

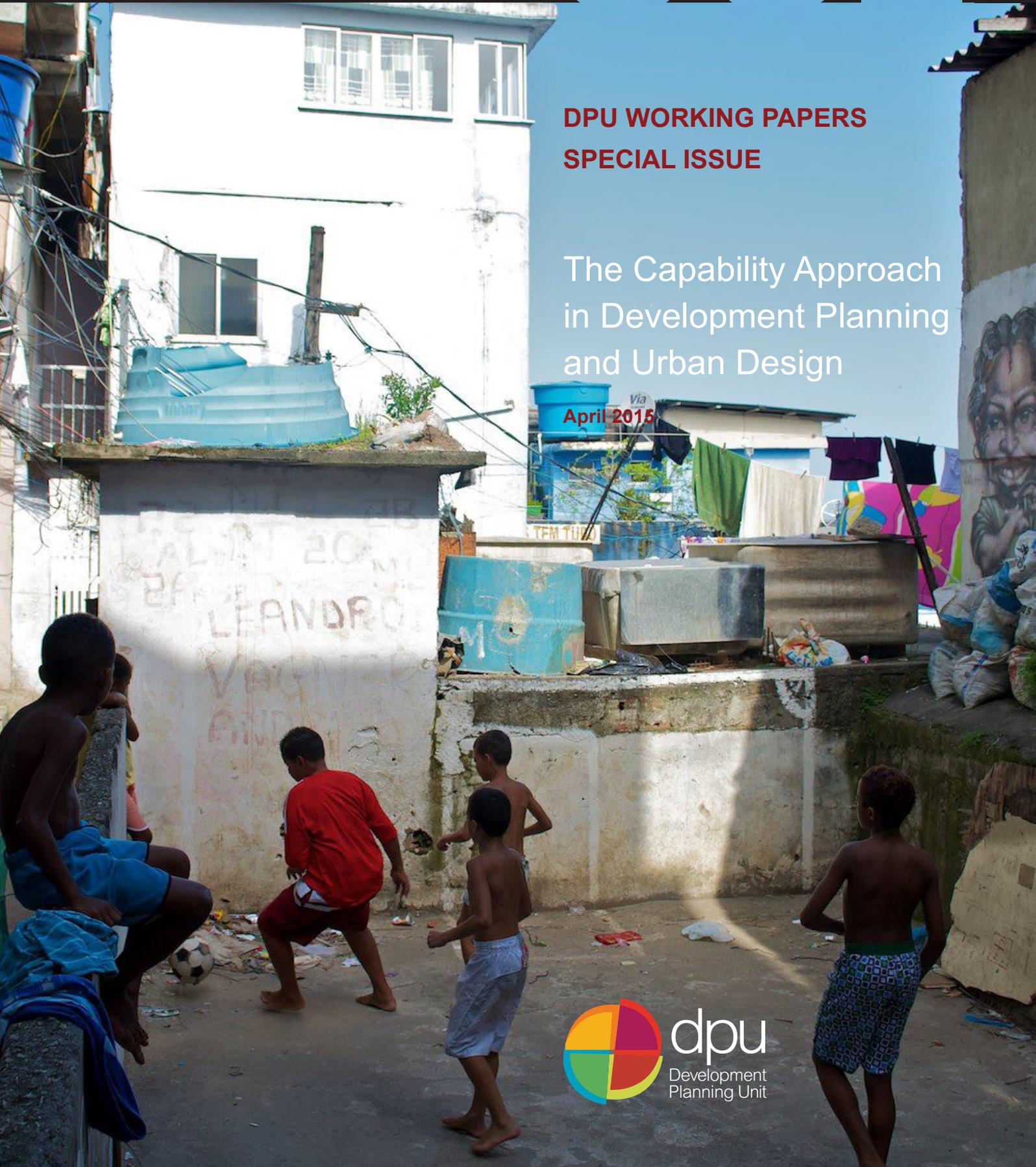


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**DPU WORKING PAPERS
SPECIAL ISSUE**

The Capability Approach
in Development Planning
and Urban Design

April 2015



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DPU WORKING PAPERS
SPECIAL ISSUE

The Capability Approach in Development Planning and Urban Design

Edited by Alexandre Apsan Frediani and Julia Hansen

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Foreword

It's really a source of personal satisfaction to forward this issue of the special series of DPU working papers on the capability approach; firstly, because it represents a materialization of an uncommon way of understanding university teaching. It's really unusual to find educational proposals, such as the Masters programmes at the DPU, where theory and practice are so intertwined and where students have an active role in this. In a system dominated by a banking approach to education, the Masters represent an educational processes where students, in dialogue and interaction with lecturers and other external actors, discover meanings, make insightful connections between practice and theory and, at the end, are able to generate not only a meaningful learning but also a transformative one. In that sense, in spite of the different context and momentum, the Masters follow educational approaches of remarkable, inspiring and committed adult educators such Freire, Horton, Coady and Tomkins.

Secondly, and linked with this transformative spirit, this Special Issue is a clear example of an Academia that does not want to be confined to the physical space of universities; it walks side by side with other groups, especially with the ones that are specially affected by problems but, at the same time, are promoting alternatives. This way of generating a collaborative and practical knowledge together is a clear example of what Boaventura de Sousa Santos named cognitive justice: a joint construction of knowledge(s) held by individuals and communities involved in struggles for social justice and that is relevant to these struggles.

Thirdly, I believe that this text provides very interesting insights to the field of planning and capabilities. As noted in the introduction, it is an underexplored and undertheorized field, compared with other areas of the human development and capabilities approach. One of the most valuable contributions is the theoretical

framework elaborated by Alexandre Apsan Frediani and Julia Hansen and presented in the introduction. In their proposal, classic elements of the capabilities approach such choices, abilities, opportunities and well-being dimensions, are intertwined with key elements of the Sustainable Livelihoods framework and from Structuralist theories. On one hand, the use of the first framework brings to the analysis the idea of assets relevant for people: human, physical, economic, financial, natural and political assets that are relevant for people and groups to fulfill their aspirations and expand their capabilities. On the other hand, connecting capabilities with elements from Structural theories (production of norms, procedures and regulations and the more global structural drivers) emphasizes the necessary relationship between agency and structure and reduces the risk of using the capability approach with an individualistic outlook.

For all these reasons, I consider this Special Issue an excellent contribution to the academic debate on capability approach and planning field and, at the same time, a real example of a way to understand the contribution of universities to human development in its teaching, researching and social extension perspective. I wish a long life to this text, and, hopefully, more contributions like it will follow.

Alejandra Boni, Valencia, November 2014.

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Introduction

Amartya Sen's writings questioning the notion and measurement of development have brought to the forefront the need to go beyond an income-led understanding of poverty. Following Sen's work, a series of academics and practitioners have contributed to the elaboration of the capability approach, which has been used mostly as an evaluative framework to capture the multidimensional aspects of development. Instead of focusing on utility maximisation, the capability approach aims to capture how change affects what people are able to do and be, also understood as people's real freedoms. While extensively applied in the field of economics, philosophy, and to some extent in pedagogy, there have been few efforts to utilise the capability approach in a more propositional manner for the purpose of planning and design (albeit with some notable exceptions, for example: Biggeri and Ferrannini, 2014; Frediani, Boni and Gasper, 2014; Ibrahim and Tiwari, 2014).

At the Bartlett Development Planning Unit, a series of initiatives have been taken to address this gap and explore what would be the linkages, complementarities and contributions between the capability approach and development planning and urban design. In addition to research and workshops with other institutions engaging in a similar endeavour¹, these reflections were also done with the students of masters' programmes at the DPU through lectures, seminars, dissertations and action learning projects. This dialogue between staff and students has led to interesting and insightful contributions in this field, which this special issue of DPU working papers aims to highlight. In this introduction, we would like to explore how students have questioned, complemented or proposed new ways of thinking about capabilities or how the capability approach has been applied for the purpose of development planning and urban design. First, we outline how the contributions of this special issue relate to key debates present in the thinking and application of the capability approach in this field, and then explore some recommendations for future work. We argue that the contributions in the special issue emphasise the need for the capability approach to be applied in a *contextualised manner*, relating to issues of structuring processes and institutional analysis; building on concepts of *collective capabilities* and *power relations*; and fostering *dynamic* and *projective* thinking.

Alexandre Apsan Frediani and Julia Hansen

From utility maximization to expansion of freedoms

Drawing from the work of Amartya Sen (1999) and Martha Nussbaum (2011), capabilities are understood as people's freedom to achieve the things and experiences they have reason to value. The notion of 'capabilities' differs from the notion of 'capacities', as it makes reference to a wider set of issues shaping people's freedom to pursue their aspired dimensions of well-being. Instead of focusing on subjective life satisfaction or objective well-being achievements as do other areas of well-being literature, authors within the capability approach literature underscore the freedom people have to shape their lives in meaningful ways. This concept of freedom can be understood as the choices, abilities and opportunities of individuals and groups to pursue well-being dimensions (Frediani, 2010). 'Choices' are the available strategies people have at their disposal to expand well-being aspirations. 'Abilities' refer to the set of skills and capacities individuals and groups have access to which would mediate the achievement of a certain dimension of well-being. Meanwhile, 'opportunities' are the structural elements conditioning the availability and use of abilities and choices (see Box 1 for an illustration of this definition). A capability analysis requires a dynamic assessment of the relationship between choices, abilities and opportunities to achieve well-being outcomes. Capability-led studies, therefore, would engage with the multiple scales of structures that interact with and affect how people successfully or unsuccessfully navigate towards their idea of 'the good life.'

Underlying the debate on how capabilities are understood and pursued are more fundamental questions about justice and equity. Sen and Nussbaum's works have pushed current understandings of justice beyond utility maximisation and to surfaced questions of equity in the distribution of capabilities. The understanding of social diversity present in the capability approach has contributed to emphasising how difference is constructed and how it shapes groups' capabilities. As with other debates in this field (White, 2010), the capability approach has the potential to bring together material, relational and subjective components of well-being, directly referring to issues of recognition and distribution present in preoccupations with justice. The capability approach is not concerned with exploring levels of satisfaction or happiness; it positions well-being within

debates of social change and justice, emphasising the importance of the enabling or disabling environment for the pursuit of well-being.

While it emphasises the role of structural processes that influence capabilities, the capability approach, as articulated by Sen, nevertheless sees the individual as the primary unit of analysis. Many authors have pointed out that this creates a false divorce between individuals' well-being and freedoms and the capabilities that can only be experienced collectively by groups and societies. Acknowledging these 'group' or 'collective' capabilities allows the capability approach discourse to more holistically address the factors that may inhibit or promote an enabling environment in an applied context (Ibrahim and Tiwari, 2014). Nevertheless, further literature is needed to move beyond the methodological individualism present in many applications of the capability approach so that the framework may contribute to analysing and producing empowering environments.

The dissertations by Brayford, Wongtschowski, and Nunes speak directly to this existing gap by questioning the role that norms and institutions play in enhancing capabilities between people and among groups. Sarah Brayford makes a clear and well-argued contribution on how the capability approach can provide a mechanism to implement a well-being approach in development practice. Brayford's work particularly stresses the importance of focusing on the personal relationships that shape people's capabilities as a means to overcome the methodological individualism predominant in many interpretations of the capability approach. By reflecting on how development practice can support the relationships between women and

children, Brayford encourages practitioners to "creatively inhabit" (White, 2002) "the tensions of mutual and conflicting interests inherent in relationships of love and care".

Meanwhile, the dissertations by Andre Wongtschowski and Teresa Maria Fernandes Cerqueira Nunes relate to the debate from the field of development practice by exploring the conditions within which development interventions operate. Both dissertations illustrate how the capability approach, as an evaluative framework, requires engagement with the norms and procedures of institutions that shape the political economy underpinning the development projects under investigation. Wongtschowski's paper analyses case studies of social enterprises from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and concludes that while they contributed to the expansion of some capabilities, they needed to be complemented by a series of policies and regulatory structures. Meanwhile, Nunes explores the relationship between cooperatives and capabilities in fragile societies through a case study from East Timor. Similar to other literature in the field reflecting on the relationship between cooperatives and human development (Vicari, 2008 and Bellanca et al., 2010), Nunes emphasises the need to recognise and investigate collective capabilities as well as the institutional power relations affecting the practices of cooperatives.

Space and urban design

In the current literature on capabilities, there has been a limited amount of work exploring the relationship between space and well-being in cities. The few studies in this field

Box 1.1. The Bicycle Example

In the capability literature, the relationship between a bicycle (an example of a commodity) and capabilities is often utilised to illustrate Sen's concepts with more clarity. To examine the success of an initiative that has focused on the distribution of bicycles to reduce poverty, one would first have to question the purpose of using a bicycle: to enhance mobility, generate income opportunities, for leisure, etc. Such outcomes are some of the multiple dimensions of well-being associated with cycling and in the capability literature are referred to as 'functionings'. There are a series of factors conditioning people (individuals and groups in all of their diversity) in their use of the bicycle for achieving their valued functionings. Such social, economic, environmental, political, and physical elements are defined as 'conversion factors' (Robeyns, 2005). These factors can be understood as individual abilities (i.e. skills to cycle or physical impairment), collective abilities (e.g. mobilisation capacities to push for legislations that will protect cyclists), or opportunities (e.g. social norms constraining some social groups from using bicycles). Meanwhile, a capability analysis would also require engaging with the alternative options for achieving people's valued aspirations to examine whether people use bicycles because of a lack of options or based on a choice to do so (for more on this, see: Oosterlaken, 2009 or Frediani, 2010).

have evolved mainly in two ways. The first approach has focused on how the availability of infrastructure or characteristics of the built environment might compromise or facilitate individuals' abilities to enhance their well-being. The second trend in this field has focused on attempting to measure the diverse levels of quality of life spread across the urban territory, making use of GIS mapping and visualisation techniques to express urban inequalities in terms of distribution of resources.

The first area of work in this field draws on discussions about the functioning of the built environment to explore how individuals, in all of their diversity, make use of particular urban facilities. The capability approach literature is used in this context to stress the importance of examining not only the availability of certain urban infrastructure facilities, but also who uses them and for what purposes. The concept of 'conversion factors' within the capability literature resonates particularly well with the preoccupations of this field, as it highlights the importance of exploring a series of factors that mediate the availability and use of commodities (i.e. personal, environmental and social factors). However, such tendencies have often reduced notions of capabilities and freedom to mere usability of space, without sufficiently addressing the wider social, political and economic trends underpinning the production of such spaces.

The second trend linking space and capabilities attempts to measure the quality of life in urban territories by looking at resource distribution, such as proximity to infrastructure, and levels of deprivation. Also present in many urban sociology studies, this body of work has the potential to generate critical evidence on spatial segregation and is frequently expressed through maps of deprivations in cities. While the studies convincingly convey the need for more comprehensive data on these questions, their use of the capability approach is still fairly inchoate. The focus on measurement within these initiatives runs the risk of establishing reductionist assumptions about the relationship between the availability of and proximity to urban facilities and the reduction of poverty, thus contradicting some of the underlying notions of capabilities. Hence, the links between concepts of space and poverty so far in the capability approach literature have been construed in a limited, instrumental, and localised manner.

The dissertations of Julia Hansen and Amar Sood address urban design and capabilities through the different entry point of deconstructing the processes of producing space (Frediani and Boano, 2012). By relating notions from the literature on the capability approach to those from urban design and debates on the social production of space, both dissertations contribute to the reflection on the relationship between societal processes and the production of the built environment, particularly in the context of informality in the urban global south. Sood's dissertation proposes the 'Capability-led framework for

urban design', which brings up the notion of time in the relationship between the production of space and capability expansion. Meanwhile, Hansen's 'Capability Locus Framework for Socio-spatial Change' with its focus on collective agency is a productive lens to explore the processes and multiple outcomes of the efforts of informal settlement dwellers when shaping their environment. The reflections instigated by these dissertations have led to a continuous re-evaluation of the relationship between space and the capability approach (Frediani, 2015).

Participation and development planning

Most of the existing literature in the field of human development and capabilities has applied the capability approach as an evaluative framework, with relatively little use of the theory in projective ways. Meanwhile, the DPU's work in this field has attempted to elaborate the mechanisms through which the capability approach can contribute to the thinking and practice of participatory approaches to planning and urban design. The purpose of the recent special issue of the *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* on development projects has been precisely to encourage more applications of Sen's ideas to contribute to the process of imagining alternatives and elaborating development interventions, using the scale of the local as an entry point (Frediani, Boni and Gasper, 2014). As argued in the introduction piece of this special issue, pursuing development projects through a human development and capability perspective means engaging with issues of participation, collective action and power.

The pieces by Frediani, Hansen and Macia aim to contribute to these on-going debates. Frediani draws on the work of Alkire (2002), Drèze and Sen (2002) and Crocker (2008) and proposes a model through which participatory capabilities could be examined. Operating through the lens of deliberative democracy embedded in the work reviewed, this piece illustrates one mechanism through which participatory development projects can be planned. Hansen's essay focuses on the application of Frediani and Boano's (2012) notion of 'capability space of participatory design' to examine the outcomes of a self-help housing programme in Asuncion, Paraguay. While still engaging in an evaluative exercise, Hansen's essay reflects on key issues that contribute to the thinking around the values guiding a capability-sensitive project design.

Mascia's provocative piece calls for further work on the articulation between participatory practices and the capability approach. Macia argues that further reflection is needed in the capability literature on how power, conflict and decision making affect participatory approaches to design and planning. Bold at times, Macia's work demonstrates the need for the literature in this field to reflect more explicitly on the role of development practitioners

and how the capability approach can support them in enabling more empowering processes. Underlying these three contributions is the emphasis that participation needs to be understood beyond the confined boundaries of development projects and embedded in wider efforts to deepen democratic practices. These pieces also suggest that further work is urgently needed to embed the reflection between capabilities and participatory practices in radical democracy (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). As argued by Frediani and Boano (2012), rather than building consensus that constructs new unitary and totalising meanings, positioning the capability approach within radical democracy would mean exposing contradictions, pluralities, encounters and disjunctions. As noted by Mascia and Hansen, the work of Miessen (2010) and his concept of ‘conflictual participation’ is particularly relevant in providing insights for follow up discussions in this field.

Ways forward for the Capability Approach

Based on the reflections between staff and students at the DPU and points articulated by the pieces in this special issue of DPU Working Papers, there are some key issues associated to the application of the capability approach that need to be developed. Firstly, its core concepts need to be situated in context to become fully operational and to be able to draw upon theories of power and institutional analysis in relevant and meaningful ways across different scenarios. Secondly, certain strands of thought within the framework, particularly collective capabilities and power relations, are often underutilised within mainstream capability approach literature; nevertheless, as shown in some of the papers in this volume, they have strong potential to empower development projects and grassroots movements and need to be further flushed out. Finally, carrying on from the previous point, the framework needs to become dynamic enough to support a projective function in increasing wellbeing and freedoms, in addition to the evaluative one that has been the focus of the operationalisation of the capability approach up until now. These ways forward are expanded upon using four components developed by staff and students at the DPU, and illustrated at the end of this discussion by a diagram that reflects the learning and directions the capability approach has taken as a result of much collaboration.

