Leder

Introduction

The ethics of sustainable governance

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The concept of "sustainable governance" invites numerous questions. First of all, how should one understand the concept of "sustainability"? Ever since sustainable development was put on the political agenda by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 (WCED 1987), the sustainability of a large variety of practices – from business (e.g. Fowler and Hope 2007) and innovation (e.g. Hellström 2007) to immigration (e.g. Ritzen and Kahanec 2017) and education (e.g. Resnick and Hall 1998) – has been debated. To be sure, the discussion of sustainability has borne important fruit in some contexts. Significantly, the United Nations has developed a set of Sustainable Development Goals which provides policy-makers with an overarching political vision in the face of global challenges connected to various issues, such as food security and climate change.[1] Nonetheless, widespread confusion prevails about what it means for a practice to adhere to a standard of sustainability (see, for example, Gatti and Seele 2014), and further discussion of the concept is sorely needed.

Arguably, sustainable development should be based on three forms of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental (Elkington 1999). Taking issue with sustainable governance accordingly involves careful consideration of each of these dimensions and their interplay in political processes and decision-making. The current issue of *Etikk i Praksis* contributes to this task by offering analysis of central concepts in the discourse of sustainability, as well as examining political and moral issues raised by pressing environmental challenges such as climate change.

In the first article, *Don't Join the Joyride: Individual Responsibility for Large-Scale Problems*, Kjetil Skjerve and Trygve Lavik address the question of whether individuals have a duty to do something that when fulfilled makes little or no difference to the undesirable result. They focus on the case of having fun that results in polluting the environment, which is called "joyguzzling". After reviewing the distinction between two concepts of moral requirements, namely *autonomous* and *heteronomous* obligations, the authors argue that individuals are heteronomously obligated to follow social norms that their respective communities have sufficient moral reasons to sanction by social control. They further argue that such heteronomous obligation applies even if individuals do not have sufficient moral reasons for acting according to such social norms, as long as acting according to those norms promotes justice. This means that society may implement those social norms "via social control in the form of praise, condemnation, or critique, and the norms may be internalized as feelings such as anger, guilt, shame, or pride."

In the second article, *Defining "Social Sustainability": Towards a Sustainable Solution to the Conceptual Confusion*, Karl Persson de Fine Licht and Anna Folland set out to define "social sustainability" by looking into the different suggestions they

find in the literature, combined with references to their own experience working with city planners and urban developers. An important aim is to refute some sceptical arguments against finding a useful and universal definition. According to the authors, finding a general and universal definition is of great practical importance in order to counter the risk of unjust outcomes being portrayed as socially sustainable. The authors assert that a universal definition is needed in order to prevent influential actors who are planning and building cities from promoting building areas that are sustainable only to the extent that they are perceived as good for the people living there.

The third article, *Økologisk demokrati og naturens iboende verdi: Klimasøksmål i miljøkrisens tidsalder* (Ecological democracy and the inherent value of nature: Climate litigation in the age of the environmental crisis) by Odin Lysaker is written in Norwegian, and we include a Scandinavian language summary below.

Økologisk demokrati og naturens iboende verdi: Klimasøksmål i miljøkrisens tidsalder *utforsker tanken om et økologisk demokrati med utgangspunkt i Norges første klimasøksmål i 2017 som kommer opp igjen for rettsapparatet i november 2019. Miljøvernaktørene Greenpeace, Natur og Ungdom og Besteforeldrenes klimaaksjon anklaget staten for å bryte miljøparagrafen (§ 112) ved å gi konsesjoner til nye lete-lisenser for 13 nye oljeselskaper (konsesjonsrunde 23). De tapte søksmålet i første runde, men ankesaken kommer nå opp for Borgarting lagmannsrett. Forfatteren argumenterer for at natursynet i Grunnlovens miljøparagraf må forstås økosentrisk, og for at et økologisk demokrati håndterer den planetære miljø- og klimakrisen bedre enn de etablerte systemene i dag. Demokratimodellen som fremmes er basert på et ideal om økologisk medborgerskap, grønn konstitusjonalisme og naturens moralske triumf. Klimasøksmålet tolkes som en positiv rettsliggjøring og grønning av det etablerte politiske og rettslige systemet.*

It is indeed very important to increase capacity in handling the environmental and climate crisis we are facing. The article suggests that outdated systems that do not allow us to do this should be reformed in light of the idea of ecological democracy. Norway's first climate lawsuit from 2017, revived in the Court of Appeal in 2019, offers some hope for needed changes.

