



*Social Choice, Agency,  
Inclusiveness and Capabilities*

The capability approach is a versatile framework rooted on issues of justice and multidimensional assessment of quality of life developed in the 1980s as an alternative approach to prevailing mainstream development ideas focused narrowly on economic development. Most closely associated with the work of Amartya Sen, it has become of great interest to development scholars from a variety of different disciplines. Much has already been done exploring the conceptual foundations of the capability approach and discussing Sen's contribution to the field, but few books have explored the links between social choice (another field with rich contributions by Sen) and human development issues. Featuring many of the world's leading experts on social choice theory and capability indicators, *Social Choice, Agency, Inclusiveness and Capabilities* combines these interrelated themes into one volume and fully explores the relevance of social choice to human development.

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# Social Choice, Agency, Inclusiveness and Capabilities

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## Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	page viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>List of Contributors</i>	x
<i>Preface and Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
1 Introduction: social choice, agency, inclusiveness and capabilities FLAVIO COMIM, P. B. ANAND AND SHAILAJA FENNELL	1
<b>Part I Social Choice and Capabilities</b>	
2 The many facets of social choice theory WULF GAERTNER	17
3 Beyond capabilities? Sen's social choice approach and the generalizability assumption FLAVIO COMIM	42
4 Examining the challenge of communication in diffusing innovative education programmes: an analysis drawing on public choice, social choice and capability framings SHAILAJA FENNELL	62
5 Nudging the capabilities for a sustainable city? When the libertarian paternalist meets the Paretian liberal P. B. ANAND	85
6 Social choice and research capacity strengthening in Nigeria: insights from the field MICHAEL WATTS, NAFISA WAZIRI AND OLADELE AKOGUN	113

<b>Part II Inclusiveness, Social and Individual Agency</b>		
7	In defence of inclusiveness: on sustainable human development, capability and indicators of progress MOZAFFAR QIZILBASH	139
8	Exploring Sen on self-interest and commitment GAY MEEKS	170
9	Incorporating an emotional dimension in the capability approach JOHN CAMERON	202
10	Sufficiency re-examined JAY DRYDYK	222
11	Adaptive preferences versus internalization in deprivation: a conceptual comparison between the capability approach and self-determination theory TADASHI HIRAI	240
12	Enriching agency in the capability approach through social theory contributions INA CONRADIE	257
13	Creativity and capabilities: a problem of change and uncertainty? JONATHAN WARNER	284
<b>Part III Social Choice and Capabilities in Action</b>		
14	Measuring the independence of ‘dependent’ persons based on the capability approach HIDEYUKI KOBAYASHI AND REIKO GOTOH	305
15	Indigenous challenges to the capability approach: a relational ontology of community and sustainability ANA ESTEFANÍA CARBALLO	323
16	Situating the family within the capabilities framework: a collective conversion factor. The role of the household configuration in the quality of life in Mali CLAUDINE SAUVAIN-DUGERDIL AND SIAKA CISSÉ	356

<i>Contents</i>	vii
17 An ethical perspective on the United Kingdom’s <i>Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability</i> JACQUES TAMIN	385
18 Public services as conversion factors: exploring the theory and practice RICHARD BRUNNER AND NICK WATSON	401
<i>Index</i>	423

## Figures

2.1	The simple case of set inclusion	<i>page</i> 34
2.2	Indifference curves in the space of functionings	35
2.3	Overlapping capability sets	36
2.4	A case of deprivation	37
2.5	A cone and its reference surface	38
3.1	Scheme of Sen’s social choice framework	51
3.2	Main informational spaces	52
3.3	‘Advantage’ as the ultimate category	53
5.1	Popularity of ‘sustainable cities’ in Google searches, January 2004–April 2021	91
8.1	Behavioural traits: mixing – and matching	179
9.1	A schematic continuum mixing emotions and impartial, ‘objective’ calculation available to CA researchers	203
11.1	Nussbaum’s central capabilities and SDT’s basic psychological needs	245
11.2	Aristotle and the Stoics on external goods	248
14.1	The ‘fractal’ structure of capability	307
14.2	Iso-cost curves in the space of two sub-functionings	309
14.3	Domination in sub-capability by the differences in utilization ability	309
14.4	Individual functionings and sub-functionings identified in self-reported patients’ experiences with nursing services	311
14.5	Estimating the frontier of capability using functioning vectors	315
14.6	Sub-capabilities of the restricted and free groups	317
14.7	Main functioning production of the restricted and free groups	319