As articulated by the pieces in this special issue, at the DPU the capability approach has been applied by honing in on the concepts of ‘choices,’ ‘abilities,’ ‘opportunities’ and ‘aspirations’ to unpack what freedom might mean in context. ‘Choices’ are understood as the different options available for the pursuit of a certain aspiration. A focus on choices calls for the recognition of everyday practices to articulate meaningful alternative futures and to define how agency is actionable in any given situation. In terms of participatory capabilities, choices define particular de-

cision-making processes; in terms of housing freedom, they could determine a particular strategy of housing (i.e., self-help, cooperatives, social rental, etc.). Hansen’s paper on a housing project in Paraguay shows how a detailed analysis of choices can clarify where people’s agency (individual or collective) is well developed or inchoate.

The concept of ‘abilities’ is closely associated to the notion of access to assets to pursue valued functionings. Abilities can be reflected in terms of access to human, physical, natural, social, financial, and political assets, dimensions that have been widely discussed in the literature on livelihoods. Abilities could also include other dimensions such as psychological assets, which might relate more with the concept of agency and the ‘capacity to aspire’ and for ‘creative thinking’. Within the capability approach, an emphasis on the concept of abilities highlights how social relations mediate availability and access to resources. Similarly, as shown in Brayford’s paper, the concept of relational well-being identifies the space in which personal relationships and social constructs such as identity affect agency and access to resources (White, 2010). This recognition of the social rootedness of ‘abilities’ is essential to framing thinking around collective agency in order to challenge those social relations that contribute to disabling environments. This pushes to the forefront of the capability approach discourse the need to engage with multi-dimensional notions of power (such as Gaventa, 2006) that account for the diversity of ways in which various resources types can be converted to capabilities.

Meanwhile, the concept of ‘opportunities’ aims to emphasise structural conditions governing capabilities. As argued by the papers of Wongtschowski, Nunes and Hansen, well-being can be expanded for a certain group of ‘beneficiaries’ without restructuring the relationships that continuously reproduce inequalities. Therefore, it becomes crucial to engage with the norms, procedures and practices that condition the way resources are distributed and claimed. There should be more studies that base contextualised institutional analysis within a capability approach framework. By doing so, the implicit argument is to ensure that the capability approach addresses not only the ‘low-hanging fruits’ of development, but also the structuring conditions affecting poverty and inequality.

The concept of ‘functionings’, defined in the capability approach literature as the doings and beings people value, can be re-interpreted as ‘aspirations.’ Appadurai’s work on the ‘capacity to aspire’ situates the capability to envision a desired future and the way to achieve it in “wider ethical and metaphysical ideas which derive from larger cultural norms” (2004, 67-8). This notion re-orientates the idea of culture as inherited practices and values from the past, instead seeing cultural norms and arrangements as potential loci of consensus and action for social change. The capacity to aspire can be seen

as a 'metacapacity', "whose fortification may accelerate the building of other capacities by the poor themselves" (Appadurai, 2004:82); it is also a capacity that poverty inhibits as limited access to resources inhibits risk taking and exploration of pathways towards desired outcomes. Thus, an important component of overcoming poverty is overcoming the limitations on imagining and designing the future. While 'functionings' can imply a 'here and now' assertion of freedom, the concept of 'aspirations' is future-oriented and encompasses the capacity to navigate towards achievement of valued visions of 'the good life.' As expressed in the diagram in Figure 1.1, a focus on aspirations encourages time-based analysis, linking cultural values and inherited structures and capabilities to future possibilities. In development practice, reframing the notion of 'functionings' as 'aspirations' could also help development projects avoid the common tendency of predetermining measures of success without sufficient input from stakeholders.

The graphic in Figure 1.1 has been developed at the DPU to illustrate how the above components of the capability approach relate to each other. Using a similar structure as the sustainable livelihoods framework (DFID, 1999), the diagram describes how capabilities, as expressed through choices, abilities, opportunities and aspirations, and which are imbedded in evolving contexts and built on widely diverse personal and collective resources, are converted to valued well-being outcomes. Crucially, this illustration attempts to draw attention to well-being trajectories towards achieving aspirations, or, in other words, it emphasises the arrows rather than the boxes. Instead of describing a static state of being, the diagram seeks to unpack the relationships between each component in order to reveal how well-being is pursued, to identify potentialities and obstacles, and thus to support the process of making a strategy for capability expansion. This framework requires a historical perspective that not only reflects how capabilities are shaped at the present, but that can also explore how capabilities have changed over the years and how they might change in the future.

Conclusion

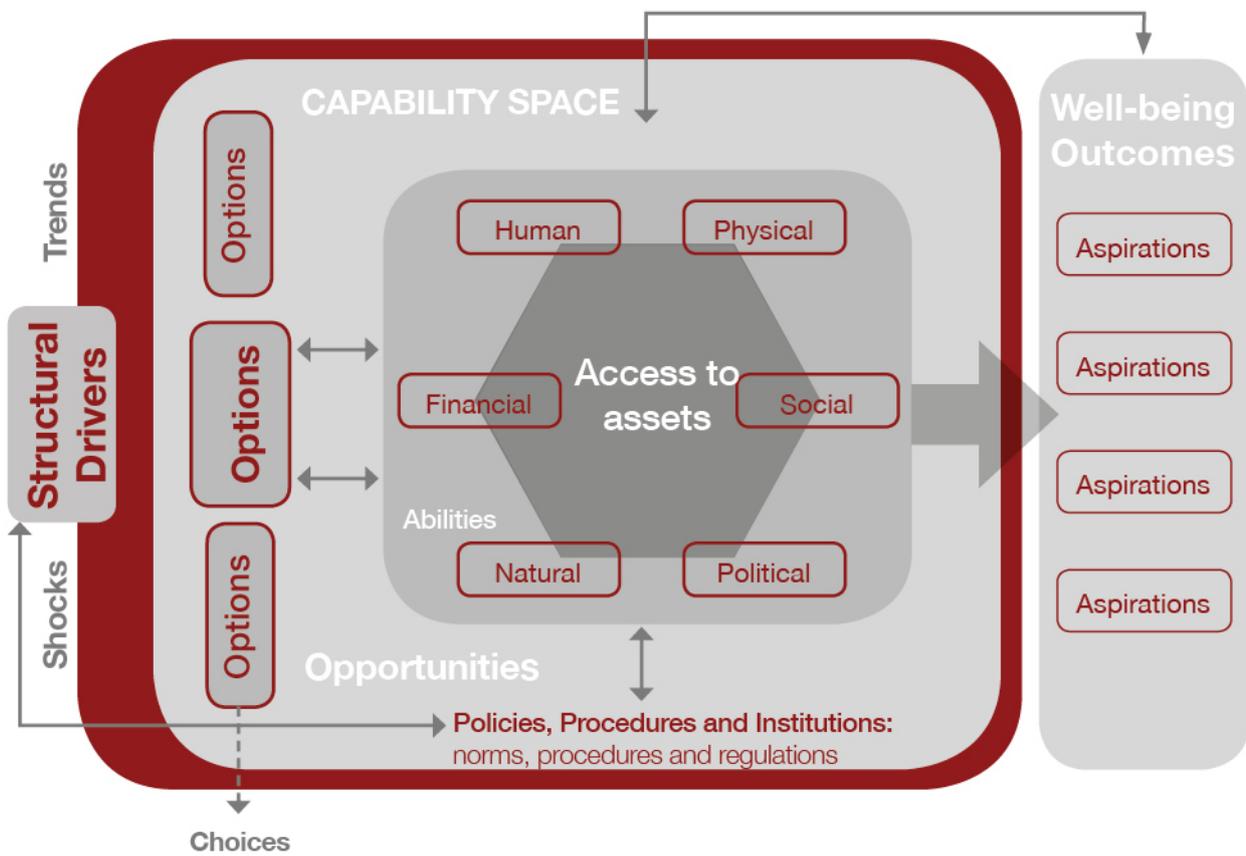
The journey of reflecting, teaching, using and learning about the capability approach between academic staff and students at the DPU has been an immensely enriching experience. This open-ended process, where students not only were part of using concepts but also of suggesting ways of understanding them, has flourished as collaborative forms of knowledge production. This special issue of DPU Working Papers aims to recognise such spaces of creativity and share some of the learning produced.

While not included in this series, one of the crucial spaces for such reflections has been the action learning initiatives undertaken by the students of the MSc in Social Development Practice. The capability approach was used in a variety of ways to explore impact and aspirations of urban regeneration in London (Frediani, Butcher and Watt, 2013; Frediani, Butcher and Hirst, 2014) as well as the outcomes of informal settlement upgrading in Kisumu, Kenya (Frediani, Walker and Butcher, 2013). These projects were undertaken with community groups and civil society organisations and the capability approach was often applied as a conceptual lens to guide the theoretical framework and the process of engagement. The focus on choices, abilities, opportunities and aspirations provided a useful entry point to structure engagement with a variety of actors, unleashing critical engagement with the past as well as imaginative configurations of the future.

For students encountering an onslaught of development theories and paradigms in the space of a short year, the capability approach has frequently been an attractive framework. Against the backdrop of an ecosystem of development agencies, national governments, and NGOs all with resource and political constraints, its tenets suggest an inherently positive and infinite outlook on what human beings, in all their diversity, can do and be. In the capability approach, students have found a powerful way to address one of the hardest ethical questions associated to the processes of change: what and for whom is development?

Figure 1.1. The Capability Approach Revisited. Source: Compiled by authors

The Capability Approach



NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Grupo de Estudios en Desarrollo, Cooperación y Ética, Universitat Politècnica de València; International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam; Dipartimento di Scienze per

l'Economia e l'Impresa and Laboratorio ARCO (Action Research for Co-development), Università Degli Studi Firenze; and Scuola di Economia e Studi Aziendali, Roma Tre Università Degli Studi.

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“Well-being happens
in relationship”:
The implications for
women, children and
development practice

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1. Introduction

A polarity exists in current approaches to the well-being of women and children in development. On the one hand, the 'smart economics' paradigm stresses the essential complementarity of children's and women's interests, seeming to overlook the fact that "even the most nurturing relationships involve some conflicts of interests and essentially contradictory relationships" (White, 2002a, p.1099). On the other, the interdependence and "genuine mutualities of interest" that can also characterise relationships of love and care often appear eclipsed within right-based discourses that emphasise the conflict, competition and abuse to which women and children are subject (ibid).

The purpose of this paper is to challenge these two dominant perspectives on women's and children's well-being to find more nuanced understanding of how relationships influence their well-being. The paper begins by reviewing the two approaches and demonstrates that a failure to give an adequate account of the complexity and centrality of relationships to women's and children's well-being has resulted in significant operational weaknesses for both approaches. The section concludes by proposing that any attempt to promote the well-being of women and/or children must recognise that ways in which "well-being happens in relationship" (White 2010, p.171) and navigate the tensions and solidarities inherent in their relationships with others.

The second part of the paper introduces the capability approach as a theoretical framework to explore the implications of women and children's social embeddedness on their well-being. Although Sen's capability approach has been criticised for methodological and ethical individualism, recent debates have attempted to more adequately theorise the relational dimensions of these core concepts. The paper continues by mobilising concepts emerging from these debates such as 'external capabilities' (Foster and Handy, 2008), 'collective agency' (Ibrahim, 2006), 'structures of living together' (Deneulin, 2008) and 'relational capabilities' (Uyan-Semerci, 2007) to map out the significance of relationships to the achievement of well-being by women and children. The theoretical discussion is integrated with a discussion of its practical implications, and broad recommendations are made for how a relational understanding of women and children's well-being could be recognised in development policy and practice.

1.1 Locating women and children within the history of development practice

The treatment of women and children in the history of development practice shows striking parallels (White, 2002a; 2002b; Oakley, 1994; Lansdowne, 1994). Beginning with the paternal charity of classic 'welfare' approaches, the tendency to view women and children through the lens of 'need' and as objects of assistance has been remarkably persistent through the decades (Moser, 1993). According to Oakley (1994), the 'vulnerability' of women and children is rooted in the operation of masculine power rather than innate biological weakness. Constituted as "non-adults" who lack competencies of rationality and autonomy, women and children's subordinate status has excluded them from basic social and legal protections while allocating (masculine and adult) others the right to decide 'their best interests'.

Assumptions of women's and children's social and economic dependency have also contributed to making the household the dominant unit of analysis for much development practice and research. Although this has practical advantages for data collection, the effect has been to obscure women and children's individual experiences and entitlements within "black box" of the 'family', masking the way in which households can be sites of inequitable power relations, unequal distribution of resources and abuse for women and children (Oakley, 1994, p.19; Whitehead, 1981).

Although the potential of women as contributors to development has subsequently been discovered with great enthusiasm by anti-poverty and efficiency approaches, the tendency has been to utilise women as a development resource, seeing them as objects of investment rather than recognising them as development subjects. Planners have continued to instrumentalise women in their mothering role, constructing women as "objects of reproduction" that require discipline as well as support in order to nurture children into productive citizens (Bradshaw, 2008, p.199).

Children, meanwhile, have been valued by planners "not in their being but in their becoming" (Oakley, 1994, p.23). Regarded as "adults-in-waiting", (Kelly, 2004 in Lister, 2006, p.322) children have been targeted for 'human capital investments', designed to ensure that they mature into tomorrow's educated, healthy and economically productive workforce.

These three trends in development policy practice fail to give an adequate account of women and children as individuals who can exercise agency in their own development. The rights-based approaches discussed below attempt to rectify this oversight.

1.2 Rights-based approaches: creating individual agents of change

Rights based approaches (RBAs) respond to critiques of welfare, efficiency and anti-poverty approaches by demanding a radical shift in the way that development practice conceptualises children and women. They call for women and children to be recognised as “the subjects of rights and participants in actions affecting them” rather than merely “passive beneficiaries” and challenge the way that their interests have been amalgamated with the family unit (Biggieri et al, 2006, p.60). The development agenda moves away from meeting ‘needs’ towards securing rights, and advocacy, mainstreaming and the direct participation of women and children in development planning become the new priorities for development agencies (White, 2002b, p.508).

Although its re-assertion of women’s and children’s subjectivity and agency is much needed, the individualistic discourse of rights-based development approaches is problematic (White, 2002a; 2002b; 2007; Trani, 2013). By emphasising individual claim-making and autonomy, RBAs ignore the way that people’s “practical options and entitlement claims” are often embedded in their relationships with others (White, 2002a, p.1098). This is particularly true for women and children where their social and/or legal status is as the property of men/adults (ibid). White (2002b) argues that by insisting on speaking an alien language of individual rights to collectivist cultures, RBAs risks alienating potential supporters and missing opportunities to utilise local (relational) discourses to promote the welfare of children.

Furthermore, the way in which rights-based approaches “disorganise” people from their context and “re-organise” them into the categories of ‘women’ and ‘children’ often has little to do with their own perceptions of their identity or the location of their interests (White 2002a, p.1098). Despite the emphasis of RBAs on the divergence between interests of adults and children, females and males, etc., people’s strongest sense of identification is usually across these divides in kinship or family groups where interests can be extremely enmeshed (ibid). Children’s embeddedness in relationships of care and dependency for example, means that their well-being “depends self-evidently on that of the families and communities to which they belong” (White, 2002a, p.731).

Moreover, in situations of chronic poverty it is often both inappropriate and impossible to address the deprivations and abuses to which women and children are subject outside of their family and community context (White, 2007). To do so is to mask the extent to which poor men, women and children experience a collective denial of their basic rights, entitlements and services, and to diagnose issues of political economy as problems of mis-recognition (ibid, p.734).

1.3 Smart Economics and the mutuality of women and children’s interests

“The well-being of women and children is inseparable. What is good for women is good for children with few, if any exceptions.... A world fit for children is also a world fit for women. They are inseparable and indivisible – one cannot exist without the other.” (UNICEF, 2007, pp.12,15)

So-called ‘Smart Economics’ paints a picture of women as the development dream: a “conduit of policy” that, when conditions are right, efficiently and effectively translate investments in their well-being and rights into a reduction in child poverty while also having a positive effect on economic growth (Molyneux, 2006).

The unproblematic synergy between the well-being of children and women that the approach proposes is founded on evidence that women tend to be more “other-oriented” and child-centred in their preferences and use of agency than men (Chant, 2006, p.12). Thus by improving women’s status, increasing their participation in decision-making, and improving their access to and control over income, the approach assumes that it can create knock-on benefits for children, since ‘empowered’ women will naturally use their influence to prioritise a greater share of resources towards children’s needs and to advocate for children’s interests (Whitehead, 1981; Chant, 2006; Bradshaw, 2008; Jones et al., 2007; UNICEF, 2007). Policy-makers promise that the results will include “more efficient use of resources... significant social returns... improving child survival... [and] considerable intergenerational pay-offs” (World Bank, 1995, p.22).

The promise that “two birds can be killed with one stone” (Chant, 2006) is understandably appealing to New Poverty Agenda policy-makers as well as strategically useful to feminists. However, despite some success in placing issues of women’s rights on the agenda of more conservative development organisations, feminists have extensively critiqued the logic of the approach for contributing to a “feminisation” of responsibility for poverty reduction (Chant, 2006; 2008).

By creating the expectation that resources targeted to women will translate into improvements in household and child well-being, smart economics places the burden for

"fixing the world" on women, while ignoring the costs to their own well-being of shouldering an "intensifying" and "diversifying" burden for household well-being (Chant and Sweetman, 2012). As development interventions attempt to exploit women across their triple role – as bread-winners, carers and community managers – women's already limited time for sleep, leisure and self-care shrinks (Elson, 1995; Moser, 1993), while children experience knock-on consequences in the quality and quantity of their care if women's reproductive responsibilities are not supported or shared (Jones et al, 2007; Hannan, 2000).

Moreover, as Molyneux (2006, p.49) points out, despite purporting to tackle gendered disadvantage and inequality, smart economics approaches are often premised on the exploitation of the "gendered assets and dispositions of women." Thus while maternal cash transfer programmes such as Progresa/Oportunidades and Creciendo Juntas may secure impressive reductions in child poverty, they also entrench existing social perceptions that child well-being is a female responsibility, promoting "a highly non-egalitarian model of the family" and "exacerbating prevailing tendencies among men to limit women's rights, and to avoid assuming responsibilities for their children's upkeep" (ibid; Chant, 2006, p.185).

