puts forward two of them: “Generational dis-savings occur whenever a birth cohort transfers to the next birth cohort less  $x$  (per capita) than what it inherited from the previous birth cohort.”; “Generational savings occur whenever birth cohort transfers to the next birth”. For the author, technically, we tend to characterize the past as aggregate succession of generational savings. Simultaneously, what many people fear nowadays is generational waste, especially in relation with environmental issues.

Ryder (1965 cited in Xian & Forrest, 2019) describes a ‘cohort’ as ‘the set of persons who experienced the same event within the same time interval’. On the other hand, for Attias-Donfut and Arber (2000 cited in Xian & Forrest, 2019), indicates a cohort that shares some similar experiences and visions of the world due of analogous significant historical experiences (Xian & Forrest, 2019).

Gaspart and Gosseries (2007), refer to Rawls’s view that intergenerational justice is two-stage: the accumulation phase followed by a steady state. During the accumulation phase, generations must transfer more to the next one than they inherited from the previous one. Intra-generational savings may have an impact on future generations, especially as generations do overlap. In other words, intragenerational savings will generate some intergenerational savings in the form of spill-over effects.

In terms of public discussion, references to both

sustainability and intergenerational justice have increased continually in the last decade in Portugal, in contexts such as public debt, social security, health care or environment (Grupo de Investigação em Ciência de Dados e Política, 2019/ Research Group for Data and Policy Science), which corroborates the fact that Portuguese people appear to be more conscious about the implications of sustainable decisions for future generations (Maximiano, wd). In this study, Maximiano (wd) concluded that, although half of the participants reported having a high level of concern about future generations’ well-being, and around 80 % considered that more resources should be transferred to the next generation, and that there should be limits to public debt (so that future generations don’t have to bear the costs), still these concerns have shown to be “more theoretical than real”, since there was little receptivity to redistributive policies and measures, like taxing, that impact personal income in order to ensure the well-being of future generations.

The study carried out by Catherine Moury (2018), allows to understand and evaluate the perception of Portuguese policy decision makers regarding the issue of Intergenerational Justice. The study shows that policy makers consider that there are two principles that manage intergenerational justice, namely responsibility and reciprocity, and that it is necessary to assess the distribution of goods and resources between social classes. They consider that Portuguese society is not intergenerationally fair and that there is a lot of poverty and inequality. They stress that what leads to this injustice/ unfairness are essentially socio-economic and environmental policies, problems in pensions, which turn out to be unsustainable and issues related to territorial cohesion, that is, where the problems of the interior of the country are ignored. The policy areas that are considered most significant from the point of view of Intergenerational Justice are education, employment and public expenditure or debt.

Intergenerational Justice or intergenerational dialogue literature doesn’t explore how intergenerational dialogue can help to resolve these issues. Although the increasingly relevant reflection on intergenerational justice or intergenerational dialogue is becoming more relevant, there is no literature to clarify what is done in this field.

# Intergenerational justice, social cohesion and sustainability: a systematic review

The main objective of this study was to perform a literature review in order to understand what has been analysed about intergenerational dialogue.

## 2 | METHOD

This systematic review was developed taking into account the PRISMA diagram (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & PRISMA Group, 2009). The central objective was to conduct a literature review in order to understand what has been, so far, analysed about intergenerational dialogue.

### 2.1 | Search and Sampling Strategy

In the investigation for studies on intergenerational dialogue, two databases were considered: EBSCO and Science Direct. The review focused on a five-year publication span: from 2015 to 2020. To narrow the number of papers to be included, the Boolean terms AND / OR were used. Search expressions included terms related with the study population: “intergenerational dialogue” OR “intergenerational dialogue” AND “environment”, “intergenerational dialogue” AND “housing”, “intergenerational dialogue” AND “family”, “intergenerational dialogue” AND “health”, “intergenerational dialogue” AND “education”, “intergenerational dialogue” AND “employment”, “intergenerational dialogue” AND “culture”, “intergenerational dialogue” AND “social security”. Search filters were also inserted: free full-text articles and written in English, Portuguese or Spanish.

### 2.2 | Conditions and data extraction procedure

Specific conditions for the inclusion of studies regarding intergenerational dialogue were created on the fulfilment of the resulting: (1) it focusses on intergenerational analysis; (2) it covers interactions between generations; (3) it is not limited to legal analysis; (4) there is some exchange of information between generations. The certification of conditions fulfilment was executed and compared by four of the authors (G.T.; A.A., C.B., F.B.).

