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Future Design

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This book discusses imaginary future generations and how current decision-making will influence those future generations. Markets and democracies focus on the present and therefore tend to make us forget that we are living in the present, with ancestors preceding and descendants succeeding us. Markets are excellent devices to equate supply and demand in the short term, but not for allocating resources between current and future generations, since future generations do not exist yet. Democracy is also not “applicable” for future generations, since citizens vote for candidates who will serve members of their, i.e., the current, generation. In order to overcome these shortcomings, the authors discuss imaginary future generations and future ministries in the context of current decision-making in fields such as the environment, urban management, forestry, water management, and finance. The idea of imaginary future generations comes from the Native American Iroquois, who had strong norms that compelled them to incorporate the interests of people seven generations ahead when making decisions.

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