Although smart economics presents the distinction between women as the 'means' and child poverty reduction

as the 'ends' of development as irrelevant, in reality, interventions are left with little incentive to address gendered structures and disadvantage that do not directly impinge on women's performance of a caring role (Baden and Goetz, 1998; Jackson, 1998). Women are essentialised as mothers and the tensions that can exist between the aspirations, needs and interests of children and women (both as carers and non-carers) are not acknowledged. By falsely conflating the needs and interests of women and children, smart economics risks subjugating women's well-being to the pursuit of child poverty reduction and child welfare (Chant and Sweetman, 2013).

Examining these dominant development approaches to women and children in development reveals that "well-being happens in relationship" (White, 2010, p.171). Children and women cannot be abstracted from their relationships. The individualistic discourse and category-centred approach of RBAs fail to take account the extent to which women and children's well-being is embedded in their relationships with family and community. The complexity of the dynamics of women's and children's relationships cannot be underestimated. Practitioners must "creatively inhabit" the dynamic tensions that exist in relationships of love and care, recognising that they are sites both of solidarity and of conflict and neither assuming unproblematic mutuality or essential contradiction (White, 2002a).

2. Conceptualising well-being

This paper uses the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen (1999) as a framework to explore the central role played by relationships in the well-being of women and children. The broad informational space of the capability approach may pose certain difficulties for its operationalisation but enables the framework to more adequately represent the complex world of human social life than narrower and simpler theoretical approaches (Smith and Seward, 2009). In particular, recent attempts to extend the conceptual framework of the capability approach have sought to give a more thorough account of the collective and relational dimensions of human well-being. A basic description of the core elements of the capability approach is given below, while section 3 of this paper draws on concepts emerging from those debates to elaborate some of the ways in which children and women's well-being is relationally embedded and to suggest their implications for development policy and practice.

The concepts of 'functionings' and 'capabilities' are integral to the capability approach's understanding of human well-being. 'Functionings' in the capability approach refers to the achievement of the beings and doings that people have reason to value such as being literate, being adequately nourished and having warm and supportive relationships with others. Meanwhile 'capabilities' refers to the freedom that people have to realise such objectives. Well-being achievement (functionings) as a realised state is distinguished from well-being freedom (capabilities).

Since the exercise of human agency in selecting valued objectives is considered an essential element in human flourishing, the capability approach evaluates adult well-being in the space of well-being freedoms rather than achievements. "The 'good life' is regarded as one that is partly a life of genuine choice, and not one in which the person is forced into a particular life – however rich it might be in other respects" (Sen, 1996, p.59). As a result, the goal of development is not to achieve universal levels of particular functionings, but to expand the freedom that people have to achieve the life they have reason to value (Sen, 1999, p.74). This is more contentious when it comes to children's well-being, however, as will be discussed.

If the goal of development is to expand capabilities, then poverty itself is understood as "capability deprivation" (Sen, 1999). The capability approach maintains that pov-

erty is a multi-dimensional state of ill-being that cannot be reduced to simple measurements of household consumption or income. Although a lack of material inputs can be an important contributor to capability deprivation, the approach emphasises that a variety of individual, local and structural "conversion factors" affect the capacity of individuals to transform commodities into the realisation of valued choices (Frediani, 2010, p.176). Understanding the capability deprivation of women and children therefore requires taking account of such factors as the availability of public services, gender norms and roles, intra-household distribution of resources, discrimination, vulnerability to water-borne disease, illiteracy, lack of mobility, etc., (Sen, 1999, p.88). The task of planners is not only to improve access to material resources but to promote social arrangements that expand people's freedom to pursue the objectives they value.

Capabilities themselves may play an instrumental role in limiting or promoting the acquisition of further freedoms and are regarded as both the "primary ends" and the "primary means" of development (Sen, 1999). Absolute poverty can be seen in capability terms as "the failure of basic capabilities" in which a lack of core functioning in areas such as adequate nourishment, bodily health or bodily integrity undermines the exercise of other dependent capabilities (*ibid*).

Although "avoiding pain and having a joyful life cannot be among the various objectives we have reason to value" (Sen, 2002, p.85), a capability understanding of well-being emphasises what people can do and be over and above their expressions of satisfaction, happiness or pleasure. Sen's caution around using subjective satisfaction as a proxy for well-being stems from his previous work into household resource allocation where he finds that people tend to adjust their expectations downwards in response to prolonged exposure to poverty and deprivation (*ibid*). As a result of such adapting their aspirations and preferences to 'realistic' levels, people may register apparently high subjective satisfaction despite living in conditions that are self-evidently damaging to their welfare. By focusing on what people can actually do and be rather than their subjective satisfaction, Sen argues that capabilities offers a more "objective" and direct assessment of well-being and development, while subjective experience is incorporated as part of the broader capability set (Sen, 1990; 2002).

Marginalising considerations of subjective satisfaction in evaluations of well-being does not eliminate the problem of adaption however. As White (2010, p.165) points out, people are not only "subject of" - actively involved in creating meaning out of their lives - but are also "subject to" "values, ideologies and beliefs" that shape the degree to which possible options represent compelling choices. Biggieri et al.'s (2006) attempt to use a bottom-up participatory approach to draw up child-specific capability lists illustrates well the role that life history and social environment can play in constituting capabilities. While a focus group composed of former child labourers readily propose paid work as a relevant capability, not a single other child questioned for their study – conference delegates without a background in the labour market - conceptualises this as valuable capability for children (ibid).

Furthermore, isolating subjective experience from wider achievements and goals in this way can seem rather artificial. Even the achievement of basic capabilities is fundamentally structured through what White (2010, p.165) calls "shared understandings of how the world is and should be". Experiencing adequate nourishment for example, requires far more than simply achieving a particular calorific intake but also takes in the symbolic resonance of the foodstuff consumed – for example, rice rather than potatoes in the case of Bangladesh – and who it is shared with. White's (2010) argument that well-being emerges in the "interplay" of the "externally observable and independently verifiable" aspects of people's lives and their "perceptions and assessments" of their circumstances offers a more compelling and holistic way of conceptualising the intersection of the subjective, material and relational aspects of capabilities.

3. Well-being and Relationships

Amartya Sen's version of the capability approach takes individuals as its unit of analysis. Sen acknowledges that capabilities are "socially dependent" yet regards capabilities themselves as the properties of individual persons, except in the case of truly global achievements such as the eradication of world hunger (2002, p.85). Likewise, although he acknowledges that social arrangements and collectives can play a critical role in shaping what people are able to think, do, and be, the focus of evaluation is on their instrumental rather than intrinsic value. They are important only in so far as they promote or restrict the expansion of the freedom and well-being of individuals.

While making individuals the ethical focus of development safeguards women and children from the tendency to merge their interests and utility with that of the family unit (and each other) (Nussbaum, 2000), it fails to recognise the crucial role played by family, kin and community values in shaping and constituting their well-being and agency. Sen's capability approach has been extensively critiqued for its methodological and theoretical individualism and concepts emerging from these debates are mobilised in the remainder of this paper to explore the ways in which women and children's well-being "happens in relationship" (White, 2010, p.161) and to suggest some of the implications that a relational understanding of women and children's well-being should have on development policy and practice.

3.1 Relating as a capability

The opportunity for "affiliation" or "to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other humans, to engage in various forms of social interaction, to be able to imagine the situation of the others" is recognised in the capability approach as among the most basic dimensions of human well-being (Nussbaum, 2000).

Although social inclusion can be a critical conversion factor in the achievement of wider capabilities, people do not simply value engaging in social relations for their instrumental benefits. People are quintessentially social beings and interacting with others is considered an integral part of what it means to live a good life. Walker et al. (2011), for example, find that whilst greater social connectedness facilitates better access to care and support for disabled children in slum areas of Mumbai, opportunities to play

and socialise with others are valued for their own sake by children. Quality of life studies find a consistent association between poor perceived quality of life and social isolation and exclusion (White, 2010).

Relating to others may be a universal human need, but the quality and nature of the interactions that are important to well-being may vary considerably according to age, cultural context and other factors of social identity. Younger and older children prioritise the importance of time socialising with peers vis à vis dedicated time with a parent or key-adult very differently, whilst being able to appear in front of others without shame tends to be especially important for adolescents, often requiring access to various culturally-specific material resources (The Children's Society, 2012; Camfield and Takere, 2011; Carers Trust, 2011).

Implications for practice

If social 'affiliation' is accepted as a vital component of what it means to live a good life, then promoting opportunities for people to enjoy fulfilling social interaction with others and a positive sense of social belonging must be recognised as a legitimate and worthwhile development goal in its own right. This contrasts with many other development approaches which tend to view people's relationships and address exclusion from social relations largely from an instrumental perspective, rather than recognising opportunities to socialise or act collectively with others as intrinsically important to people's well-being.

Identifying and addressing the women and children that are vulnerable to social isolation and exclusion therefore becomes an important task of development professionals seeking to promote female and child well-being. The intersectional nature of women's and children's identity is likely to be significant in determining which groups of women and children are most vulnerable to relational deprivation. Walker et al. (2010), for example, observe that perceptions that disabled girls were at particular risk of sexual abuse meant that gender with disability, rather than disability or gender alone, was a determining factor in whether the children in their study were isolated from opportunities to socialise with others.

The demanding nature of caring responsibilities make child-carers and women who care for young children or

those with disabilities particularly vulnerable to suffering isolation (Carers Trust, 2011; Kirk, 2003). Bornstein (2013) argues that supporting such women and children into greater well-being requires a "network-centred" rather than person-centred model of health and social care services, which explicitly focuses on creation of informal support networks around carers as well as the provision of professional support. Although a wider social network can support the performance of caring roles by improving access to practical supports such as supplementary child-care, advice, and material support, promoting warm friendships and opportunities for enjoyable social interaction should be recognised and promoted for their intrinsic value to carers as critical sources of well-being (Kirk, 2003).

3.2 Well-being through others

Foster & Handy (2008) introduce the idea of 'external capabilities' to describe how people access and utilise the capacities of other individuals in their social networks in order to expand their own ability to function. This is readily observed in very young children and babies whose physical weakness and inexperience makes them dependent on the functioning of parents or carers to achieve even basic levels of well-being. Parents may also use their connections with children to achieve additional functionings in particular contexts. In many conservative Islamic societies for example, it is common practice for women to rely on the mobility of sons as errand-runners and chaperones in order to enhance their own freedom of movement. Likewise, migrant women in diaspora communities may frequently find themselves relying on children's abilities in the host language to navigate their new environment (since children generally show a greater faculty for language learning and have greater opportunities to socialise with native speakers at school).

Adult-child relationships of care, particularly those within the family unit, are a critical determinant of what children are able to do and be both in childhood and later in their lives. Not only do the income and assets of care-givers structure the capability space of children, playing a key role in determining children's access to formal and informal educational opportunities, for example (Andreson et al., 2012), but the realisation of certain capabilities in children can be dependent on the care-giver's possessing a related set of capabilities and functionings (Biggieri et al., 2006). This can be clearly seen, for example, in the link between maternal health and nutrition and the birthweight and health of babies. Biggieri et al. (2006, p.63) term this the "intergenerational transmission of capabilities." Moreover, adult well-being itself is also path-dependent, and the achievement of particular levels of functioning in childhood (adequate nutrition, education, literacy, etc.) is a precondition for the exercise of the majority of adult capabilities (Biggieri et al., 2006; Nussbaum, 2000).

Implications for practice

Capabilities should always be promoted for their intrinsic value for the well-being of the individual concerned. No individual should be regarded as a "mere tool" for the well-being of others to the detriment of their own well-being (Nussbaum, 2000, p.55). However, the fact that particular capabilities are able to create additional positive spill-over effects on the well-being of family, friends and contacts can and should be incorporated into development planning. By observing which capabilities can be most readily shared with others and in which relationships such capabilities are most readily multiplied, planners can target resources and interventions more effectively to address capability deprivation in women and children.

Although individuals relying on external capabilities may experience more qualified and contingent gains in well-being compared to if the same capabilities were possessed independently, external capabilities can be an effective stop-gap solution for capability deprivation, and over time can sometimes lead to the replication of that capability in the recipient individual (Foster and Handy, 2008). An excellent example in practice can be seen in 'family learning' approaches (UNESCO, 2008). Where educators work simultaneously with children and their carers, literacy outcomes for both are significantly improved. Reciprocal sharing of learning takes place within the home while both experience greater motivation and home support for learning as a result of the participation of the other.

3.3 Well-being with others

Collective capabilities

Individuals do not act in isolation to pursue their valued goals and objectives, nor do they form their particular goals and objectives in isolation from one another. Ibrahim (2006; 2013) proposes the concept of 'collective capabilities' to describe the way in which human well-being is generated in and through group membership. Such achievements "exist or perish with the group" (Foster and Handy, 2008, p.13), and cannot be reduced to the contributions of group members. Indeed, the existence of the group itself, and commitment to explicitly shared goals and a shared identity is often the key impetus for individual engagement in collective action.

Ibrahim (2013, p.5) regards the relationship between group and individual freedoms as "mutually reinforcing" in that access to an expanded collective capability set can enhance what individual members are able to do and be, while the building of individual capabilities may in turn support more effective collective action by groups. She illustrates this reciprocal relationship through an analysis of a self-help initiative among poor squatter settlers in Cairo, in which migrants mobilised their social networks to provide and gain official

recognition for a social centre offering literacy and kindergarten services in their neighbourhood. The example demonstrates well how collective capabilities can be used to create gains for both individual and communal freedom and well-being.

The importance of collectivities stems not only from the instrumental role they can play promoting the abilities of individuals to pursue valued objectives but from the part they have in shaping individuals' very "perception of the good" (Ibrahim, 2006, p.404). The collective arrangements that are endorsed by groups – described as "structures of living together" by Deneulin (2008) – mediate individual freedom through the value and legitimacy they confer on various beings and doings and through the social technology they provide for individuals and groups to enact agency. Evaluating collective capabilities thus requires an analysis of the type of individual capabilities promoted through group membership as well as the way in which particular social arrangements or sets of relationships enable or disable acts of collective and individual agency (Stewart, 2004).

Although Sen (2002) affirms "the socially dependant" character of capabilities, he continues to defend the ethically individualistic stance of his version of the capability approach. He raises concerns that a focus on group well-being can act to essentialise and homogenise group members, missing the multiplicity and fluidity which characterises social identity, and obscuring in-group inequality in the distribution of collectively generated capabilities and benefits. Meanwhile, Alkire (2008) questions the way in which group strength can act to exclude and disadvantage outsiders, and curtail as well as promote the freedoms of insiders.

Participating in collective action may yield little or no positive change in the material aspects of an individual's well-being, even when a group's goals are successfully achieved. Yet the achievements of others with whom one identifies can make a significant contribution to one's own sense of well-being. Stewart (2004) notes, for example, the negative effect of poor group performance on the self-esteem of black Americans. More than simply "exterior" assets to be mobilised in pursuit of personal or collective interests, relationships themselves can be fundamentally "constitutive of the person" (White, 2010, p.164).

The way in which self-hood itself can be relationally inhabited is vividly illustrated in Uyan-Semerci's (2007) study of migrant Turkish women in the Gecekondu area of Istanbul. Her research subjects self-define with reference to kin as "fathers' daughters, brothers' sisters, husbands' wives, families' brides and [most importantly as] mothers of children", while their aspirations and achievements are consistently articulated in terms of 'we' rather than 'I' (ibid, p.209). Despite Nussbaum's assertion that capabilities are fundamentally individual phenomena since "the food on A's plate does not magically nourish the stomach of B... [nor does] ... one person's exceeding happiness and liberty... make an-

other person happy or free" (Nussbaum, 2000, p.56), Uyan-Semerci's study demonstrates that where the self itself is experienced as plural and shared, capabilities are no longer so clearly distinguished as the properties of individuals. Well-being emerges and belongs in relationships with others.

In particular, the capabilities of the Gecekondu women appear embedded in those of their children. Capability achievements in the areas of health, bodily integrity, etc., are framed predominantly in terms of their implications for children's well-being, while children's achievements in turn constitute "one of the most important sources of well-being" for the women themselves (ibid). There is also a "permeability" in the intimate relationships between women and other family members that is also noted by Camfield et al. (2006, p.20) in the context of Bangladesh. The behaviour of children has significant repercussions for the status of parents even into adulthood, and the chastity of women and girls is integral to the honour of male kin.

Yet this apparent blurring of individuals' welfare should not be accepted uncritically. Given the strong social pressures women face towards altruistic behaviour and family orientation, there is a real possibility that this 'relational' experience of well-being reflects the colonisation of women's subjectivity by hegemonic social norms that demand the subjugation of their needs and interests to others (Sen, 1990; Nussbaum, 2000).

Implications for practice

Since group freedoms provide the context through which both individual and group capability achievement (or deprivation) takes place, development practice cannot afford to limit its focus to the individual alone. The 'structures of living together' that misrecognise particular social identities and exclude them from access to entitlements and power must be challenged if the agency of groups and their individual members is to be expanded. The focus of development practice and evaluation should therefore be on expanding freedom and promoting well-being at collective as well as individual levels (Deneulin, 2008; Ibrahim, 2013).

While the freedom of groups to engage in collective action may be constituted by social arrangements, social structure is not reified but is being constantly reconstituted through group action itself (Deneulin, 2008). Political action by groups – for example women's activism – offers important windows of opportunity to adjust the rules of the game onto more advantageous lines for group and individual well-being. Development practitioners can support marginalised groups of women and children to develop their political capabilities in order to renegotiate the terms of their social inclusion. While pursuing access to universal rights for women and children may be an important part of the processual aspect of supporting their capability achievement, Trani et al (2013, p.423) caution that "local realities" must be incorporated into

the realisation of rights based approaches. In collectivist cultures such as Afghanistan, they argue this will require recognising the importance of social links between individuals, and engaging in collective deliberation about how rights for women and children can be operationalised in a culturally appropriate way. Addressing collective arrangements that limit individual freedom (while preserving those that enhance capabilities) is paramount to ensuring collective gains are equitably distributed.

Development practice can support women's and children's well-being through family-centred interventions which respond to the way that women and children experience and achieve well-being in relationship with others. Interventions that provide simultaneous and joined-up support to family members – children, women and men – are one way of recognising their interdependence and intersubjectivity.

Balancing the needs of family members in such interventions will not be straightforward, since households are not homogenous units and contain an array of sometimes aligning, sometimes competing needs (Warin, 2007). Yet, treating people embedded in intimate relationships as if they were isolated individuals is not the solution to the dilemma. Planners need to keep women's and children's needs and interests visible, while approaching them within the context of the intimate relationships that play such a critical role in their well-being. In the case of children, for example, this might mean including parental outcomes as a core part of planning, delivery and evaluation (Kirk, 2003, p.95).