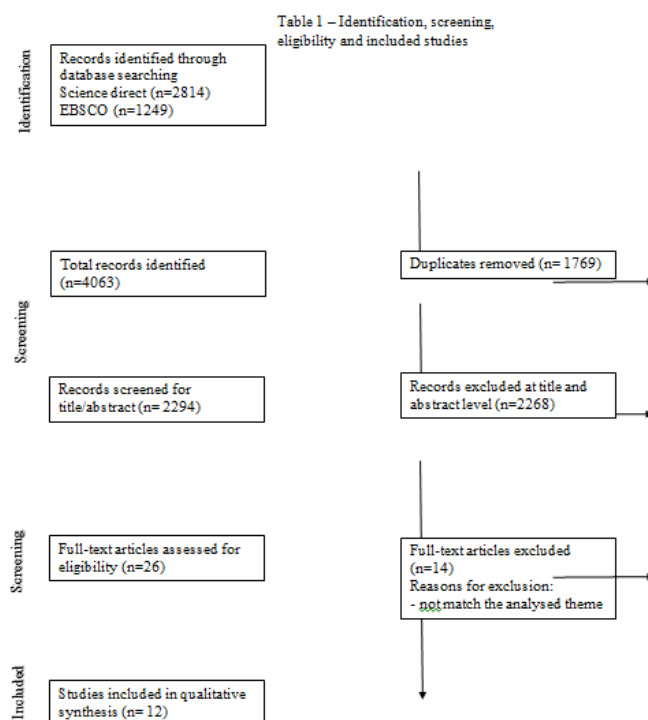
Data extraction was established according to PRISMA diagram guidelines (Moher et al., 2009).

Pertinent data were removed from the document by three authors (G.T.; M.G.M., S.E.), who also performed their coding. Then, it was controlled by another author (M.G.M). Divergences were resolved through debate among the authors, in which a consensus was reached once 90% of the members agreed. Extracted data involved the subsequent elements: author / year, objective, methods (mixed, qualitative, quantitative), data type (focus group, interviews, survey, other), focus area, sample, results reported, country and general recommendations.

## 3 | RESULTS

### 3.1 | Literature search

The diagram of the papers involved in this systematic review is shown in table 1. The search returned a total of 4063 scientific papers pertinent to this work, of which 2294 abstracts were read for eligibility after the exclusion of replacements (n=1769). A total of 2268 papers were excluded after reading titles and abstracts. Then, a total of 26 papers were measured as possibly pertinent studies, but after accurate analysis, studies that did not meet the established criteria were excluded (n=14). At the end, 12 articles were included in the present study.



### 3.2 Included study

The characteristics of the 12 involved studies are showed in Table 2.