The fourth paper, *Why, and what will it look like? Evaluating energy experts' responses concerning the German Energiewende and their implications for communication efforts* by Sebastian Kreuz and Eugenia Ploß, deals with the German Energiewende. There are positive, although diverging reasons among the stakeholders for embracing the Energiewende, and this diversity has been poorly communicated to the public. This heterogeneity of reasons – e.g. climate protection for some and independence from energy import for others – poses challenges with regard to communicating the rationale of the Energiewende and points to the need for establishing adequate communication tools. Tools such as films, games, databases, homepages, pictures and infographics, the authors argue, can provide narratives that may improve lay people's understanding of heterogeneous reasons for the energy transition. These information channels can also prevent mistrust and polarization – thereby promoting a more inclusive public debate about energy transition processes, as in the case of the Energiewende.

This issue's open section features two articles. In the first open section article, *Physicians in the double role of treatment provider and expert – an approach to social insurance medical ethics*, Hans Magnus Solli and António Barbosa da Silva use

conceptual analysis to show that social insurance medical ethics (SIME) unite physicians' obligations associated with the roles of treatment provider and expert in social insurance systems. Physicians as treatment providers should try to balance sympathy and empathy with impartiality in their role as experts. The authors further assert that there are no basic ethical conflicts between the two roles. However, applying and balancing the relevant ethical principles require negotiations between patients and physicians.

The second open section article, *Faktorer, der har betydning for sygeplejerskers holdning til «God Klinisk Praksis» – en kvalitativ analyse på data fra et empirisk studie ved Aalborg Universitetshospital* (Factors having significance for nurses' attitudes to "Good Clinical Practice" – a qualtitative analysis of data from an empirical study at Aalborg University Hospital) by Patrik Kjærsdam Telléus, Dorte Møller Holdgaard, and Birthe Thørring, is written in Danish and we include a Scandinavian language summary below.

Faktorer, der har betydning for sygeplejerskers holdning til «God Klinisk Praksis» – en kvalitativ analyse på data fra et empirisk studie ved Aalborg Universitetshospital *diskuterer etiske holdninger i ulike helseprofesjoner, med spesielt fokus på sykepleierprofesjonen. Gjennom en hermeneutisk analyse av kvalitative data fra en større undersøkelse viser forfatterne at vurderingene blant sykepleierne er fundert i nærhets- og relasjonsetiske verdier. Disse verdiene er ofte mer komplekse enn retningslinjene tar høyde for, og forfatterne påpeker behov for elastisitet i tilpasningen av de etiske retningslinjene. I artikkelen argumenteres det for at de viktigste faktorene som karakteriserer sykepleieetikken er tillitsfulle relasjoner, omsorg for svake, og forrang for det som er for hånden. Forfatterne forsøker dessuten å vise hvordan disse verdiene spiller inn i situasjoner som omhandler andre verdier, for eksempel ressursfordeling og autonomi.*

The open section brings to the table some well-reasoned responses to ethical issues in healthcare financing and delivery that we need to address in Scandinavian societies. These discussions are relevant to the ethical challenges faced by healthcare systems in the rest of the world as well. The main section provides readers with a range of perspectives on sustainable governance and related matters, such as the ethics and politics of climate change. The articles illustrate the complexity of environmental problems, while offering guidance on how to deal with them. We hope to inspire further discussion of the important topics raised by the authors.

Acknowledgments

Notes

[1] See https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/ (accessed 22.10.2019).

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