3.4 Agency and social values

Well-being freedom and agency freedom

Freedom, according to Amartya Sen (1999), encompasses the dual notions of 'well-being freedom' and 'agency freedom'. Distinguishing between well-being freedom – an individual's freedom to pursue goals to his/her personal advantage – and 'agency freedom' – "an individual's freedom to choose and bring about the things he/she values" (Frediani, 2010, p.176) – enables a more adequate theorisation of intimate relationships of care in which carers (most often women, less frequently men, sometimes children) may make daily decisions to prioritise the needs and interests of others at the expense of their own welfare. Having the freedom to choose and act is a critical component of what it means to have well-being and choices do not have to be under-pinned by self-interest in order to comprise valuable exercises of agency (Sen, 1999).

Development practitioners and researchers should be cautious about accepting acts of altruism as 'freely' chosen, however. Agency is "inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political, and economic opportunities available to us" (Sen, 1999, pp.xi-xii) and our "ability to choose" is

profoundly influenced by relations of power that underpin social norms, discourses and institutions and which shape our preferences, create obligations, and legitimise or illegitimise particular modes of action (Frediani, 2010).

The role of social structure in constituting agency should be of particular concern to those seeking to support the well-being of women and girls. Jackson (1993) argues that women's perception of their true interests is distorted by the hegemonic operation of social values on two levels. On the one hand, women internalise the ideals of self-sacrifice and subservience that are central to many cultural constructions of femininity and motherhood. They are socialised into prioritising the needs and interests of children and men over their own and altruistic activity becomes the basis for feminine identities and self-worth. On the other, women's recognition of their own needs and the validity of their claims on household resources is distorted by "perception biases" that devalue female needs and economic contributions relative to those of men (Sen, 1990, p.149).

As a result women and girls may not only actively collaborate in their own neglect and oppression but also collude in that of other women and girls (Sen, 1990; Jackson, 1993). Although 'smart economics' logic asserts that increasing women's status and decision-making power within the household can eradicate gendered disadvantage, this overlooks the way in which women themselves internalise and act out gendered social ideologies. They are complicit alongside men and boys in "female foeticide and infanticide, in food and health biases within households, in exploitative relations with other women" and other gendered practices (Jackson, 1993, p.50).

Implications for practice

To understand and monitor how social values contribute to capability deprivation, quantitative methods alongside qualitative techniques can provide a more holistic picture. Although focusing on what children and women are able to do and be through measures of nutrition, life expectancy, educational achievement, etc., may give a more "objective" picture of the poverty and inequality they experience (Sen, 1990), qualitative approaches can help researchers and practitioners to understand the part played by social perceptions in creating capability deprivation. Whilst quantitative measures may be useful to side-step adaptive preference and reveal patterns of disadvantage that may not be apparent to individuals, qualitative research and evaluation methods can provide information about how discourses around particular social identities or other aspects of social structure create and sustain such disadvantage. Effective interventions to reorder social relations onto a more beneficial footing for disadvantaged women and children can only be designed when the role played by particular social values in deterring children and women from realising otherwise achievable capabilities is clarified.

Additionally, development policy and practice can promote public debate around social norms. The constitution of women and children's agency through social structure means that development planners must address more than just the processual aspects of realising capabilities. For example, Chant (2007) highlights how the resilience of traditional gender roles and models of masculinity and femininity mean that many anti-poverty programmes fail to substantially expand the choices available to women despite effectively improving their access to material resources. Where social values continue to sanction and reward individualism for men while proscribing altruism, subservience and a family-orientation for women, the degree to which improvements in income, skills and education truly 'empower' women remains limited.

Yet, social values are not "immutable" and development can and should encourage poor women and children to recognise, question and renegotiate the social order that contributes to their deprivation and disadvantage (Sen, 1990, p.126). By supporting women's activism and political organisation, and engaging in consciousness-raising activities, development agencies can participate in reshaping the discourses around gender roles, attributes and relations that continue to constrain women's and children's agency and their "capacity to aspire" (Appadurai, 2004 in White, 2010).

Social identities are created through "relations of division, difference and inequality" that construct their characteristics, power and entitlements in relation to a necessary 'other' (Alanen, 2001, p.13; Walker et al., 2011). If development planners wish to "destabilise deeply embedded structures of... inequality" (Chant, 2007, p.185) it is vital that they engage with the part that men, adults and other privileged social groups play in producing and perpetuating the discourses of identity and forms of social organisation that devalue and disadvantage children, women and particular groups of children and women and limit the opportunities that are practically and 'thinkably' available to them.

Jackson (1993, p.58) for example, argues that expanding the options available to poor women will necessarily entail addressing the gendered practices and discourses of the non-poor (dowry-giving and the seclusion and veiling, for example) since these play a key role in shaping the gender ideologies (and status aspirations) to which poor women are subject. At the same time, supporting and publicising the achievements of upper and middle-class women can make an important contribution to enlarging poor women's "capacity to aspire" by expanding perceptions of what it is possible for women to be and do (Appadurai, 2004 in White, 2010). Development interventions cannot afford to have a single-category focus, and must identify and address the influence of other social groups in shaping the agency and entitlements of women and children.

Agreeing the freedoms against which development should be measured and evaluated is a critical part of operationalising the capability approach to well-being. Sen (1999) advo-

cates the use of bottom-up processes of "democratic deliberation" in order to select relevant capabilities rather than the use of universal lists drawn up by "cultural experts." He maintains that this approach avoids paternalism and allows for diversity in the doings and beings that people in different contexts may value while leaving well-being criteria open to revision and challenge.

Seeking out children's participation in the selection of the doings and beings important to their well-being is particularly important because of the way that children's well-being has historically been seen through an "adult nexus" (Trani et al., 2013). By revealing the ways in which the dimensions of children's well-being substantively differ from those of adults, participatory capability lists can improve the design and targeting of child poverty interventions while also fostering greater recognition of children's agency.

Yet relying solely on deliberative processes to determine development priorities and monitor progress is problematic. The strength of dominant social values can suppress women's and children's recognition and expression of their interests by mediating "what it is thinkable to desire" as well as what it is permissible to say in public forums (Jackson, 1993). Although perfect reconciliation of the structure-agency dilemma in determining well-being criteria may be impossible, recent innovations in methods for devising capability lists have the potential to reduce the influence of adaptive preferences. Methods require further work but include cross-referencing the results of deliberative processes against human rights, normative capability lists and the use of intercultural comparisons (Robeyns, 2003; Clark, 2009).

3.5 Autonomy within dependency

Children simultaneously prioritise both care and freedom (Biggieri et al, 2006; Andreson et al, 2012) and childhood is characterised by the tension between children's receding dependency and their emerging autonomy (ibid; Oakley, 1994). For children to thrive requires caregivers to balance safeguarding children's current and future functioning – "the child's right to be protected" with a respect for children's agency – the child's right to "have a voice" in decisions about their own welfare (Lansdowne, 1994, p.42; Biggieri et al, 2012). Discerning when children's desires should be overruled for the sake of their future freedom is not straightforward. While compelling children to attend school for example seems reasonable, Lansdowne (ibid) points out that arguments of 'best interest' have frequently been used to justify the control of children in ways that have served adult rather than child interests.

The extent of children's dependency and autonomy varies significantly with age. This is reflected in the nature of the doings and beings that children value at different stages of their development – with older children placing more value on

mobility and time autonomy, for example – and in the ability children have on a practical level to independently select and realise the capabilities they value (Biggieri et al., 2006, p.64). For example, children between the ages of 0-5 show little autonomy across all capabilities, and none at all in the capabilities of religious choice, time use and mobility (ibid). Whilst children's well-being may be embedded in relationships of care, the nature of their needs and interests in those relationships is constantly changing and being negotiated (White, 2002b, p.1103).

Relationships of care can exemplify the way that autonomy is able to coexist with dependency. Examining the situation of disabled children in Mumbai, Walker et al. (2011) note the way in which children with speech or cognitive impairments develop communication systems with their mothers and utilise their relationships with carers in order to mediate their agency. Meanwhile, in Bangladesh, White (2002b) observes that recognition of children as legitimate agents in Bengali society is dependent upon their relationships with socially-approved 'guardians' through whom they gain the ability for autonomous action.

As relationships of care illustrate, rather than the isolated decision-making of individuals, agency may often take place in and rely on relationship with others. Devine et al. (2006, p.5) go so far as to assert that in particular contexts "autonomy can only be realised through interdependence". They observe that in collectivist societies such as Bangladesh, "experiences of autonomy occur primarily within and through people's interpersonal relationships", mainly through hierarchical relationships of patronage and horizontal relationships with clan, although sometimes also through more formalised collectives such as savings circles (ibid, p.110). Relationships are not only the locus of identity but also of action.

Devine et al. (2006)'s research also highlights that in Bangladesh women's expressions of agency have a more relational character than that of men. Family members are central to the achievement of women's autonomy (for example, having a husband that will invite the input of his wife(s) on major decisions) while the goals and domain of agency achievements are often home-based and centred on maintaining the quality of relationships with other members of the family.

Implications for practice

As discussed, being embedded in relationships of dependency or care does not preclude the use of agency and can indeed be the means through which it is expressed. In collective societies and for children in particular, exit from such relationships can reduce autonomy rather than expand it. It may be neither possible nor desirable to be extracted from such relationships. The extent to which individuals are able to influence shared decision-making processes to exercise autonomy is extremely variable however (Deneulin and Shahani, 2009). Supporting the agency of women and children

will not necessarily require attempting to reposition them as individual agents pursuing individual entitlements but rather renegotiating the terms on which they voice and exert their interests in relationships with others.

Rather than "essential contradiction" or harmony, White (2002a) posits that relationships between children and adults are characterised by a dynamic balance of solidarity and conflict, in which the degree to which their interests overlap is constantly shifting according to external socio-economic factors. Monitoring how development interventions affect this balance is essential, since the quality of people's relationships with others is a critical determiner of their freedom to pursue well-being goals and exert agency. Camfield et al. (2009, p.88) write that "more than any other factor, [relationships] determine what people are able to do or be, and what they actually achieve or become."

3.6 Well-being trade-offs

Fulfilling the social role endorsed by one's household, community or society can be a critical condition of access to social entitlements (Smith and Seward, 2009; Trani et al., 2011). Social roles are commonly differentiated by gender and/or age as well as by other cross-cutting aspects of identity. For women, achieving social recognition and status is often closely associated with the fulfilment of maternal and reproductive roles as well as the display of altruistic behaviours, while for children this is more commonly linked to the exhibition of traits of obedience, compliance and apprenticeship to elders (ibid; Alanen, 2001).

Although adequate performance of prescribed social roles is instrumentally important in order to secure the resources for well-being achievement, social roles are also embedded in broader ideologies about 'how things ought to be' that are internalised by individuals. As a result, the subjective experience of well-being, including senses of self-worth and life-satisfaction, is closely linked to the "feeling of acting according to the norms of the community", particularly in highly collective societies (ibid, p.419).

Although nurturing of children by parents or other caregivers is typically extremely important for the expansion of children's capabilities, performing a care-giving role can also be considered as a capability in its own right (Uyan-Semerci, 2007; n.d). In her study of migrant Turkish women in Istanbul, Uyan-Semerci (n.d, p.3) notes the way in which the women's achievement of capabilities such as bodily health is valued primarily for the way in which these enable them to care for their children. The women are so deeply invested in their maternal role that "their existence, their self-expression and their future plans are always expressed for and through their children." For many such women, fulfilling their social role as care-givers and securing the well-being of children constitutes a highly valued objective,

despite (and partly because of) the fact that such a responsibility is socially constructed as an essential feminine duty.

However, acknowledging that caring for others can constitute a valid dimension of well-being as well as a legitimate exercise of agency should not detract from recognising the costs that caring may exact from care-givers. Achieving the capability to care can often inhibit the freedom of carers to achieve other capabilities (Uyan-Semerci, 2007). Across the world, women remain primarily responsible for children's care, and the time and energy given to ensuring children's well-being may often be provided at the expense of a women's own sleep, mobility, leisure, health and ability to engage income-generating activity (ActionAid, 2011). The capability deprivation experienced by mothers and care-givers is exacerbated in situations of poverty in which household resources are under pressure and/or where the care-giver may be required to engage in additional productive work in addition to their care-giving activities (ibid). Inadequate support for women's reproductive role, for example in the form of poor public services, will also make care-giving more difficult (ActionAid, 2011).

Children, particularly girls, may also find themselves acting as carers. The unpaid work done by children in caring for siblings or elderly or disabled household members is rarely recognised in official definitions of child labour but is a clear (and gendered) constraint to the realisation of children's current and future capabilities. It is a common cause of the educational drop-out and underachievement of girls (Biggieri et al, 2006; UNICEF, 2007).

Households in poverty may often face difficult decisions about which aspects of well-being to prioritise and whose well-being should be prioritised and how. In particular, achieving adequate inputs of both care and material resources to ensure the well-being of household members is a challenge for many households. Although women's entry into the labour market can raise overall household income as well as improve their ability to advocate for children's needs within the household, without the availability of quality childcare facilities the employment of both parents outside the home can come at the expense of the quality and quantity of care given to children (Jones et al, 2007; UNICEF, 2007; Warin, 2006). Where women's reproductive work and responsibility for the care of younger children is transferred to older children, typically girls, child-carers experience both a loss of maternal care and an increase in domestic responsibilities (ibid).

Women's pursuit of well-being for themselves and their children can also require difficult choices between alternative forms of poverty. Although development myths emphasise the material deprivation and insecurity experienced by female headed households, Chant (2007) highlights the way in which women can regard the loss of male income, guardianship and assets as less detri-

mental to well-being when weighed against the violence, control and lack of ability to provide for children's needs associated with staying in an abusive or oppressive conjugal relationship.

Power relations between household members influence the way in which such well-being trade-offs play out. As described, "the capacity to foster and set the terms of personal linkages are not evenly distributed" and factors of age and gender may confer on household members very different capacities to resist or influence the claims that are made on their time, labour and resources, or indeed, to make such claims on others (White, 2002b, p.1098).

Implications for practice

Care is a central tension between the well-being of women and children. As discussed, relationships of care can be simultaneously rewarding and costly for those who give care, and mitigating the tensions between the capabilities of carers and those requiring care requires improving the conditions in which care is given. Improving women's access to, awareness of and the quality of public services is vital to reduce the costs of caring to women as well to support their capacity to carry out their caring roles (ActionAid, 2011, UNICEF, 2007).

Providing public support to women who play dual roles as paid workers and carers for children is also vitally important. Promoting flexible working arrangements, as well as safeguarding rights to maternity benefits and labour protections can help women more successfully combine their caring responsibilities and paid employment.

At the same time, programmes that promote women's enterprise and entry into the labour market must explicitly address the risk of creating a "care deficit" within households (UNIFEM, 2000, p.32). Affordable and quality alternative childcare options need to be available to avoid children and girls substituting as carers for working mothers and taking on inappropriate caring responsibilities (ibid).

Moreover, attention needs to be paid to rebalancing the responsibilities between men and women for children's care. Gender roles should not be regarded as set in stone and development planners should engage in processes that challenge the gendered division of labour and attempt to match the new norm of 'universal bread-winner' with a 'universal care-giver' model that sees men participating alongside women in the care of children (Lister, 2006, p.331). Development practitioners can consider strategies that include: awareness-raising among men of women's burden, promoting alternative forms of masculinity that can embrace care, providing and promoting take-up of employment benefits for fathers such as paid paternal leave and flexible working.

4. Conclusions

This paper has drawn out the variegated ways in which “well-being happens in relationship” (White, 2010). Relating with others is a central capability on its own, but membership in or affiliation to groups or kin can also generate more capabilities and freedoms through collective action, others’ external capabilities, and the support given through relationships of love and care. Nevertheless, the quality of relationships, including the power dynamics, trade-offs, and inherent social norms implicated in relationships, colours the extent to which relationships contribute to expanding one’s overall capability set. Unpacking this complex dynamic, the paper offers a more nuanced understanding of where well-being and freedoms can flourish in and through relationships.

To the risk that Bradshaw (2008) identified in development of excluding men from the ‘problem’ of well-

being, the focus on women and children here is to challenge the dominant perspectives that have led to policies that view women and children either as instrumental to other social goals or as a single unit of analysis for their wellbeing and development. By positioning well-being of women and children within a capability approach framework, the arguments in this paper underscore the significance of well-being on the personal level and highlight the ways in which well-being is influenced by relationships with others.

The implications offered in this paper are meant to encourage practitioners to recognise and “creatively inhabit” (White, 2002a) the tensions of mutual and conflicting interests inherent in relationships of love and care. They are a basis for policymakers and stakeholders to take up and contextualise the arguments discussed in order to further promote well-being among women and children.

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DPU WORKING PAPERS
SPECIAL ISSUE

Social enterprises, capabilities and human development

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Governments, the private sector and the third sector fail to provide essential, life-changing goods and services to a substantial share of the world's poor. As a consequence, the bulk of humanity in the lowest tiers of the economic pyramid does not have access to affordable, critical goods and services that could play an important role in improving their livelihoods. It is now commonly accepted that "the vast majority of nations and people in the world have yet to benefit from the apparent triumph of capitalism" (Hart, 2007, p.23). Some estimates put at over 4 billion the number of people¹ that have been largely bypassed by globalisation (Hart, 2007, p.116). For all its benefits, globalisation has led to a "growing divide between the haves and the have-nots that has left increasing numbers in the [developing world] in dire poverty" (Stiglitz, 2002, p.5).

Alternative models capable of sustainably bringing affordable, critical goods and services to parts of the world where markets, governments and the third sector have failed are now emerging. These are the social enterprises, organisations that rely on the proposition of mutual value creation: they provide valued societal returns to the local communities in which they operate and generate acceptable economic returns to their investors (London, 2009, p.583).

Recent literature is filled with praise for social enterprises. They have been commended as "long-term organisations that see the poor not as passive recipients of charity but as agents who want to change their own lives" (Heath Brothers, 2010). Central to this line of argument is the belief that "when the poor are treated as consumers, they can reap the benefits of respect, choice, and self-esteem and have an opportunity to climb out of the poverty trap" (Prahalad, 2005, p.99). In a complementary string of argument social enterprises are seen to "contribute to reducing market failures and to improving the welfare of people and communities, thus supporting economic development in general" (UNDP, 2008, pp.28-9), and similarly to "manage transactions that are not efficiently managed by markets, be it from an economic or a social point of view [and to] also complement the supply of general interest services when public funding is lacking or not available" (UNDP, 2008, pp.28-9).

1.2 Description of the problem and objective of the study

While broadly accepting the bearing of the arguments raised by these different commentators, a fundamental question needs to be asked: to what extent do social enterprises advance human development?

Regrettably, research and practical evidence on the extent of the contribution of social enterprises to human development is limited and inconclusive. While much has been written over the past decade about opportunities at the bottom of the pyramid (Hart, 2007) and about new strategies for entrepreneurs and established corporations to tap into this market (Prahalad, 2005), a meaningful exploration of the impacts of social enterprises on poverty alleviation has lagged (London, 2007, p. 2). Acknowledging this gap in the literature, this paper aims to investigate the extent to which social enterprises are effective agents of development.