Reference	Objective	Methods	Data type	Focus Area	Sample	Results reported	Country	General recommendations
Schmitt, E., Hinner, J., & Kruse, A. (2015)	Analysis impact of intergenerational dialogue on generativity development, life satisfaction, and perceived meaning of life in older people	Quantitative	Survey	Intergenerational dialogue	Older people Younger people	Longitudinal analyses showed significant increases in generativity, satisfaction with relationships (lonely dissatisfaction), attitudes toward own ageing, agitation, self-acceptance, meaningfulness, and purpose in life in older people. Further results show increases in perceptions of old age potentials and generativity in younger people.	Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine	Findings suggest that even in rapidly changing societies there is no insurmountable gap between generations. Encouraging self-initiated informal exchange on self-chosen historical and societal topics in the context of local intergenerational initiatives is a promising measure to support development and use of potentials of generativity in older people in the interest of the old, the young, and the whole society.
Lefebvre, M., & Lefebvre, V. (2016)	Discuss four alternative future leadership projections generated by a group of 14 next generation members participating in a training workshop	Qualitative	Mixed	Future family business leaders	Younger people	Next generations are rarely asked to express their thoughts and feelings about the future of the family firms that they are expected to protect, develop and pass on to their own children.	France	Participants cited several trends affecting the future of management transfer: Economic trends, Socio-demographic trends, Cultural trends, Technical and technological trends,
Buehs, M., & Koch, M. (2019)	Make a contribution to degrowth thinking by critically reflecting on common assumptions about wellbeing under degrowth, highlighting important challenges, and offering some ways of addressing them.	Only descriptive	Descriptive	Intergenerational dialogue	-	Current generations' concerns possible negative wellbeing implications from degrowth represent an important reason for a lack of political support for this movement to date. These concerns and potential challenges to maintaining and improving wellbeing head on to advance this movement need to be addressed under degrowth.  We propose that involving the broader public in deliberative processes that review perceptions of wellbeing and needs, taking future generations' needs into account, could be a way to advance the degrowth agenda.	United Kingdom and Sweden	We propose that deliberative forums on future needs satisfaction can help establish a 'dialogue' between current and future generations which could support cultural shifts on wellbeing thinking which will be much needed for advancing the cause for degrowth.
Strom, R., & Strom, P. (2015)	This article explores some obstacles that prevent the intergenerational connections needed for mutual understanding and care.	Qualitative	Interviews	Intergenerational dialogue	Older people Younger people	The concerns provided for consideration include (a) age-segregated communication practices of adolescents and older adults, (b) willingness of older people to disclose personal opinions and feelings to younger people, (c) need for general adoption of the reciprocal learning concept to support harmony, (d) amount of time spent with adolescents as a predictor of parent and grandparent success, (e) learning expectations for later life that contribute to productive aging, and (f) recognition of the leadership role that adolescents should assume to reconnect the generations.	USA	Educators can help reconnect the generations by homework that encourages learning and teaching outside school. By facilitating this dialogue, teachers can enable reciprocal learning, mutual respect, and societal harmony. Grandparents have more education, better health, and greater longevity than previous generations. If they use communication methods that are preferred by young people, the prospects for closer relationships can become more promising.

# Intergenerational justice, social cohesion and sustainability: a systematic review

Jones, N., O'Brien, M., & Ryan, T. (2018)	Aim to present a solutions-based approach to the challenge of intergenerational inequality.	Qualitative	Case Study	Intergenerational inequality	Institutions explicitly aimed at the interests of future generations (Others)	We draw out broad lessons which we can apply to policymaking in England, and make policy recommendations based on these findings.	England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An All-party Parliamentary Group on Future Generations should be formed.</li> <li>- Legislation should be passed containing an obligation to include the long-term risks of any Government Bill in the accompanying Explanatory Note.</li> <li>-The various futures research institutions and think tanks should cooperate to form an expert advisory panel with a mandate to influence policy.</li> <li>- If and when a British Bill of Rights is passed, the opportunity should be taken to include intergenerational rights. More work would be needed on the precise legal formulation of such rights.</li> <li>-In the longer term, political momentum should be translated into a formal Select Committee on Future Generations.</li> <li>-Any Future Generations institution should be explicitly mandated to consider existential risks arising from technological development, in addition to environmental sustainability.</li> <li>-Civil society needs to mobilise to form a strong cross-party support for representation of future generations.</li> </ul>
Tonn, B. (2017)	This paper addresses obligations that current generations have for future generations. After establishing why we should care about future generations, a new and expanded list of obligations are presented.	Only descriptive	Descriptive	Intergenerational dialogue	-	Several new intergovernmental institutions are proposed to: assess to what extent obligations are being met; judge what levels of actions are needed to meet obligations or remediate a failure in meeting obligations; and negotiate an international protocol to arrange for actions to meet the obligations.	USA	The real challenges have to do with breaking through cultural barriers to caring for future generations and being more futures oriented in thought and deed. Some may argue that the world cannot afford additional layers of intergovernmental organizations and the commitment of what could be substantial resources. The response is that the world cannot afford not to. Futurists and many, many others around the world must lead efforts to improve futures decision making to meet our obligations to future generations.
Ramey, H., & Krasnor, L. (2015)	Youth-adult partnerships (Y-APs) engage young people in a meaningful community activity and in institutions and decisions that affect their lives. The current study is an examination of the process of The New Mentality, a multi-site pilot program intended to mobilize Y-APs to raise community awareness of child and youth mental health, reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness, and advocate for a mental health service system that is more responsive to the needs of children and youth.	Qualitative	Mixed	Mental health (Others)	Younger people; Adults	Findings from the current study both reinforce and extend past research on Y-APs, offering a number of promising avenues for practice and research	Canada	Youth reported their Y-AP experience was characterized by positive program features, high levels of youth voice, positive psychological engagement, and perceptions of successful self-growth. These results supported qualitative reports from youth, for example, regarding the presence of positive features of the developmental setting. Our positive features measure included questions on supportive relationships and skill-building, among others, which also emerged as themes in the qualitative data. As expected, youth's perceptions of the positive features of developmental settings, psychological engagement, participation in children's mental health services, and self-perceptions of growth all were positively correlated, which also links to some past research. For example, similar to the current finding that positive features of the developmental setting were related to self-perceptions of growth in youth.
Collins, T., Jamieson, L., Wright, L., Rizzini, L., Mayhew, A., Narang, J. ... Casares, M. (2020)	This article explores the role and contributions of Child and Youth Advisory Committees (CYACs) in the research process. It discusses the establishment of CYACs and how they supported the International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership (ICCRP).	Qualitative	Interviews	Child Rights (Others)	Younger people	This article contributes to the growing body of literature focused on the participation of children and youth in research in advisory roles and, in doing so, extends the international dialogue about wise practices, new innovations and ethical considerations for meaningful participation of children and youth in research processes across different contexts in both the Global North and South.	Brazil, Canada, China and South Africa	<p>A key question for the partnership and other research centres on what "meaningful" participation means. In the ICCRP project, the importance of dialogue among (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child) all involved in the research, and across multiple spaces, was highlighted.</p> <p>This included hosting separate dialogues to support the international and local research teams. Working across the globe meant dealing with large inequalities in regards to resources, cultural practices, and levels of education to name a few. Also allowed for the sharing of unique insights, expertise, and wisdom of young people.</p> <p>This project attempted to give effect to the general principles of non-discrimination and participation, as well as an anticolonial approach, to overcome the imbalances of power across contexts, lived experiences, and intergenerational roles, while recognizing the influential roles of children as the sociology of childhood affirms.</p>

