
The Aeneas Contract: Rethinking Intergenerational Responsibility for Peace in the Ageing World

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ABSTRACT

As the global demographic shifts toward an unprecedented ageing society, the concept of peace must evolve beyond the mere absence of conflict between states. True stability in the 21st century must include the cohesion and mutual responsibility shared between generations. This article introduces “The Aeneas Contract,” a novel social framework that expands the traditional contract between the state and the individual into a “temporal-ethical” covenant. Drawing on Hans Jonas’s *ethics of responsibility* and John Rawls’s *intergenerational justice*, it posits that the current generation must act as a steward, to uphold responsibilities toward older generations who laid the foundations of society, while safeguarding the rights and interests of younger and future generations (Rawls, 1999; Tremmel, 2009; Gardiner, 2011). The Aeneas Contract suggests that citizens serve as a vital bridge, a role formalized through concrete policy mechanisms. Key proposals include Generational Impact Assessments (GIA), which ensure that current fiscal and environmental decisions do not unjustly burden future cohorts, and Age-Coexistence Infrastructure (ACI), designed to foster organic interaction between youth and elders. Furthermore, the initiative seeks to empower the elderly as “Centenarian Peacebuilders,” transforming them from passive recipients of care into active community mediators who utilize their vast life experience to resolve local conflicts. In this framework, domestic intergenerational harmony is viewed as a prerequisite for international peace. A society that practices internal solidarity, learning to compromise and care across the life course, is inherently less prone to the divisions and “us vs. them” mentalities that often lead to external aggression. By embedding intergenerational empathy into national identity, countries naturally adopt a more cooperative and long-term approach to global diplomacy, trade, and environmental protection. Ultimately, peace is not a static inheritance but a living responsibility that must be actively passed on. The Aeneas Contract underscores that individuals are not only shaped by the past but are also morally responsible for the future. By designing systems rooted in reciprocity and care, we can ensure that a world of increased longevity becomes a world of increased harmony. Peace, in the end, begins with how we treat one another across the vast expanse of time.

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