1.3 Analytical framework

The capability approach, a theory of human development pioneered by Amartya Sen, will be used as the analytical framework to support this investigation. The approach will inform this study in two central ways. First, it will provide the conceptualisation of human development adopted in this paper - in summary, that the goal of human development and poverty reduction is the expansion of one's capability to achieve the things one values (Sen, 1999). Second, the solutions offered by the capability approach to evaluate progress of the process of development will be used to assess the extent of the contribution of social enterprises to human development.

1.4 Structure of the paper

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on social enterprises, placing particular emphasis on discussions regarding their emergence as agents of development, definitional issues, and the measurement of their contribution to poverty reduction.

Chapter 3 briefly introduces a number of concepts from the capability approach, which is used as the conceptual framework for the discussions that follow. Chal-

allenges in impact measurement faced by the capability approach are compared to the analogous challenges faced by social enterprises, and the solutions offered by the capability approach to these challenges are then applied to the social enterprise context.

Chapter 4 describes the components and methodology of the multi-case study, followed by a presentation of the findings. Chapter 5 presents the author's conclusions, and considers implications for policy-makers, philanthropists and social entrepreneurs.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. 4 billion is the approximate number of people living on US\$ 1.500 a year, roughly US\$ 4.3 a day (Hart, 2007, p. 116).

2. Literature review

2.1 The shape of things

In rich and in developing countries, the private sector, governments and the third sector fail to deliver critical goods and services to significant numbers of poor people, thus depriving them from a central mechanism for improving their livelihoods. Reasons for this failure abound.

For the private sector, a number of motives appear to be central. First, very low-income people are frequently unappealing to businesses, which often assume they have little money to spend on non-essential goods and services, and thus represent no significant market opportunity. Second, a number of logistical barriers, such as poor distribution systems, dispersed customers and inadequate infrastructure, are often in place, limiting access to poor consumers. Third, knowledge about poor consumers' preferences, behaviours and requirements is frequently inadequate, limiting the ability of traditional corporations to efficiently reach out to them. Fourth, poor consumers often show a preference for products and services with low unitary value; that requires a whole different go-to-market strategy that few traditional enterprises boast. Fifth, goods and services provided by mainstream corporations, and multinationals in particular, are largely tailored for rich-country consumers, or rich- or middle-class consumers in developing countries. The technologies and organisational structures developed to meet the needs of these customers cannot be easily deployed towards low-income consumers because it is very problematical to remove costs from such a business model without affecting the quality or integrity of the goods and services provided (Hart, 2007, p.121). Finally, the combination of some or all of the conditions above creates a risk/return profile that is not acceptable to traditional investors pursuing purely financial returns.

In the case of governments, insufficient revenues to pay for basic services, such as energy, housing, clean water and healthcare, add up to a lack of management capacity to put limited resources to good use. In addition, corruption and entrenched political and economic interests too often divert funds to waste and outright abuse. Even in rich countries, models of extensive welfare provision proved "insufficient for distributing welfare inclusively, as evidenced by its difficulty in coping with the growing inequalities and social exclusion" (UNDP, 2008, p.15).

As for traditional, top-down aid, charity and philanthropy, their finite amount of funding renders interventions limited in scale, scope and continuity. Though they frequently meet immediate needs in crucial ways, too often they fail to enable poor people to solve their own problems over the long term. As noted by Sam Goldman, the head of D.Light Design¹, "The scale of the problem is measured in billions. If we want to grow to that scale, we have to do it backed by massive amounts of capital (...). We can affect a lot of lives as an NGO, but if we want to affect a billion people's lives, it has to be done with a different set of models" (Goldman, 2009). Additionally, aid and charity frequently engender a sense of dependency rather than dignity; poor people seek the latter, not the former. Ultimately, "The record of aid and loans from the various donor countries and the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and other institutions is at best mixed" (Prahalad, 2005, p.78).

These combined failures mean that the poor either have no access at all to critical goods and services or are often forced to pay more – up to 50 times as much – than middle- and high-income consumers for basic goods and services such as water, medicine, phone services, and electricity (Prahalad & Hammond, 2002, p.8). Adjusted for income levels, these differentials are all the more shocking.

2.2 The shape of things to come: social enterprises

The emergence of social enterprises

Social enterprises are not exactly novel organisations, with some authors tracing their origins to ventures operating as early as the mid-1800s (Alter, 2010, pp.10-16). Although there is certainly a multitude of distinct origins for social enterprises, two main streams seem to have been particularly frequent. First, a number of organisations have traditionally made use of commercial activities in order to generate revenue to support socially-oriented programme activities. Over the past ten to fifteen years, this practice seems to be becoming considerably more widespread, as an "increasing number of non-profits are faced with decreasing funding from both government and foundations" (Emerson et al., 2003, p.36). A second stream of social enter-

prises appears to have come from socially-minded entrepreneurs that “have chosen a for-profit vehicle as the best means of delivering on their social mission” (ibid).

Encircling these two streams is the perception that two key drivers are at play simultaneously. First, there is growing interest in exploring new poverty alleviation approaches, as both governments and the development community are “confronted with the challenge of having to serve too many ‘customers’ and with increasing pressure to expand their impact (London, 2007, p.7). Second, there is increasing appreciation of a larger role for market-based ventures in serving the needs of the poor, as enterprises look for new customers and suppliers on their continuous search for profitable growth.

This results in the “intriguing idea that business-oriented motivations of growth and profits can potentially be aligned with the development community’s efforts to scale their poverty alleviation efforts” (London, 2007, pp.7-8). The stage for the emergence of social enterprises at a scale much larger than in the past seems, therefore, to be set.

Definitions

Defining social enterprise is part of an on-going debate in the social enterprise literature, with some commentators recognising that “the definition of social enterprise today is anything but clear” (Martin and Osberg, 2007, p.30). Part of the problem stems from the multitude of organisations sharing similar but distinctive characteristics, such as conventional businesses with strong emphasis on corporate social responsibility, on one extreme, and philanthropic organisations with strong emphasis on market mechanisms, on the other. Quite different organisations may share the social enterprise label but little else; a workers cooperative marketing products globally and an individual entrepreneur running a local not-for-profit venture are likely to be almost entirely dissimilar.

Some contributors have come to suggest that there may be little value in trying to establish clear-cut definitions for social enterprises, while others stress that definitions are important to “differentiate social enterprises from other types of public or commercial organizations” (Peattie and Morley, 2008, p.5). Other observers have come to prefer the middle ground and rather than define social enterprises, propose to convey the features that characterise them (McManus, 2004; Trelstad, 2008). This paper adopts this stance and characterises them as follows:

- A business venture providing goods and services on a permanent basis, while generating acceptable economic returns to their investors;

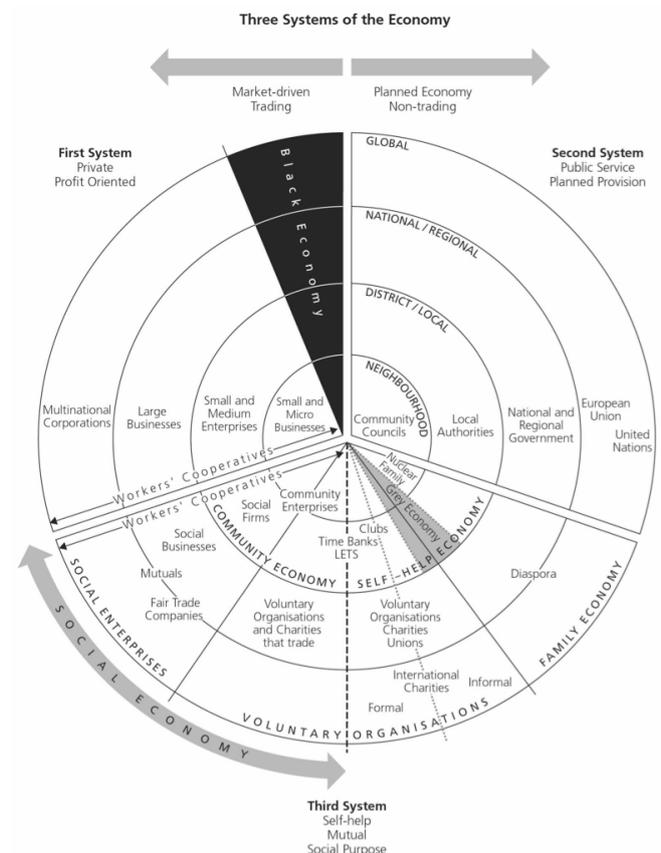
- An explicit and intentional goal of maximising social impact;
- Potential for scale: reach can be increased by expanding or replicating the business
- A high degree of stakeholder participation is preferred
- Profit motivation is either non-profit or for-profit, while dividends may or may not be distributed to shareholders.

Locating social enterprises

A comprehensive framework for locating social enterprises within the economy is suggested by Pearce (2003), and is reproduced in Figure 2.1.

The framework suggests there are three ‘Systems’ of the economy. The First System is where the private sector, with a profit orientation, operates. Here are located enterprises from small and micro businesses up to large multinational corporations. The Second System is occupied by the public sector and by multi-lateral and supra-national agencies and bodies. From local community councils to United Nations, the sec-

Figure 2.1. Three Systems of the Economy Framework. Source: Pearce (2003)



ond sector engages in the non-commercial, planned provision of goods and services. The Third System is perhaps the more diverse. Some of its organisations operate a trading, market-driven model (in a way similar to the private sector), while others operate a non-trading, planed economy model (similarly to the public sector). The Third System encompasses the social economy, the non-trading part of voluntary organisations, the family economy and the self-help economy. Within the social economy are located the trading part of voluntary organisations, the community economy and, finally, social enterprises. These range from local community enterprises to national social businesses to global fair trade companies.

Pearce locates social enterprises at the left of the Third System, or closest to the private sector, based on their “aspiration for or drive toward financial self sufficiency through trading in markets and their use of ‘entrepreneurial’ skills” (McManus, 2004, p.6). Organisations of the Third System often cross the inner boundaries; voluntary organisations that trade will frequently operate similarly to social enterprises, charities may regularly operate at both sides of the formal-informal divide, and emerging social enterprises might operate similarly to voluntary organisations that do not trade. In practice, therefore, there is a trading continuum that spans across the Third System, which is graphically represented in Figure 2.2.

Pearce's framework's major value is that it simultaneously articulates the complexity of organisations and operating models while providing useful guidance as to the location of social enterprises within the economy.

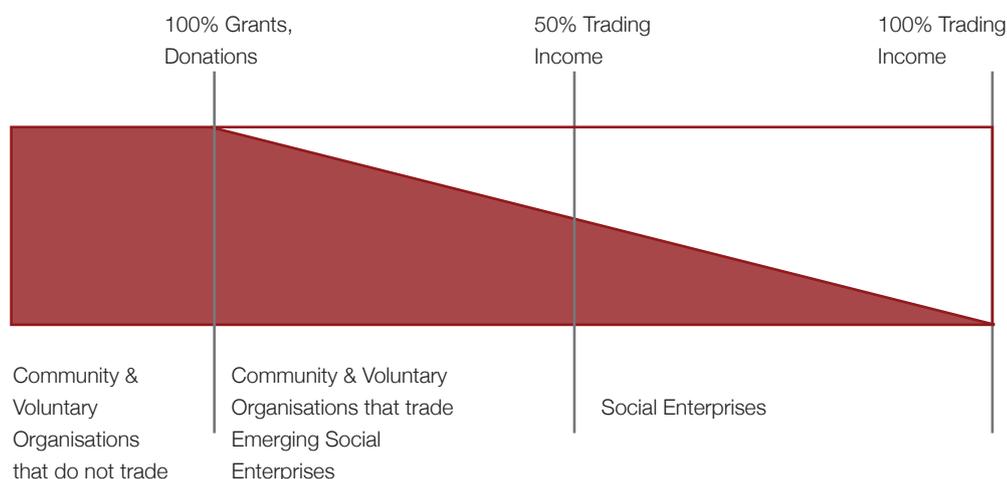
Types of social enterprises

Social enterprises employ a number of different operating models. This section offers a superficial description, rather than a meticulous account, of some of the models under which social enterprises operate. The aim is to introduce the reader to some of the different forms social enterprises adopt in order to deliver on their social mission. The models presented in this section are an adaptation of Kim Alter's Social Enterprise Typology (Alter, 2006, pp. 48-61).

In the first model, termed fee-for-service, social enterprises provide goods and services in exchange of an affordable fee or price. These goods and services include, for example, irrigation pumps, microcredit, clean drinking water, electricity, health services, and so on. These goods and services are either useful on their own (such as clean water) or used as a means to something else (such as a microloan that is used to expand a small business). Examples of fee-for-service organisations include Pro Mujer, a microfinance institution operating in Bolivia, Nicaragua, Peru and Mexico that provides microloans to low-income women; Bookshare.org, an organisation that supplies, at a subscription fee, access to an extensive online library of digital Braille and talking books for the blind; and A to Z Textile Mills, a Tanzanian venture that produces and commercialises affordable, long-lasting anti-malaria bed nets.

The second model is service subsidisation, in which social enterprises generate revenues to advance their mission through overlapping or distinct activities. In these cases, the social mission is partly or entirely detached from the business operation, which is employed primarily

Figure 2.2. The trading continuum for the social economy. Source: McManus (2004, p. 10)



as a funding mechanism. One example is Para la Salud, a social enterprise in Guatemala that operates a chain of village pharmacies that generates profits that subsidise a series of rural community health clinics that provide health services to the poor.

Other models, which will not be discussed in length in this paper, include market intermediary, in which social enterprises act as mediators between producers and markets, purchasing products locally from small producers and selling them in non-local markets at a mark-up; employment and training, which provide employment opportunities and technical training to people with high barriers to employment, such as the homeless, disabled, ex-offenders, and the elderly; cooperatives, organisations that are “owned and operated by a group of individuals for their mutual benefit” (O’Sullivan, 2003, p.202), and whose members benefit from increased collective bargaining power for purchasing and selling goods and services, or from improved access to markets, market information, technical assistance, and extension services; and market linkage, in which social enterprises act as brokers to connect clients to markets, while charging a fee for the service.

It must be noted, however, that these models are flexible and not mutually exclusive. In practice, rather than strictly adhering to a single model, social enterprises will often adopt two or more models in order to deliver on their social mission, leading in some cases to quite complex organisational structures. One example is Vision-Spring, a social enterprise based in India that produces affordable eyeglasses, and trains and employs micro-entrepreneurs to operate a micro-franchise that travel to rural villages where they conduct vision camps, in which eye exams are carried out and eyeglasses are sold.

2.3 Measuring social impact of social enterprises

“Metrics and evaluation are to development programs as autopsies are to health care: too late to help, intrusive, and often inconclusive.” (Trelstad, 2008, p.107)

The complexity and the shortcomings of measuring non-financial contributions of social enterprises are widely acknowledged in the literature. Andrew Flockhart, for example, notes that “whilst it is possible to measure the amount of money that social enterprises generate and return to the economy (e.g. salaries, credit, contract for services or goods), it is far more difficult to measure the wider civic or social impact that social enterprises have and the benefit gained (financial or otherwise) by a community” (cited in Peattie and Morley, 2008, p.18). These difficulties lead to “the lack of consistently effective ap-

proaches and tools for measuring and reporting social value, and the lack of confidence in what is measured” (Emerson et al., 2004, p.9).

The challenges of measuring impact can be grouped in three broad aspects. The first issue is what to measure. Do we measure outputs, outcomes or impacts? How should the outputs, outcomes and impacts be selected? How do we define the evaluative scope of the assessment? What do we specifically mean by social impact? What about the “economic multipliers or unintended consequences of our work?” (Trelstad, 2008, p.106).

The second challenge is how to measure. Measuring outcomes and impacts is in fact quite difficult because (i) it involves measuring intangible attributes, such as improvements in gender relations or community cohesion, trust and vibrancy; (ii) it is expensive, and “social enterprises don’t have an endless budget” (Hill, 2009); and (iii) it involves a complex and large logistical effort of data collection (ibid). In addition, we’re likely to face a causality issue: how do we ‘prove’ that our initiative caused the change we have identified? Can we ever have confidence that our initiative (and not something else) caused the intended outcome? It turns out it can be extremely difficult to track outcomes or impacts back with certainty to the original inputs and activities undertaken.

The subsequent challenge is how to value what has been measured. “Simply because we can measure something does not mean we can accurately value what has been measured” (Emerson et al., 2003, pp.77-78). So once all measurements have been done and are available, how do we go about calculating meaningful indicators from it?

Added together, these challenges have meant that “little consensus on how best to approach the creation of a single, commonly endorsed set of metrics by which to assess the performance of non-financial aspects” of social enterprises has been achieved (Emerson et al., 2004, p.77).

Reflecting on these difficulties, some authors have come to propose that the costs of measuring performance may well outweigh the benefits. One of the most vocal among these commentators is Jed Emerson (2001), who argues that spending resources (both financial and human) and time on measurement and building measurement systems means less resources and time are available for actually running the social enterprise. He also notes that some things inherently defy measurement, such as the increase in someone’s level of opportunity or dignity, and argues that “there’s more to human life than numbers can possibly capture” (cited in Cameron, 2010).

On the other side of this debate are those that perceive

a great deal of benefits in carrying efforts to measure impact. One line of argument centres in the popular saying that “we can’t manage what we can’t measure”. One to use this string of argument is Brian Trelstad, who argues that impact measurement allows “professionals trying to effect change to understand what is working and what is not—and why” (Trelstad, 2008, p.107). Ted London, another author to support the case for impact measurement, similarly argues that “It helps managers identify and enhance the positive effects of a venture’s products and services, understand and mitigate the negative effects, and more clearly articulate current performance and prospects for improvement. With this information in hand, they can create more successful, sustainable business models” (London, 2009, p.107).

A second line of argument used by those promoting impact measurement centres on the accountability of social enterprises to end users as well as to funders. Referring to the accountability to consumers, Hill insists that social enterprises need to be able to answer important questions such as “Have your products/services actually reached the ‘poor’?” and “Are your investments drastically improving lives or only marginally?” (Hill, 2009). In regards to the accountability to funders, Trelstad notes that social enterprises should be able to tell donors whether their philanthropic investments have made a difference relative to their other charitable options (Trelstad, 2008, p.107). This is the same position taken by Hill, who argues that “the future of the social enterprise sector—this idea (and it is still only an idea) that enterprises may be a more efficient means of improving the lives of the poor—rests entirely on our ability to get [impact measurement] right” (Hill, 2009).