Humboldt, S., Monteiro, A., & Leal, I. (2018)	Intergenerational relationships are central for older adults' wellbeing. In spite of the reiterated value of intergenerational interactions between older adults and grandchildren, there is a paucity of research that has analyzed these relationships at a cross-national level. The current study purports to analyze how older adults conceptualize intergenerational relationships.	Qualitative	Interviews	Intergenerational dialogue	Older people	Data analysis generated six themes representing intergenerational relationships: affection and reward; interest and integration; quality of grandparent –grandchild interaction; definitions of privacy and boundaries; provision of support; and obligations regarding childcare, supportive, and conflictual.	Portugal	The empirical findings indicated older adults' ambivalence over intergenerational relationships and contradictory expectations of support from grandchildren.
Biggs, S., & Carr, A. (2015)	Descriptions of age-friendly and child-friendly cities exhibit similarities and differences, yet both are essential if we are to develop an understanding of intergenerational space. It is argued that combining age-based priorities and the possibilities for generational empathy provide a way of reintroducing intergenerational relations as a key to the debate on the future of the City.	Only descriptive	Descriptive	Intergenerational dialogue	-	By shifting the focus or debate towards a critical understanding of intergenerational relations, a way forward is suggested that draws on the work of Guy Debord and on contemporary debates about environments 'for all ages'. Seen through a life course lens, the urban environment becomes instrumental in shifting debate away from the fixed needs of work and consumption and towards a more flexible creation of urban time and space that includes social and emotional aspects of intergenerational belonging and community.	Australia	First, recognizing that each generational group will have life projects, arising from the point they have reached in their life course, which rise to distinctive requirements of urban space. Second, those intelligent generational spaces are both the result of and should enhance the ability to negotiate the sustainable use of those spaces in generational terms. The uses made of these spaces, by specific age groups separately and through shared activity, should be able to stand the test of time and produce mutually advantageous use value. Third, those environments should be designed so that they enhance the cooperative and emotionally empathic capacity to share space.
Strom, R. & Strom, P. (2016)	A rationale describes the need for societies with a lengthy lifespan to make education available that can support learning and favorable influence for a rapidly growing grandparent population. International studies drawn from varied disciplines are reviewed that make known the effects of formal education and the effects of social engagement on cognitive functioning of older adults.	Quantitative	Survey	Intergenerational dialogue	Older people	Science has corrected false assumptions regarding mental performance in later life. The impression that older adults cannot learn has been replaced by evidence that training can restore atrophied skills and reduce rate of mental decline.	USA	While retired people do not have to continue working, they should keep on learning. The incidence of dementia increases with age, a fact that is more troubling in view of forecasts for increased longevity. Formal education prepares youth for work and can provide protection from dementia. Mental stimulation for older adults can also support cognitive health and increase brain reserve.  Another mistaken assumption has been that all the knowledge and skills needed for success can be acquired well in advance. Therefore, countries arrange schooling for children, adolescents, and young adults.
Gu, X., Tse, C., & Brown, N. (2019)	The present study examined the intergenerational factors in transmitting autobiographical memories from one generation to the next.	Qualitative	autobiographical memories	Intergenerational dialogue	Older people; Younger people	Across generations, consensus memories, which refer to the memories that both parents and children considered as important in the parent's life, were characterised by the substantial material change that the events brought about in their lives. While parent-child interaction affected the number of events passed onto children, it only affected the number of script-divergent events that were not recorded in the life script of a culture, but not the number of script-consistent events. In addition, children whose parents were rusticated and relocated to rural areas during the Cultural Revolution remembered more historical memories than children whose parents were not rusticated.	China	The findings shed light on the process that one generation gains the biographical knowledge and historical experience of the prior generation. Theoretical implications are discussed.

