

Special Issue of JHDC on the Capability Approach and Sustainability

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Deadline for paper submissions: May 4, 2012

Background of the special issue:

Though the Capability Approach (CA in the following) focuses on well-being, the question of the Brundtland commission how well-being can be sustained for future generations has gained little attention within the CA literature so far. Currently, the Human Development Report 2011 and several research projects focus more on this link. This special issue of the JHDC aims at collecting and presenting current work on the issue, inviting submissions of theoretical and empirical papers alike.

The issue of conceptualizing sustainable development and assessing the sustainability of development is demanding in several ways. It aims at sustaining well-being of people all over the world, now and in the future. The CA clearly defines well-being for each and every individual as its goal and has been used for analyzing and conceptualizing justice between people in industrial countries and developing countries alike. However the issue of intergenerational justice imposes additional demands that are difficult to deal with.

Sustainable development on the global level cannot but be achieved in a collective effort. This raises a number of questions when it comes to designing policies. Due to the complex interactions in ecosystems and the multilayered interdependency between countries and people in economic and social matters sustainable development places high motivational and cognitive demands on us. We have to be willing and to be able to consider the effects of our own behavior on people we do not know: people who live far away or are not even born. In order to get a grip at these complexities sustainable development is often divided into the three pillars of ecological, economic and social sustainable development. This seems to be naïve at best. By providing a framework that integrates economic and social aspects the CA might be a good basis for overcoming this divide and might provide a foundation for an integrated framework of economic, social and ecological sustainable development. However, the suitability of the CA for this enterprise has not been proven so far. The CA does not explicitly incorporate the environment in its conception. Further, modeling changes in time and assessing the distribution of capabilities between groups and generations is a challenging task. We invite papers that face these challenges.

The conceptualization of sustainable development is but a first step towards making it work. For designing policies towards sustainability it is necessary to develop indicators that capture the many facets of sustainable development. Recently, the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report argued for using dashboards instead of relying on indices which aggregate and summarize the information. Still, which indicators should be part of the dashboard is a question that remains. We invite proposals for indicators, empirical work that illustrates how indicators might be applied and reports on the current state of affairs concerning the development of indicators in the EU and on the international level. Furthermore, the governance of sustainability is more than the use of CA-based indicators: transitions towards sustainability require collective actions, spanning over countries and over time. Therefore, we also invite papers that address questions of sustainability governance from a CA perspective.

Journal of Human Development and Capabilities (JHDC), call for papers for special issue on Sustainability

Possible topics:

- functionings and capabilities as the currency of intra- and intergenerational justice (instead of Brundtland's needs or standard welfare-economic measures)
- intergenerational justice and time as a challenge for the CA
- integrating the environment into the CA
- the tension between the collective goal of sustainable development and the individual-focused CA
- motivational questions
- indicators for sustainable development (e.g. efforts to implement the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report or reactions on the HDR in 2011)
- case studies on sustainability projects
- governance of sustainability in a capability perspective

Submission

Please use the online submission system of JHDC. Instructions for authors can be found on the Taylor and Francis website:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=cjhd20&page=instructions>

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