2.4 Methodologies for measuring impact

In this context, a multitude of methodologies and mechanisms for measuring social enterprises’ social impacts have been proposed. Examples include Social Return on Investment (SROI), a methodology developed by the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (REDF); Blended Return on Investment, developed by Jed Emerson; On-going Assessment of Social Impacts (OASIS), also by

REDF; Expanded Value Added Statement, by Mook, Richmond and Quarter; Best Alternative Charitable Option (BACO), created by the Acumen Fund; and the Base of the Pyramid Impact Assessment Framework, by Ted London. The list could go on. To further blur the picture, every organisation seems to be “reinventing the measurement wheel” (Hill 2009) and, therefore, to be adopting “different but overlapping solutions to a common set of problems” (Kramer, 2005, p.1). Kramer argues that the end result is a “massively inefficient system of multiple reporting requirements” (Kramer, 2005, p.17).

Without going into extensive analysis of each of these methodologies, two main limitations have to be noted. First, most methodologies insist in converting social benefits generated into monetary value, in order to calculate a return on investment. This works well for programmes that create employment or reduce demand for health care, but not for other types of programmes such as those focused on women empowerment or the promotion of political participation (Kramer, 2005, p.2). Second, the majority of these methodologies seem to “judge their success at alleviating poverty on the basis of tasks completed and milestones achieved—amount of money invested, quantity of products distributed, number of interventions initiated, and so on—rather than on how well their activities translate into changes on the ground” (London, 2009, p.107). Attempts to create qualitative or impact-focused methodologies are emerging (notably BACO and Base of the Pyramid Impact Assessment Framework), but not enough experimentation has been done to gather a meaningful amount of evidence to support them. As a consequence, none of these methodologies has gathered enough consensus as to be widely accepted and adopted by those working on impact measurement (Peattie and Morley, 2008; Kramer, 2005; Emerson et al., 2004).

Shortcomings aside, the use of these methodologies requires considerable amounts of time, resources and skills that this author lacks. Recognising this state of affairs, and with the stated aim of measuring the extent of the contribution of social enterprises to human development in mind, this research next introduces the capability approach, and investigates its appropriateness as a framework for this analysis.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

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1. D.Light Design is a social enterprise based in India that produces and sells affordable solar lamps.

3. Conceptual framework

This section considers the adequacy of the capability approach as a framework to evaluate social enterprises' impact on human development.

3.1 Revisiting some concepts from the capability approach

Before considering the use of the capability approach to value social enterprises' development outcomes, it is worth revisiting a couple of concepts from the approach. First, central to the capability approach is the idea that human development refers to "the real opportunity that we have to accomplish what we value" (Sen, 1992, p.31). This understanding calls for people to be seen "as being actively involved – given the opportunity – in shaping their own destiny" (Sen, 1999, p.53), as opposed to passive beneficiaries of development programmes.

Second, the approach assumes that functionings, capabilities and freedoms have intrinsic value (are valuable themselves) as well as instrumental value (as a means to achieving something else). In Sen's words, greater freedom to achieve the things one values is (i) "significant in itself for the person's overall freedom", and (ii) "important in fostering the person's opportunities to have valuable outcomes" (Sen, 1999, p.18). In this sense the expansion of freedoms is both the primary end and the principal means of development (Sen, 1999, p.36).

It may be here that the capability approach contrasts the most with income- or consumption-led views of development. The capability approach sustains that, while income and consumption are important, they are only means of expanding people's ability to achieve the things they value (Sen, 1999, p.3). Sen argues that "viewing development in terms of expanding substantive freedoms directs attention to the ends that make development important, rather than merely to some of the means that, inter alia, play a prominent part in the process" (Sen, 1999, p.3). He notes this idea goes back to Aristotle, who observed that "wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking; for it is merely useful for the sake of something else" (cited in Sen, 1999, p.14).

3.2 Use of the capability approach to value development outcomes

Central to the capability approach is the argument that the success of a society should be evaluated "primarily by the substantive freedoms that the members of that society enjoy" (Sen, 1999, p.18). This, in turn, means that assessment of progress of the process of development has to be done "primarily in terms of whether the freedoms that people have are enhanced" (Sen, 1999, p.4). Similarly, Sabina Alkire suggests that one can conclude that poverty reduction would have occurred if people "could realistically choose to enjoy a greater set of valuable activities or ways of being" (Alkire, 2002, p.2).

As a minimum, this evaluation would entail three stages. First, one needs to identify valuable functionings or capabilities that would be in scope of the analysis. Second, one needs to measure whether those functionings or capabilities have been expanded or contracted. Finally, because some functionings or capabilities are conceivably more important than others, one needs to identify the 'weighted value' of contractions and expansions. Simply put, one needs to identify what to measure, how to measure, and how to value what has been measured. Only after capabilities have been identified (if not the comprehensive set, at least a meaningful subset), measured and valued, can at least a "partial assessment possibly be made about capability expansion" (Alkire, 2002, p.27).

It is reasonable to ask, therefore, how to select the functionings and capabilities, how to measure their expansion or contraction, and how to value them in an evaluation exercise. Naturally, these questions are not specific to the capabilities approach. They are, incidentally, strikingly similar to the ones raised in section 2.4 when discussing the measurement of impact of social enterprises (as a reminder, those were what to measure, how to measure and how to value what has been measured). It would therefore be sensible to apply the solutions proposed by those working on the capability approach to the analogous challenges faced by those working on social enterprises.

Let's take on each of these challenges at a time.

What to measure

Sen chooses not to specify a list of capabilities and functionings that people have reason to value, insisting that the capability approach is deliberately incomplete (Frediani,

2010, p.176). While he acknowledges that “the extensive coverage of freedoms is sometimes seen as a problem in getting an ‘operational’ approach to development that is freedom-centred” (Sen, 1999, p.24), Sen objects to “an insistence on a pre-determined, canonical, cemented or ‘fixed-forever’ list that is not subject to public reasoning” (Qizilbash, 2005, p.146), and maintains that the capability approach “requires no unanimity” (Sen, 1999, p.34).

Martha Nussbaum, who shares with Sen a number of writings and is herself one of the main exponents of the capability approach, has on the other hand come to set forth a list of human capabilities that she hoped would trigger a process whereby the “community of nations [would] reach a transnational overlapping consensus on the capability list, as a set of goals for cooperative international action and a set of commitments that each nation holds itself to for its own people” (Nussbaum, 2000, p.104).

Five aspects of Nussbaum’s list of central human capabilities deserve explanation. First, the list is one of combined capabilities. To be enjoyed they require the development of one’s internal capabilities (“developed states of the person herself that are, so far as the person herself is concerned, sufficient conditions for the exercise of requisite functions”) as well as an enabling environment for their exercise (Alkire, 2002, p.33). These combined capabilities have value in themselves (intrinsic) as well as value for their usefulness in achieving something else (instrumental). Second, the list is one of capabilities to achieve valuable functionings, rather than of achieved functionings; as such most components of the list are introduced with the formula ‘being able to’ (Nussbaum, 1995, p.82). Third, the list is deliberately incomplete, in that it identifies only the “subset of human capabilities that are necessary for a dignified human existence anywhere” (Alkire, 2002, p.33). Fourth, Nussbaum’s list is also flexible, in that it is open to be tested and as such has been revised a number of times. Finally, the list is open to plural specification, in the sense that “its members can be more concretely specified in accordance with local beliefs and circumstances” (Nussbaum, 2000, p.77). Nussbaum’s list of central human capabilities is reproduced in Table 3.1.

Though not free from criticism (mainly for being over-deterministic and dissociated from a process of public reasoning and discussion – see, for example Alkire, 2010, p.31), Nussbaum’s list has come to be the most widely acclaimed and adopted list of capabilities in the literature.

How to measure

Sen suggests a number of approaches that would give “practical shape” to the capability approach (Sen, 1999, p.81). The one that seems more suitable to the goal and scope of this paper is what Sen calls the “supplementary

approach”, a procedure in which changes in instrumental variables that are expected to affect capabilities, such as availability of health care or the prevalence of joblessness, are examined as a proxy to changes in capabilities themselves (Sen, 1999, p.82).

In practice, this implies making use of a logic chain of results – a theory of change – in which inputs and activities lead to a succession of expected outputs, which lead to a series of expected outcomes and finally to a set of expected impacts, where impact refers to “significant or lasting changes in people’s lives” (Roche, 1999, p.21). In some cases articulating a theory of change is uncomplicated – an eye hospital, for example, can easily relate outputs (number of eye surgeries performed) with outcomes (number of people with vision restored), so assumptions have to be made only from outcomes to impacts (number of people with vision restored enabled to seek employment on an equal basis with others). In other cases, however, a theory of change may involve more complex relationships, and therefore a greater number of assumptions need to be made – an ambulance service needs to make assumptions to relate outputs (response time and number of patients taken safely to hospital) to outcomes (quality of the treatment received in hospital) and then to impacts (health of the patient after receiving treatment in hospital) (Ebrahim and Rangan, 2010, pp.22-23).

How to value what has been measured

In addressing this question, Sen argues that this is inherently a “judgmental exercise [that] can be resolved only through reasoned evaluation” (Sen, 1999, p.78). Sen is purposefully open about this, and chooses not to specify how the value judgments are to be made (after all, as Horace noted over 2,000 years ago, “there are as many preferences as there are people”) (cited in Sen, 1999, p.68). Alkire notes that, instead, Sen argues there are a multitude of competing ways in which this evaluation could be done, each of them coherent with the capability approach; choosing one could rule out the others, and therefore compromise the pluralism of the approach (Alkire, 2002, p.3).

Sen does provide some useful insights, though. He suggests that if certain functionings or capabilities are identified as valuable, then it should be evident that, even if there is no agreement as to the relative value of the various capabilities, having more of each of them (or even any of them as long as there is no reduction on any of them) would be an improvement (Alkire, 2002, p.30). What Sen is arguing is that the decision of weighing capabilities relative to each other does not necessarily need to be made, as it should be possible to assess the absolute expansion of functionings or capabilities without necessarily assessing their relative expansion.

Table 3.1. Nussbaum's list of central human capabilities. Source: Nussbaum, 2000, pp.78-80

Life. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.

Bodily health. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.

Bodily integrity. Being able to move freely from place to place; having one's bodily boundaries treated as sovereign, i.e. being able to be secure against assault, including sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.

Senses, imagination, thought. Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason — and to do these things in a 'truly human' way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing self-expressive works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to search for the ultimate meaning of life in one's own way. Being able to have pleasurable experiences, and to avoid non-necessary pain.

Emotions. Being able to have attachments to things and persons outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by overwhelming fear and anxiety, or by traumatic events of abuse or neglect. (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development.)

Practical reason. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's own life. (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience.)

Affiliation (i). Being able to live for and towards others, to recognise and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation; to have the capability for both justice and friendship. (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedoms of assembly and political speech.)

Affiliation (ii). Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails, at a minimum, protections against discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, caste, ethnicity, or national origin.

Other species. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

Play. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

Control over one's environment - Political. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.

Control over one's environment - Material. Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), not just formally but in terms of real opportunity; and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into mutual relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

3.3 Revisiting the objective of this paper

Back in section 1.2, the objective of this paper was outlined as 'to investigate the extent to which social enterprises are effective agents of development'. At this point, and based on the discussions so far, it is possible to expand on this objective. First, and drawing on the capability approach, the expansion of capabilities is seen as both the primary end and the principal means of development. It makes sense, therefore, to **focus on the expansion of capabilities in order to assess progress in terms of development**. As discussed previously, the list of human capabilities proposed by Nussbaum has received considerable endorsement in the literature, and as such it seems appropriate to adopt it here.

Second, and based on discussions in section 3.3, assessment of the impact of social enterprises on human

capabilities draws on individual social enterprises' theories of change – the exercise of **associating inputs, activities and outputs to expected outcomes and impacts**. In other words, this implies making use of the "supplementary approach", whereby changes in instrumental indicators that are likely to affect capabilities are considered as a proxy to assess changes in capabilities themselves. Finally, and drawing on discussions on the capability approach in section 3.3, **no value judgment is made on the importance of different capabilities relative to one another**¹. What is attempted instead is to identify the range of capabilities that are affected, to whatever extent, by the operations of social enterprises.

In conclusion, the objective stated in section 1.2 could be rephrased as 'to investigate the range of human capabilities that are impacted by the operations of social enterprises'.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. In other words, the absolute, rather than the relative, expansion of capabilities is assessed. Implicitly, this assumes

no capability is negatively impacted.

4. Case studies

4.1 Why a multi-case study

To address this paper's objective, the multi-case study method was adopted. A multi-case study approach can expose patterns and relationships that could remain unnoticed on the single-case study method. A multi-case study "allows for an in-depth analysis across different contexts and enables researchers to better understand how and why outcomes occur" (London et al., 1999, p.584). It also offers the "opportunity to conduct both within-case and cross-case analysis, [whereby] tentative explanations found in a within-case analysis can be tested across other cases, enhancing reliability and validity of the conclusions drawn" (ibid).

4.2 Scope of the case studies

Given the wide range of organisations that fit the description of social enterprises, their broad geographical reach, and the limitations faced by the author in terms of resources and data availability, it has been necessary to focus the case studies on a more restricted group of social enterprises and geographies, as follows:

- i. In terms of operations, focus is given to social enterprises that provide goods and services to the poor (mostly operating a fee-for-service or service subsidisation models). This excludes enterprises that primarily source from the poor (market intermediary, market linkage or cooperative models) or that primarily employ the poor or disadvantaged (employment and training model). This does not mean, however, that organisations analysed here will not source from, employ or train the poor, but that will not be their primary activity.
- ii. In terms of geographic scope, focus is given to organisations operating in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Though different in many aspects, these neighbouring countries are in similar stages of human development, as measured by the United Nations' Human Development Index¹ (HDI). It is assumed this would have a 'neutral effect' on the capacity of social enterprises to have a positive impact on the expansion of capabilities.

It is hoped that this 'double-focus' will translate into a more relevant discussion and, most importantly, increase the validity of the findings.

4.3 Limitations and constraints

The scoping exercise, however, does not remove a number of limitations and constraints that permeate the case studies. Quantitative information on social enterprises' outputs, outcomes and impact is limited. The sample is likely to be biased in favour of more successful, better-known and well-resourced enterprises, as information on these is prone to be more widely available. Goods and services provided by social enterprises are likely to be used in ways not captured by the literature or unimagined by the author. Finally, the sample is sourced from existing works, which are liable to suffer from their own limitations and constraints.

As a consequence, the range of impacts identified in this paper is likely to be incomplete at best.

4.4 Methodology

Cases have been chosen with three preoccupations in mind. First, organisations had to fit within the operational and geographical scopes defined in section 4.2. Second, cases were chosen as to provide a considerably wide range of organisational size, profit motivation, and sector of operation. Third, sufficient information on organisations needed to be available as to allow for an informed assessment of their impact on the instrumental variables used to evaluate variations on capabilities. Information was sourced from a variety of published literature such as books, journals, newspaper articles and websites. Based on these criteria, a final sample of 34 social enterprises was selected for the study. Each of these 34 organisations was mapped in terms of sector, products or services provided, stated mission, base country, profit motivation, and numbers of consumers reached.

Of the 34 ventures, 22 (65%) are based in India, 8 (24%) in Pakistan, 2 (6%) in Bangladesh, and 2 (6%) have bases in more than 1 of these countries. Catego-

rised by sector, 7 (21%) are in health, 5 (15%) are in microfinance, 5 (15%) are in agriculture, 4 (12%) are in appliances, 4 (12%) are in energy, 3 (9%) are in water supply, and 2 (6%) are in waste management, housing and communications. Of the 34 enterprises 24 (71%) are for-profit, and 10 (29%) are non-profit. In terms of reach, 8 (24%) have served fewer than 10 thousand consumers, 5 (15%) between 10 thousand and 100 thousand, 11 (32%) between 100 thousand and 1 million, 7 (21%) more than 1 million, and 3 (9%) did not make this information available at the time of writing.

The task of assessing the impact of these organisations on central human capabilities was carried out according to the amount of information available on each social enterprise. In some instances, information was avail-

able up to the level of impacts, while for others it was available only to the level of outputs. In these cases, assessment of impact was based on observed changes in instrumental indicators that could be expected to affect capabilities themselves. A series of examples of this assessment are presented in Table 4.1. This activity draws heavily on the discussion in section 3.3, which suggested that alterations in instrumental variables that are expected to affect capabilities can be examined as a proxy to changes in capabilities themselves.

Both direct and indirect impacts were considered. For example, an enterprise providing eye surgery that restores one's ability to see has a direct impact on health (restored vision), and an indirect impact on incomes (as the restored vision can affect a positive impact on the

Table 4.1. Examples of typical instrumental indicators used to assess the impact of social enterprises on human capabilities. Source: produced by the author with information from companies' websites (listed in Table 8), Acumen Fund, Hart 2007, Prahalad 2005, Global Impact Investment Network (GIIN), The Parthenon Group 2009, Jhunjhunwala et al. 2004, Skoll Foundation, Ashoka, Aavishkaar.