Table 2 shows that most studies have qualitative methodology (n=6). Participants differ in analysed studies: older people (n=2), younger people (n= 2), older and younger people (n=3), others (n=2) and not specified (n=3).

For the data type it is verified: descriptive (n=3), interviews (n=3), survey (n=2), mixed (n=2), case study (n=1) and autobiographical memories (n=1).

As for the focus area, the topics addressed were: intergenerational dialogue (n=8), future family business (n=1), intergenerational inequality (n=1) and others (n=2) and were carried out in several countries: Belarus, Russia and Ukraine (n=1), France (n=1), United Kingdom and Sweden (n=1), USA (n=3), England (n=1), Canada (n=1), Brazil, Canada, China and South Africa (n=1), Portugal (n=1), Australia (n=1) and China (n=1)

**3.3 | Included sample characteristics**

Papers selected for this review focused on intergenerational dialogue and intergenerational justice and attempt to answer questions such as whether the generation behaviour has consequences for future generations and how negative consequences can be prevented.

Table 3

Research characteristics among studies

**Table 3**  
*Research characteristics among studies*

Research characteristics	n
<b>Methods</b>	
Qualitative	6
Quantitative	3
Descriptive	3
<b>Data type</b>	
Descriptive	3
Interviews	3
Survey	2
Mixed	2
Case Study	1
Autobiographical memories	1
<b>Focus Area</b>	
Intergenerational dialogue	8
Future family business	1
Intergenerational inequality	1
Others	2
<b>Sample characteristics</b>	
<b>Sample</b>	
Older people	2
Younger people	2
Older people and Younger people	3
Others	2
<b>Country</b>	
Belarus, Russia and Ukraine	1
France	1
United Kingdom and Sweden	1
USA	3
England	1
Canada	1
Brazil, Canada, China and South Africa	1
Portugal	1
Australia	1
China	1

**3.4 | Main findings**

According to the presented results, it can be seen that most of the analysed articles focus on the analysis of intergenerational dialogue (66,7%; n=8). Most of the studies (77,8%) involved older people (n=2), younger people (n=2) or both (n=3).

The majority (50%) of the studies (n=6) make use of qualitative methods and the descriptive (25%, n=3) and interviews (25%, n=3) data type. Moreover, most studies were conducted in European countries (55%; n=11).

#### 4 | DISCUSSION

Papers selected for this review focused on whether each generation behaviour have consequences for future generations and how negative consequences can be prevented, by means of inquiring participants from different age groups. This is an up most important subject that begins to emerge, and seems essential even for the future of the planet, keeping an increased quality of life, which includes access to housing, education, work, health, social security and leisure.

As Schmitt, Hinner, and Kruse, (2015) pointed out, intergenerational dialogue is important for individual and social development in younger and older people, intergenerational solidarity and social change. However, it seems that this dialogue is too often based in evaluating present and past decisions as “good” or “bad” decisions for the future. Sometimes this dialogue ends up as an exchange of recriminations in which each generation blames the previous for “all harm” and the previous becomes defensive, avoidant and reluctant to change attitudes and behaviours. According to this approach, there is a risk of taking a shallow perspective of reciprocal blaming among generations for previous and current deeds. In order to keep intergenerational fairness, to widen its scope and increase its efficacy, another set of variables must be included in the equation of the problem which takes into account the different generation circumstances, needs and knowledge, i.e. the historical background. That is to say, some decisions that may look seriously harmful were simply not sustainable solutions to a past problem that needed to be solved. What needs to be addressed now in order to avoid intergenerational unfairness in the future is the sustainability of solutions, or at least to be able to foresee consequences so as to choose the least harmful solution after a total cycle of events that may be able to address and solve current needs and problems.