## Tables

2.1	Condorcet winner versus Borda winner	<i>page</i> 20
2.2	Dodgson's method	21
2.3	Majority judgement via grading	22
2.4	The 'no show paradox'	22
2.5	Feasible and non-feasible actions	24
2.6	No conflict of actions	27
2.7	Conflicting actions	27
2.8	Diamond's query	30
3.1	A 'generalizability table'	55
4.1	Diffusion of innovation and institutional change	74
5.1	Six types of injustices or inequalities caused by cities	95
6.1	Participation, contribution and feasibility	127
6.2	Application, learning and feasibility	128
9.1	A framework for linking emotional positionalities to research questions	216
14.1	Correlation between sub-functionings	312
14.2	Difference in functioning achievement by activity restriction	314
14.3	Estimation of the frontier of sub-capability	316
16.1	Configuration of urban households: results of multiple correspondence and cluster analysis	365
16.2	Configuration of rural households: results of multiple correspondence and cluster analysis	367
16.3	School attendance, urban settings, children aged ten to 19 years: multi-level logistic regression analysis	374
16.4	School attendance, rural settings, children aged ten to 19 years: multi-level logistic regression analysis	376



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xi

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## *Preface and Acknowledgements*

This book is a result of the second and third Cambridge Capability Conferences (CCCs), held in 2017 and 2018. It is a continuation of a new phase of capability conferences in Cambridge, following the early Capability Conferences in the first half of the 2000s, which preceded the creation of the Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA). It can be seen as follow-up of a previous publication, *New Frontiers of the Capability Approach* (2018), co-edited by the same group of editors. It marks new perspectives in the way that the approach can be used to tackle a wide range of social issues related to its foundations, operationalization and applications. For the 2017 CCC we had the honour to have Professor Wulf Gaertner from the University of Osnabruck, one of the leading social choice theorists in the world, as our keynote speaker. The main objective of that conference was to examine social choice theory (SCT) as the main engine of Amartya Sen's approach. For the 2018 CCC we had the privilege of having Professor Mozaffar Qizilbash from the University of York, a distinguished capability scholar, to deliver the conference keynote speech. The main focus in this third conference was on discussing new perspectives of the capability approach, exploring concrete debates related to sustainability, poverty and inequality. We were very fortunate to have renowned capability scholars as participants of these two conferences, including the keynote speaker of our first CCC, Dr Gay Meeks. We are very grateful to all our keynote speakers for their participation. During these two conferences Professor Sen kindly accepted our invitation to come during the main break for a cup of tea and to catch up with old and new friends. We are very grateful for his time and consideration.

Putting together a small selection of papers to include in this book was an extremely hard task, given the high quality of submitted papers. We privileged the elaboration of a homogeneous narrative, selecting chapters after very rigorous scrutiny and detailed work,

putting the different pieces of a complex puzzle together. We would like to thank a group of eminent capability scholars who wrote referee reports, including Bina Agarwal, Paul Anand, Izete Bagolin, Jérôme Ballet, Morten Byskov, Mario Biggeri, Mihály Borsi, Tania Burchard, Cristina Devecchi, Marc Fleurbaey, Des Gasper, Caroline Hart, Pushpam Kumar, Enrica Chiappero Martinetti, Santosh Mehrotra, Mathias Nebel, Teresa Herrera Rendon, Rosie Vaughan and Andrea Vigorito. These reports were invaluable, and we appreciate the expertise, time and attention that these scholars have dedicated to this project. We are in debt to our editor, Phil Good, who continues to believe in the value of our endeavours and has supported this second book based on our Capability Conferences.

This book should be of interest to capability scholars who wish to reflect further on themes related to Sen's work on SCT and its links to the capability approach. It can also be of interest to social choice scholars who wish to consider broader issues related to SCT, and in general to anyone interested in human development and its links to the capability approach.