Social Enterprise	Product/Service	Description of activity/output/outcome	Indicator of impact or theory of change	Identified or expected impact	Capabilities affected
1298 Ambulances	Emergency medical response service	Provision of ambulance services based on a sliding price scale driven by ability to pay, which is determined by the kind of hospital to which patients choose to be taken.	Patients taken to hospital receive adequate treatment and as a consequence have their health improved and/or avoid premature death.	not dying prematurely	Life
				to have good health	Bodily health
D.Light Design	Portable AC-rechargeable and solar-rechargeable LED lamp	Provision of economically and socially preferable alternative to kerosene lanterns, which are expensive, inefficient, dangerous, and low-quality sources of light.	D.Light lamps are bright enough to facilitate longer and more effective studying hours, which lead to increased learning and higher test scores.	cultivate an adequate education	Senses, imagination, thought
			United Nations Development Program studies demonstrate that families with improved lighting have up to a 30% increase in income due to increased productivity at night.	to have an adequate income	Control over one's environment - Material
			By replacing a kerosene lamp with a d.light product, a consumer can expect to experience increased safety from the elimination of accidental fires caused by kerosene lamps and better health from the elimination of indoor air pollution.	to have good health	Bodily health
AyurVAID	Provision of safe, effective, and affordable health care to poor communities	Treatment of chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, and stroke through the integration of classical Ayurveda practice with modern allopathic practice at low cost.	Treatment of chronic medical conditions leads to improved general health and well-being	to have good health	Bodily health

Social Enterprise	Product/Service	Description of activity/output/outcome	Indicator of impact or theory of change	Identified or expected impact	Capabilities affected
IDE-India	Drip irrigation and water storage systems	Provision of affordable and modular drip irrigation and water storage technologies to smallholder farmers	Drip irrigation systems improve crop yields, leading to increased consumption of vegetables per person	to be adequately nourished	Bodily health
			Recent studies have shown that drip irrigation and water storage products raise the income of small-scale farming customers by an average of \$400/year	to have an adequate income	Control over one's environment - Material
			Drip irrigation systems reduce the amount of irrigation water needed to cultivate an acre of land by 50%	being able to live with concern for the world of nature	Other species
			Year-round farming – made possible by irrigation – means that farmers do not have to uproot their families and migrate to cities during the dry season	not having overwhelming fear and anxiety	Emotions
Waste Concern	Waste collection and composting	Waste Concern directs a process for house-to-house solid waste collection that is then taken to community-run composting plants to be turned into organic fertiliser	The technology used for composting can treat 30,000-35,000 tons of waste per year and reduces emissions by 20,000 tons of carbon dioxide per year	being able to live with concern for the world of nature	Other species
VisionSpring	Provision of affordable reading glasses	VisionSpring trains local entrepreneurs to operate a micro franchise, travelling from village to village and conducting vision camps, checking eyesight and selling eyeglasses.	Clear vision is critical for continued worker productivity, especially for the artisans, tailors, mechanics, and many others across rural communities doing detailed-oriented work. Studies indicate that each pair of eyeglasses sold enables an average \$106 in increased earnings for the customer	having the right to seek employment	Control over one's environment - Material
LifeSpring	Provision of affordable maternal and child healthcare	Network of Maternity and Child Healthcare hospitals that provides high-quality, low-cost (cross subsidisation) reproductive and pediatric healthcare to low- and lower-middle-income people in urban and peri-urban areas.	Reproductive and pediatric healthcare leads to reduced maternal and child mortality and morbidity rates	not dying prematurely	Life
			Provision of pediatric care, including immunisation, leads to improved health	to have good health	Bodily health
Anjuman Behbood Khawateen Talash	Provision of financial products and educational programmes for tribal women.	Provision of micro-credit, savings, non-formal basic education, health education, and political education for women as a basis for organising and mobilising them into formal women's grassroots organisations.	ABKT encourages and guides women to participate in local elections as candidates, thus enabling them to participate more actively in local government policy-making.	being able to participate effectively in political choices	Control over one's environment - Material
Environment Planning Group Limited (EPGL)	Water purification plants based on reverse osmosis technology	New model for small water purification clusters that reduces the initial installation costs and simplifies the maintenance of community water systems.	Access to clean and safe water reduces the incidence of preventable waterborne diseases	to have good health	Bodily health

person’s productivity or employability)². This does not entail, however, that direct impacts are more profound or lasting than indirect impacts. This distinction only served the purpose of identifying the type or the closeness of the relationship between activities and impacts. Likewise, no attempt was made to measure the magnitude of the impact on each capability, as this would require more information and resources than are currently available to this author.

As a result, both direct and indirect impacts were assessed on a **yes/no** basis: either a social enterprise affected a specific capability or it did not. Once the results were recorded, an indicator was devised to illustrate the range of human capabilities that were deemed to be impacted by social enterprises: the **impact rate**. The impact rate is expressed as the *percentage of social enterprises that have an impact on a specific capability*, as per the formula below:

$$\text{Impact rate} = \frac{\# \text{ social enterprises impacting a given capability}}{\# \text{ social enterprises}}$$

For example, if 31 out of 34 enterprises had an impact, either direct or indirect, on a given capability (as in the case of ‘bodily health’), the impact rate for this capability would be 31/34 or 91%. In the case of a capability affected by 12 of the 34 enterprises (as in ‘other species’), the impact ratio would be 12/34 or 35%.

4.5 Summary of findings

Based on the analysis of these 34 enterprises, the base country variable does not seem to have a large influence on impact rate. Results for India and non-India³ are not materially different, with an overall gap of only 2% and gaps on individual capabilities varying between 24% in favour of India (on ‘senses, imagination, thought’) and 30% in favour of non-India (on ‘practical reason’). Comparisons of India and Pakistan or Bangladesh on their own were not possible, as the limited size of the sample did not allow for control for other variables, such as sector. The complete set of impacts by base country is shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1. Impact rate by country. Source: produced by the author based on case studies

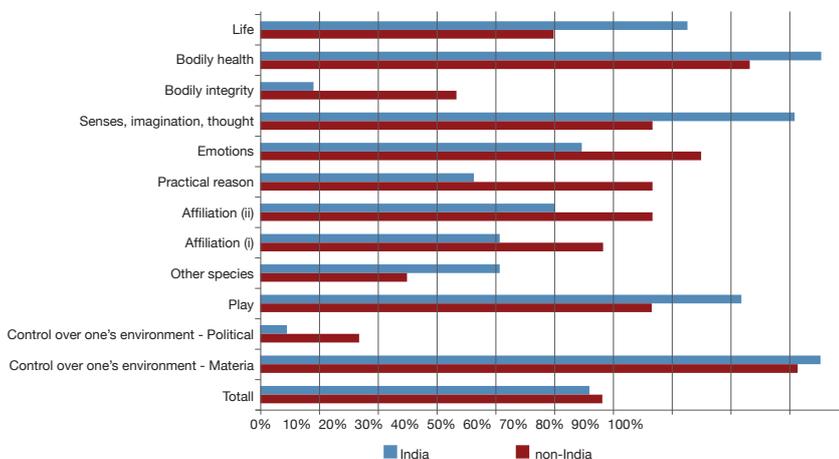
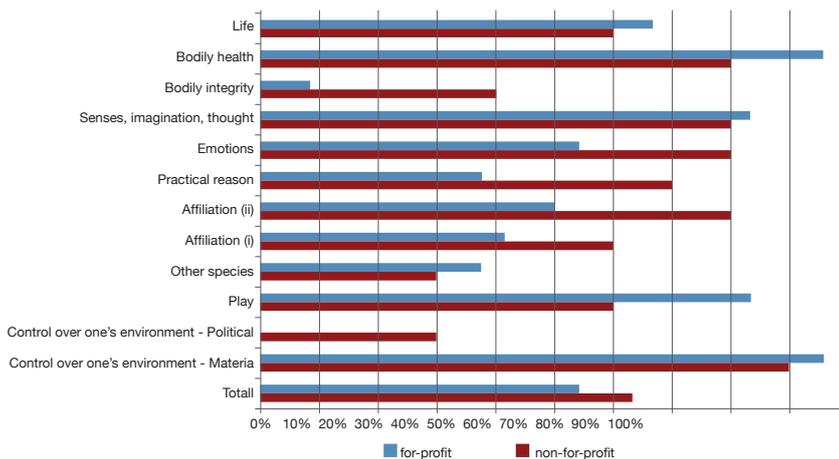


Figure 4.2. Impact rate by profit motivation. Source: produced by the author based on case studies



Profit motivation, however, does appear at first to have a material influence on impact rate. On average, non-profits had an impact rate 9% higher than for-profits, with impact on individual capabilities varying between 23% in favour of for-profits (on 'play') and 34% in favour of non-profits (on 'affiliation (i)'). However, this is entirely explained by the different mix of sectors, with a high concentration of appliances and energy (low average impact rates) in for-profits, and a high concentration of waste management (high average impact rate) in non-profits. The full set of findings by profit motivation is shown on Figure 4.2.

No discernible pattern was identified in relation to number of consumers reached. Enterprises serving less than 10 thousand people and those reaching more than 1 million people have higher overall impact rates (65% and 63% respectively) than those serving between 10 thousand and 100 thousand and those reaching between 100 thousand and 1 million people (50% and 51% respectively). It could be argued at first that enterprises are better at impacting capabilities when they're still very small or after they surpass a certain scale, and worse while they are in between. Looking closer, however, this difference is at least partly explained by the mix of sectors, with a high concentration of microfinance and waste management (high average impact rate) on the lowest and highest ranges, and a high concentration of appliances and agriculture (low average

impact rates) on the mid ranges. The complete set of impacts by consumers reached is shown in Table 4.2. In terms of sector, some appear to be significantly better than others at impacting capabilities. Microfinance displays the best impact rate by far (77%), followed by communications (63%). Microfinance seems to boast impacts almost across the whole range of capabilities, from women empowerment to improved literacy to increased employment opportunities to critical reflection. No wonder microfinance has exploded so dramatically over the past 20 years. On the other end of the scale is appliances, with an impact rate of 46%. Appliances, which include products such solar lights and energy efficient cooking-stoves that replace inefficient and dangerous kerosene-based lanterns and burners, seem to have a more focused impact on capabilities, mainly in terms of improved health and opportunities to study and socially interact after nightfall. The full set of findings by sector is shown in Table 4.3.

Most important, perhaps, is the finding that impact of social enterprises varies considerably across capabilities. The impact rate varied from a high of 94% on 'control over one's environment - material' to a low of 9% on 'control over one's environment - political'. Other capabilities with a high impact rate include 'bodily health' (91%), 'senses, imagination, thought' (82%) and 'play' (76%). On the other end of the spectrum, capabilities with a low impact rate include 'bodily integrity' (18%) and 'other species' (35%). Graphic representations of the impact of social enterprises on human capabilities are shown in Figures 4.3 and 4.4.

Table 4.2. Impact rate by number of consumers reached. Source: produced by the author based on case studies

	<10k	10k-100k	100k-1million	>1million
Life	75%	100%	55%	57%
Bodily health	100%	100%	82%	86%
Bodily integrity	13%	0%	18%	43%
Senses, imagination, thought	75%	100%	82%	86%
Emotions	88%	40%	45%	71%
Practical reason	63%	0%	45%	57%
Affiliation (i)	75%	20%	55%	71%
Affiliation (ii)	63%	20%	36%	71%
Other species	25%	40%	36%	29%
Play	88%	100%	64%	71%
Control over one's environment - Political	13%	0%	0%	14%
Control over one's environment - Material	100%	80%	91%	100%
Total	65%	50%	51%	63%

Notably, most social enterprises appear to have an impact on 'control over one's environment - material', which includes having the opportunity to engage in income-generating activities and to hold property. This was achieved either directly, as a result of employment opportunities generated by the social enterprises (for example, Grameen Telecom's phone ladies) or through the provision of affordable housing (such as Saiban), or indirectly, when enabling conditions to engage in income-generating activities are put in place (for example, Vision Spring's eyeglasses or Kashf's microloans). While we insisted throughout this paper on distinguishing the notion of poverty as lowness of income from that of capability inadequacy, it must be recognised that the two perspectives "cannot but be related, since income is such an important means to capabilities" (Sen, 1999, p.90). A substantial connection between greater income potential and advancements on other capabilities could therefore be expected.

Equally significant was the impact of social enterprises on 'bodily health', which includes being able to have good health and to be adequately nourished. That is indeed the primary focus of quite a few of the enterprises investigated, such as LifeSpring's provision of maternal and

child healthcare or 1298's ambulance services. In addition to health-care focused organisations, those providing safe drinking water (such as Waterlife's water purification plants), agricultural systems that expand farm's output (for example, Micro Drip's drip irrigation system), and appliances that replace kerosene-based lamps (such as D.Light's LED lamps) all appeared to have a direct impact on health or nourishment indicators.

Similarly noteworthy are the results for 'senses, imagination, thought', which include an adequate education, being able to produce self-expressive works and being able to avoid unnecessary pain. Direct impacts were observed mainly through the provision of health-care, which reduces unnecessary pain. Indirect impacts were observed, among others, through mechanisms that facilitate education to take place, such as electricity that powers schools (for example, SHREY's micro-hydroelectric plants) and communication technologies that enable people to access computer-based courses (such as n-Logue's internet kiosks).

On the bottom of the impact range is 'control over one's environment - political', which is about being able to participate in political choices and the protection of free speech. Only three of the 34 organisations studied have an impact on this capability. Two of them, both from the communications sector, support this capability by enabling the free exchange of information between remote villages and central towns. The third enterprise to have an impact on this capability is Anjuman Behbood Khawateen Talash, a microfinance institution that alongside loans provides political education for women.

Scoring similarly low, 'bodily integrity', which includes freedom of movement and being able to be secure against assault, seems to be impacted only by organisations that empower women to take a larger role in the household and in society at large. These include most of the microfinance institutions, and also those that systematically train and employ women, such as Grameen Telecom and Vision Spring.

Table 4.3. Impact rate by sector. Source: produced by the author based on case studies

	Agriculture	Appliances	Communications	Energy	Health	Housing	Microfin.	Waste Mgt.	Water Supply
Life	60%	0%	0%	100%	71%	0%	100%	67%	150%
Bodily health	80%	100%	50%	100%	86%	100%	100%	67%	150%
Bodily integrity	0%	0%	50%	0%	14%	0%	80%	0%	0%
Senses, imagination, thought	40%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	80%	67%	150%
Emotions	20%	25%	100%	0%	86%	100%	100%	33%	150%
Practical reason	80%	25%	100%	25%	0%	100%	100%	33%	0%
Affiliation (i)	60%	25%	100%	0%	86%	100%	80%	33%	0%
Affiliation (ii)	80%	0%	0%	0%	29%	100%	80%	33%	150%
Other species	60%	75%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	67%	0%
Play	0%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	150%
Control over one's environment - Political	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%
Control over one's environment - Material	100%	100%	100%	100%	86%	100%	80%	67%	150%
Total	48%	46%	63%	52%	55%	58%	77%	39%	88%

Figure 4.3. Impact by functioning/capability. Numbers represent number of times a capability is impacted by the activities of a social enterprise (maximum = 34). Source: produced by the author based on case studies

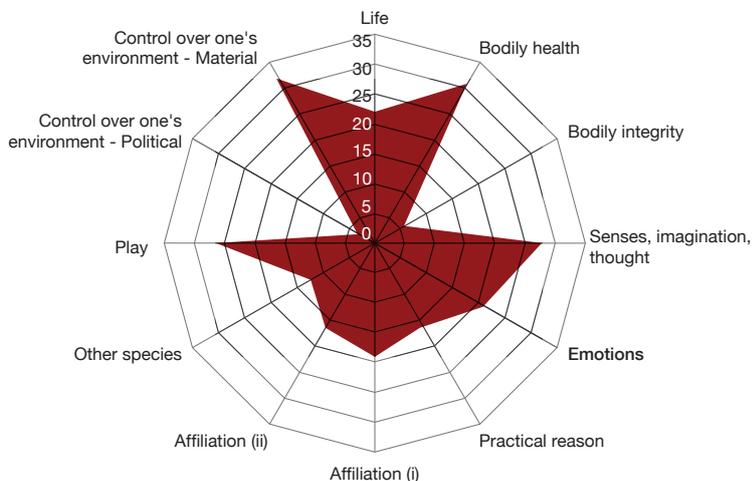
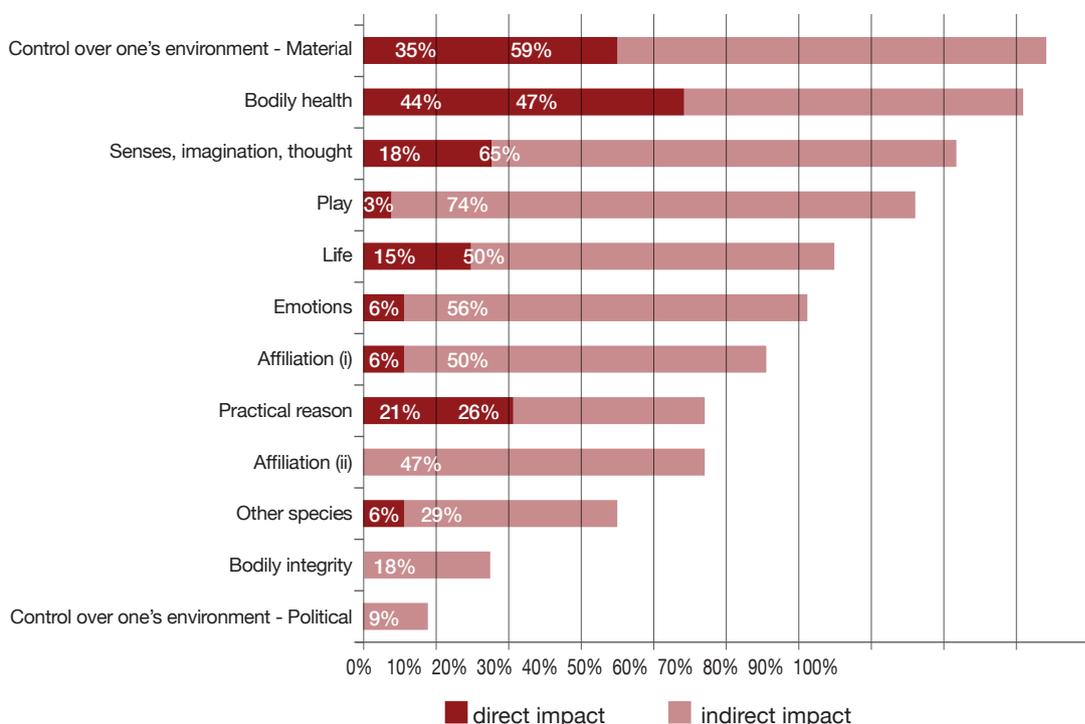


Figure 4.4. Impact rate by functioning/capability. Source: produced by the author based on case studies



NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh rank 136, 146 and 146 respectively on the 2012 Human Development Index. HDI is 0.612 for India and 0.515 for both Pakistan and Bangladesh (UNDP, 2013)
2. One exception to considering indirect impacts was made on the case of income. Whenever an activity had an impact on in-

- come (direct or indirect), the impact on income was recognised; the use that was made of the additional income (whether it was on school fees, food or shelter) was not, as it would be virtually impossible to assess how the extra income was spent.
3. Non-India includes enterprises based in more than 1 country, even when one of these is India

5. Conclusions

5.1 General considerations

The case studies indicate that social enterprises have an impact over a considerably wide range of central human capabilities. Though the magnitude of the impact was not assessed, the stories told by the case studies and the figures used to back them clearly indicate that many of the impacts are indeed life-changing. In particular, social enterprises appear to systematically create opportunities for income generation, for the upholding of good health, for adequate nourishment, for the cultivation of an adequate education, for the avoidance of unnecessary pain, and for the enjoyment of recreational activities.

At the same time, social enterprises do not seem to be effective agents at enhancing a number of human capabilities. Importantly, the case studies indicate social enterprises have only marginal impact over security against assault, freedom of movement, political participation, protection of free speech, preservation of the natural environment, critical planning of one's own life, and protection against discrimination.

5.2 Implications and recommendations

These considerations lead to two main conclusions. First, social enterprises are a valuable agent of human development: they systematically promote the expansion of human capabilities in places where markets, government and philanthropy have failed. They do so while treating the poor not as passive recipients of charity but as agents who, given an enabling environment, can and do reap the benefits of opportunity, choice, respect, and self-esteem to change their own lives. They do so sustainably, without persistently having to tap into the limited funds of government and charity. And they do so in large scale: some very large social enterprises reach tens of millions of people. Our modest group of 34 ventures touched the lives of over 20 million people.

Second, social enterprises' contribution is limited: they do not impact the whole spectrum of central human capabilities. Social enterprises are therefore only part of the solution.