As it was also referred to, the gap amongst some of the generations intensifications ambiguity as to the effects of our actions or the nature of future generations’ favourites or their environment (Gosseries, 2008). And this fact can be seen from both sides of the intergenerational dialogue: from the past with those who might have decided without caring about consequences, those who might have decided with-

out being aware about consequences and those who might have been obliged to decide in order to solve vital /survival past problems; from the present represented by those who believe that past generations were not aware enough of harmful consequences, those who believe that past generations just didn’t care about harmful consequences that had to be addressed for vital/ survival reasons.

The future generations dependence on choice behaviour of the present generation has strengthened since the mid-twentieth century, due to developments in the technological, demographic and social domains, raising the question about obligations towards the future generations (Silva & Ribeiro, 2017). In order to fully address this topic, other issues are to be included into the complex 3x3 scenario just described above, so that the strength must be focused on sustainability of actions: creating awareness, fostering a culture of caring and focusing on decisions that will not carry unsustainability after a period of time.

Gosseries (2018) has considered “Generational dis-savings” that happen when a birth cohort transfers to the next birth cohort, less  $x$  (per capita) than what it inherited from the previous birth cohort”. It represents the past as accumulative sequence of generational savings, with people fearing nowadays exactly generational dis-savings, at least in relation with environmental issues. Although environmental issues are a vital issue in urgent need of being addressed, now that people are aware and science has developed, this trajectory has to be urgently corrected, without creating new problems (of environmental or any other natures) or without regressing into previous problems that were mis-solved in an unsustainable way (example hunger, global education; global health care, global housing, extreme poverty, gender iniquity), trying to meet the Millennium Goals (United Nations, 2015) followed by the Sustainable Developmental Goals (United Nations, 2019).

A social generation indicates a cohort sharing some mutual experiences and visions of the world because of analogous substantial historical experiences. In order to foster intergenerational fairness, a greater intergeneration dialogue must be achieved allowing those who did not have common life events to build upon and share experiences. By doing so, a radi-



cal disruption of social continuity (Xian & Forrest, 2019) will be shunned while a cohesive social continuity will be promoted in which people are aware of and care about each other within and beyond their cohort.

As Gaspart and Gosseries (2007), pointed out, generations do overlap, and if strength is put into dialogue and inter-cohort care, then intragenerational savings will generate additional intergenerational savings in the form of spill-over effects.

As was already pointed out by others (Grupo de Investigação em Ciência de Dados e Política, 2019/ Research Group for Data and Policy Science), we believe that this is the broad, holistic and correct way to approach this issue, whereas simultaneously, in terms of public discussion, there should be a reference to both sustainability and intergenerational justice in contexts such as public debt, social security, health care or environment (Grupo de Investigação em Ciência de Dados e Política, 2019/ Research Group for Data and Policy Science). Portuguese people appear to be more conscious about the implications of sustainable decisions for future generations (Maximiano, wd), even though these concerns have proven to be “more theoretical than real”. This is so because there was little receptivity to redistributive policies and measures, such as taxing, that impact personal income in order to ensure the wellbeing of future generations.

The study carried out by Catherine Moury (2018) in Portugal came to the conclusion that Portuguese society is not intergenerationally fair, that there is a lot of poverty and inequality and that the policy areas that had surfaced as the most important from the point of view of Intergenerational Justice were education, employment and public expenditure and debt.

So far, the Intergenerational Justice or intergenerational dialogue literature doesn't explore how the intergenerational dialogue can help to resolve issues of unfairness across generations. Our suggestion is to decrease intergenerational distance from a social and historical point of view; to increase awareness and care in living and future cohorts in order to avoid this problem in the future; and to foster intergenerational dialogue, cohesion and co-action. By doing so, all living and future cohorts can have common

advantages when finding sustainable solutions for current or future (and past) problems, and, of course, implementing public policies that may enforce those principles (and becoming friendly citizens) in the present and in the future.

## 5 | REFERENCES

- Biggs, S., & Carr, A. (2015). Age- And Child-Friendly Cities and The Promise Of Intergenerational Space. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 29(1), 99-112. doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2014.993942.
- Buchs, M., & Koch, M. (2019). Challenges for the degrowth transition: The debate about wellbeing. *Futures*, 105, 155-165. doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2018.09.002.
- Collins, T., Jamieson, L., Wright, L., Rizzini, I., Mayhew, A., Narang, J. ... Casares, M. (2020). Involving child and youth advisors in academic research about child participation: The Child and Youth Advisory Committees of the International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 109, 1-9. doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104569.
- Gaspart, F., & Gosseries, A. (2007). Are generational savings unjust?. *Politics, philosophy & Economics*, 6(2), 193-217. Doi: 10.1177/1470594X07073006.
- Gosseries, A. (2008). On future generations' future rights. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 16(4), 446-474.
- Gosseries, A. (2019). Are inequalities between us and the dead intergenerationally unjust? *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 22(3), 284-300. doi.org/10.1080/13698230.2018.1438790.
- Gosseries, A. (2014). Nations, Generations, and Climate Justice. *Global Pollicy*, 5(1), 96-102.
- Grupo de investigação em Ciência de Dados e Política (2019). *Justiça Intergeracional e Sustentabilidade – Uma Análise dos Discursos Parlamentares e dos Média* [Intergenerational Justice and Sustainability - An Analysis of Parliamentary Speeches and Media] Lisboa: Nova SBE
- Gu, X., Tse, C., & Brown, N. (2019). Fac-

- tors that modulate the intergenerational transmission of autobiographical memory from older to younger generations. *Memory*, 28(2), 204-215. doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2019.1708404.
- Humboldt, S., Monteiro, A., & Leal, I. (2018). How do older adults experience intergenerational relationships? Different cultures, ambivalent feelings. *Educational Gerontology*, 44(8), 501-513. doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2018.1520528.
- Jones, N., O'Brien, M., & Ryan, T. (2018). Representation of Future Generations in United Kingdom Policy-Making. *Futures*, 102, 153-163. doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2018.01.007.
- Lefebvre, M., & Lefebvre, V. (2016). Anticipating intergenerational management transfer of family firms: A typology of next generation's future leadership projections. *Futures*, 75, 66-82. doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2015.10.010
- Maximian, S. (SD). *Preferências Intergeracionais da População Portuguesa* [Intergenerational Preferences of the Portuguese Population]. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.
- Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D. G., & The PRISMA Group. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *PLoS Med*, 6(7), e1000097. doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1000097.
- Moury, C. (2018). *Perceções da classe política portuguesa sobre Justiça Intergeracional* [Perceptions of the Portuguese political class on Intergenerational Justice]. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.
- Ramey, H., & Krasnor, L. (2015). The new mentality: Youth-adult partnerships in community mental health promotion. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 50, 28-37. doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2015.01.006.
- Schmitt, E., Hinner, J., & Kruse, A. (2015). Potentials of survivors, intergenerational dialogue, active ageing and social change. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 171, 7-16. doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.082.
- Strom, R., & Strom, P. (2015). Assessment of Intergenerational Communication and Relationships. *Educational Gerontology*, 41, 41-52. doi: 10.1080/03601277.2014.912454.
- Strom, R. & Strom, P. (2016). Grandparent education and intergenerational assessment of learning. *Educational Gerontology*, 42(1), 25-36. doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2015.1059148.
- Tonn, B. (2017). Philosophical, Institutional, And Decision Making Frameworks For Meeting Obligations To Future Generations, *Futures*, 95, 44-57. doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2017.10.001.
- United Nations (2019). The Sustainable Development Goals Report. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations (2015). *The Millennium Development Goals Report*. New York: United Nations.
- Xian, S., & Forrest, R. (2019). The post-80s generation: exploring the attitudes toward family and housing. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1-17. doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2019.1636949.

**How to cite this article:** G.T.P.D., A.A.M.S., C.B.P.D., S.I.E.M.S., F.G.M.S., T.G.P.D., L.R.P.D., M.G.M.P.D. Intergenerational justice, social cohesion and sustainability: a systematic review. *Journal of Advances in Social Science and Humanities*. 2021;1798–1809. <https://doi.org/10.15520/jassh.v7i6.606>