These findings are relevant to policy-makers, philanthropists and social entrepreneurs alike. Policy-makers

should strive to create enabling environments that ease the way for social enterprises to be created, managed and grown successfully. This could include, for example, regulatory frameworks that facilitate starting a business, employing workers, registering property, paying taxes and enforcing contracts, and that ease the access to funding. Philanthropists should maintain or increase their support for social enterprises, including both financial and management support. Organisations that provide funding and management expertise to social enterprises, such as the Acumen Fund, Ashoka, and the Skoll Foundation, should be replicated and financially supported.

At the same time, policy-makers and philanthropists should be aware that social enterprises must be complemented with direct public investment, public policy and traditional aid. At the risk of being repetitive, areas where social enterprises fail that require particular attention from policy-makers and philanthropists include, among others, the provision of security against assault, the promotion of guarantees for the freedom of movement, political participation and free speech, and policies aimed at the preservation of the natural environment. Activities and areas in which governments could focus resources include, for example, direct investment in infrastructure; provision of social safety nets; promotion of positive discrimination policies; encouragement of green technologies through tax breaks; and law enforcement. The third sector could dedicate a greater share of their emergency, development and advocacy work to areas such as the exposal of corruption and mismanagement of public funds; the promotion of freedom of press and of individual expression; the safeguarding of the natural environment; and the promotion of gender equality.

Social entrepreneurs must be equally attentive to the impact they can expect from their organisations. In order to deliver impact on those capabilities with low impact rates, social enterprises may need to engage in non-core or non-revenue generating activities, such as educational programmes for tribal women, or counselling on the sustainable management of local natural resources. Another possibility is to focus the creation of new ventures in those sectors that have an impact on one of the capabilities with low impact rates. That is, for example, the case of communications, which positively impacts political participation.

5.3 Final considerations

Rather than drawing grand conclusions, the final note on this paper is one of prudence. The research was carried out under constraints of time, scope, resources and information availability. The findings and recom-

mendations do not pretend to be conclusive or exact. The author, however, trusts to have constructed a useful methodology for assessing the impact of social enterprises on human development, which he hopes will eventually serve as a framework for a rather more detailed, wide-ranging and controlled investigation.

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DPU WORKING PAPERS
SPECIAL ISSUE

Cooperatives, capability spaces and the idea of justice: A case study of Timor-Leste

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Problem Statement

There has been a renewed awareness, within the academia as well as international organisations such as United Nations and the International Labour Organisation, on the role of cooperatives as a means to generate opportunities for transitioning out of poverty. The International Cooperative Alliance estimates that over one billion people are members of cooperatives (ICA, 2012a). Some of the figures are remarkable: for example in Kenya, 63% of the population derive their livelihoods from cooperatives and approximately 250,000 Kenyans are employed or gain most of their income from cooperatives (ICA, 2012b); in Côte d'Ivoire, cooperatives invested USD 26 million into setting up schools, building rural roads and establishing maternal clinics in 2002 (ICA, 2012b).

Cooperatives help to bring people together, to foster their participation in economic and political life. Cooperatives can "create economic, human, and social capital" (Majee et al., 2011, p.51) and therefore they promote a kind of development that is both "democratic and people-centred" (ibidem, 52).

Whilst acknowledging the role of cooperatives for community development, this research aims to investigate to what extent collective enterprise encourages the expansion of human capabilities (individual or collective) in a context of a fragile environment. Societal fragility poses undeniable problems for human development, as the lack of social capital restricts the potential for human agency. Thus, the aim of this research is to appreciate the role of the collective enterprise in terms of the personal and collective expansion of capabilities in a fragile environment. The capability approach brings useful insights to this objective, addressing links between collective action and the potential for reducing societal fragility; these links are especially evident in the conceptual approach developed by Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum (2006, 2011) provides a list of ten "central human capabilities" that people have reason to choose and value (see Table 2.1). For example, the capability of "affiliation" relates to the ability "to live with and towards others, to recognise and show concern for others, to engage in social interaction" (Nussbaum, 2011, p.34). The elements of the approach, as defined by Nussbaum, form the process of constructing a "partial theory of social justice". Her list is greatly influenced by Aristotelian understanding of "human flourishing" or "dignified human life" for each person, and it can be used as a blueprint for discussion of what constitutes "a life worth living". Additionally, by associating the list of central capabilities to the idea of a "minimum social justice" for all, she

has introduced a "partial moral conception" to the capability approach (Nussbaum, 2003, p.42) whereby selected capabilities, important for a dignified human life, are politically justified. This last point will be further elaborated in Chapter 2.

Thus it is argued here that a cooperative, as a social structure, can play a role in reducing societal fragility. However, it is pertinent to understand the *space* in which the exercise of individual and collective agency takes place. In fact, it is through the exercise of agency and freedom of choice that individuals and groups of people can contribute to the strengthening of social cohesion. To empower these social structures and recognise their rights is a development objective that has direct impacts in societal fragility.

1.2 Research questions and objectives of the study

A key question is addressed in this research, which acknowledges the relevance of cooperatives for the advancement of human development: **Can a cooperative facilitate capability spaces in a fragile society?** This question reflects on whether the agency of the cooperative can mitigate or facilitate these capability spaces to deliver new functionings or capabilities.

Research on the extent of the contribution of cooperatives and other models of self-help to the expansion of capabilities in the context of a fragile society is apparently limited. For this reason the following study sets out to explore the extent to which cooperatives can be effective agents of development in a fragile society and thus contribute to the expansion of freedoms and human development. This paper investigates three case studies of cooperatives in Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste's recent struggle for independence shows that moving from conflict to stability is a long and demanding socio-political process. Ten years after gaining independence, key development challenges clearly remain as obstacles to achieve an inclusive form of development, such as "high population growth, lack of a modern private sector, reliance on subsistence agriculture for employment and an oil sector that brings spending capacity to the country but not jobs" (Lundahl et al., 2008). In this context, collective initiatives such as cooperatives will be evaluated to determine whether they encourage community resilience through some contribution to a "minimum account of social justice" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 71).

2. The question of collective capabilities within a 'capability approach'

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a survey of literature related to the capability approach, its philosophical influences, as well as its implications to the understanding of collective agency with regard to institutional barriers. Section 2.2 focuses on the main contributions and divergences of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum to development ethics, followed by a brief discussion and concluding remarks in section 2.3 on collective capabilities and the relevance of cooperatives for advancing human development.

2.2 The Capability Approach to development ethics and its philosophical influences: Sen's and Nussbaum's main contributions and divergences

In an era where the "development project", pursued either in developed or developing countries, has been unsettled by the ongoing economic crisis, there is an urgency to rethink the relationship between human and societal development along a more ethical path. This urgency stems from the fact that the problems faced by millions of people still living in poverty are not theirs alone. Furthermore, there is a need to openly debate the ethics associated to development policy and practices. Current policy processes privilege technocratic approaches to problem solving, which sometimes overshadow ethical considerations (Deneulin et al, 2006). A global agenda of questions and reflections about major value choices involved in processes of social and economic development is needed to ensure that the human development paradigm, as "the most holistic development model" and "a practical reflection of life itself" (Haq, 2003), can be fully achieved. Development should be concerned with how to enhance people's capabilities in the present and in the future, and in all areas of life. It is here that this appreciation of human development fully embraces Amartya Sen's core ideas of capabilities and agency that is the capability approach. This approach, first outlined in 1979 during Tanner's lectures on "Equality of What?" consists today of a new paradigm in development economics and moral philosophy. The core elements of the capability approach are that "social arrangements should aim to expand people's capabilities – their freedom to promote or achieve what they value doing and being" (Deneulin et al, 2009, p.31).

Chapter 3 provides a more detailed account of the key terms of the capability approach. For now let us briefly consider the concepts of agency and capabilities, as they are the core concepts within the capability approach. One of the goals of human development is to enable people to become agents in their own lives. As Sen explains, "people have to be seen ... as being actively involved – given the opportunity – in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programs" (Sen, 1999, p.53). When social groups and individuals are recognised as agents, and they are allowed to decide upon what kind of development they would like for themselves, priorities can be defined as well as choices on the means to achieve them. As Sen argues, "human agency can deliberately bring about radical change through improving societal organization and commitment" (Sen cited in Fukuda-Parr, 2003). Agency expands the prospects beyond a person's own wellbeing and it is directly linked to other concepts such as empowerment, self-reliance, autonomy and self-determination. This suggests that there is a strong collective aspiration for agency and that human development processes should advance public debate and "radical participatory forms of citizenship" (Hickey et al, 2004). However, the implementation of the concept of human agency is rather complex for various reasons. Decision-making processes may be dominated by groups rather than individuals, which potentially may reproduce patterns of exclusion. Similarly, the outcome of collective choices is greatly influenced by social structures as they can enhance or restrain the exercise of agency.

This brings us to explore the theoretical debates surrounding the capability approach, particularly the contributions made by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. While both share the same commitment to the use of the idea of capability, they disagree as to its means of implementation. These debates are of particular relevance to the conceptual framework for this working paper (see Chapter 4; Figure 4.1), as it offers insights into how agency is enabled or constrained by personal factors, environmental conditions, institutional and embodied social structures (e.g. institutional and legal structures, social agreements, individual value systems, and environmental and physical conditions). They can shape one's ability to act and choose the course of action or inaction, or in other words to expand **individual capabilities** toward instrumental freedoms of social justice (Nussbaum 2000,

elaborated below). Finally, the pursuit of these freedoms may be empowered through capability spaces made possible by organisational or collective support. Thus the significance of the negotiated exercise of **collective agency** lies at the intersection of these three considerations: social structures, individual capability to pursue a better life, and the **capability spaces** of collective support. Furthermore, multiple practices of collective agency must be understood as individuals' willingness to "live well together" (Deneulin, 2010). All together, these social structures, which enable or constrain individual capabili-

ties to pursue "instrumental freedoms" through capability spaces, must be considered in the everyday negotiated politics of collective agency.

Nussbaum's own version of the capability approach takes an Aristotelian philosophical stance; she uses the idea of capabilities as "the core of an account of minimal social justice and constitutional law" (Nussbaum, 2011, p.71). This "minimal account of social justice" would thus guarantee political principles to all its citizens and a capability space for claiming these principles. Her version

Table 2.1. Nussbaum's Central List of Human Capabilities. Source: Nussbaum, 2011, p.33

- 1. Life:** Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as not to be worth living.
- 2. Bodily health:** Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
- 3. Bodily integrity:** Being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.
- 4. Senses, imagination and thought:** Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think and reason – and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid non-beneficial pain.
- 5. Emotions:** Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety (supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development).
- 6. Practical reason:** Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life (this entails protection for the liberty of conscience and of religious observance).
- 7. Affiliation:** (A) Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, and to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another (protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and political speech). (B) Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion and national origin.
- 8. Other species:** Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.
- 9. Play:** Being able to laugh, to play and to enjoy recreational activities.
- 10. Control over one's environment:** (A) Political: Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association. (B) Material: Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

of the capability approach has a universal call for claims for social justice and equity. Nussbaum has outlined a Central List of Human Capabilities (CHC) (2000, 2003, and 2011) (see Table 2.1, below). Her endorsement of a list of capabilities is correlated with the idea of "protecting areas of freedom central to human lives that their removal makes life not worthy of human dignity" (Nussbaum, 2011, p.31). Her approach asks questions such as "what does a life worthy of human dignity require?" (ibidem, p.32). Thus the role of a government should be to protect a "threshold level of these ten Central Capabilities" (ibidem, p.33).

As Nussbaum argues, these capabilities are "general goals that can be further specified by the society in question" (Nussbaum, 2000) but they can serve as "the foundation of a minimum account of social justice" (ibidem, 2000, 2011). It provides "basic political principles that should be embodied in constitutional guarantees, human rights legislation and development policy" (Nussbaum, 2003, p.42) hence engaging with the human rights language. This presents a basis for citizens to claim their rights from their governments as they are embedded in constitutional principles. She further argues: "if capabilities are to be used in advancing a conception of social justice, they will obviously have to be specified (...). Either a society has a conception of basic justice or it does not" (ibidem, 2003, p.46).

This is the core divergence between Sen's and Nussbaum's justification of the capability approach. She maintains that if Sen's capability approach wants to incorporate values of social justice, then he will have to endorse a list of central capabilities. Nussbaum (2000, 2011) further stresses that one might need to go beyond the "incompleteness of Sen's capability approach" so that equal freedom for all can be appreciated.

Nussbaum's formulation of the capability approach is appealing in many ways, but with some level of criticism. First, Nussbaum can be credited for appreciating the role of governments as central to the realisation of central human capabilities; however, she does not provide a context under which circumstances and in whose interests governments regulate or facilitate particular forms of development. For example, in the case of a "fragile" state, where governments can be unresponsive to claims made by their citizens, as a result of a fragmented social fabric or because government structures are too frail to respond adequately to citizen's claims, are there alternative capability spaces for the empowerment of human central capabilities? Secondly, by associating the formulation of a list of central capabilities to the idea of a "minimum social justice" for all, she has introduced a "partial moral conception" to the capability approach (Nussbaum, 2003, p.42), whereby selected capabilities important for a dignified human life are politically justified. Her list contains ele-

ments of pluralism (e.g. freedom of speech and association), which are essential elements of a society that protects diversity, and it is useful for providing guidance in political conceptions of what human dignity means. Also, it brings to the fore ethical considerations of what constitutes a life worthy of living. However, questions arise with regard to the means through which a realisation of social justice can be expected or achieved. Nussbaum does not investigate the unequal and contingent structural relations between states and citizens (Feldman et al., 2006, p.434). Moreover, the construction of her deliberately general list of capabilities has been the subject of criticism. In fact, some authors worry that it lacks democratic legitimacy and thus minimises the role of democratic agency in her approach (Robeyns, 2005, p.106). In fact, formulating one list as one-size-fits-all seems to undermine people's ability to choose the capabilities that they value.

Furthermore, the differences between Sen's and Nussbaum's views of democratic processes have repercussions for the justification of a list of capabilities. Sen argues that "fixing one pre-determined list, undermines people's agency" (Sen, 2004, p.77). Setting a fixed list of capabilities, he argues, would be "to deny the possibility of fruitful participation on what should be included and why" (Sen, 2004, p.77). This entails a promise that, through the practice of democratic deliberation, the voices of the poor can be heard. Sen refers to "critical public discussion" as an unavoidable requirement for the formulation of "good" public policy. However, he does not offer an in-depth analysis of the structural inequalities and their implications for the general wellbeing of citizens. In this regard, at the very least, Nussbaum seeks to identify a common denominator of social justice and human dignity. Moreover, the lack of attention that Sen pays to collective-ness may undermine the efforts to realise the potential for democratic forms of expression. Sen, as explained by Deneulin, "takes the normative position of ethical individualism - meaning that what ultimately matters is what happens to every single individual in society" (Deneulin, 2009, p.35). In other words, Sen's position appears to overlook the "unjust" social structures and institutions that hinder the exercise of human agency. This is to conclude that the theoretical debates over the capability approach are far from over, and that recognising the vital role of social norms and institutions is essential for "developing public policies to advance capabilities and ultimately to achieve social justice" (Deneulin, 2009).

2.3 Can there be 'Collective Capabilities'?

Sen's use of "capability" is markedly individualistic as explained above: it refers to the "doings and beings" that a person or individual has reason to value. Sen's

support of "ethical individualism" is related to the fact that if the unit of analysis is a group (for example a family), then the analysis can be distorted as to not pay attention to any of the existing inequalities within that unit of analysis. However, some of the critics of the ethical individualism of the capability approach (such as Stewart, 2005; Ibrahim, 2006; Deneulin, 2009, 2011) recognise that when human beings interact socially, "they generate something truly collective" (Deneulin, 2009, p.36). This is more than the total sum of their individual capabilities. Ethical individualism does not capture the reality of development as it overlooks the social structures and capability spaces of society that allow people to live well together, collectively.

Stewart stresses "the importance of groups in human development, not only in directly promoting human freedoms through collective action but also in shaping what people value" (2005, p.186). As Ibrahim explains: "collective capabilities can be defined as the newly generated set of capabilities attained by virtue of engagement (of an individual) in a collective action or their membership in a social network that helps them to achieve the lives they value" (Ibrahim, 2006, p.404). Group affiliation that enhances wellbeing is an important capability as recognised by Nussbaum (Nussbaum, 2000, p.79; 2011, p.34). Another way that groups affect wellbeing is through *instrumental reasoning*. Stewart (ibidem, p.188) categorises the economic functions of groups in three types: efficiency functions (aimed at overcoming market failures), claims groups (intended to improve the share of resources or power of their members), and pro bono groups (aimed at providing benefits for others in society). Without going into much detail in each of these group categories, it is worth noting that the organisation of groups amongst the disadvantaged in society is predicated on capability spaces for debate. These spaces can exert pressure on policy, which can lead to significant improvements in society. Group formation or collective agency, among the poor, has great potential for enabling or empowering individual capabilities (Ibrahim, 2006, p.406). For instance, they may alleviate poverty directly by increasing income generation, or indirectly through empowerment and political action (Thorp et al., 2005, p.907). *Organised communal groups* – such as women's groups, unions or cooperatives – *play a fundamental role into one's capability to choose the life he/she values*. They provide a space for formulating shared values, and are instrumentally important for pursuing them. However, and as Thorp explains (ibidem, 2005), the chronically poor can be disadvantaged in group formation or in exercising their agency within a group – therefore making them even more excluded.

This brings us back to the notion of "collective agency" or "collective freedoms". Agency is exercised in a variety of ways and in multiple spaces. It is affected by the prevailing social structures of individual or communal

values, socio-political relations, and institutional frameworks or social agreements (Evans, 2002, p.55). Collective agency can then be understood as "an individual pursuing acts of the good collectively" (Ibrahim, 2006, p.405). This point is debatable when conceptualising "collective capabilities" because one needs to be aware that "group affiliation is not always beneficial" (Sen, 2004 as cited in Ibrahim, 2006, p.406); it may restrict members from belonging to other groups, or even may be oppressive and reproduce patterns of exclusion of the poorest among communities. Also, group affiliation can cause conflict and thus undermine individual choices (Stewart, 2005).

Acknowledging the possible adverse effects of some groups, this paper takes the view that these adverse effects should not underplay the intrinsic importance of group affiliation in aspiring human development. In other words, the social structures, which may enable or constrain the effective exercise of individual capabilities and even the spaces of communal support, should be considered an important instrumental precondition for attaining more just forms of human development. That is, in order to fully understand the implications of the expansion of collective agency in the context of societal fragility, *an assessment of the intersection of the following three considerations is required: social structures, individual capability and capability spaces*. They need to be assessed because they may or may not promote the collective structures that help individuals to thrive. This assessment can only take place with an appreciation of capability spaces, through which one is able to evaluate the factors that may enable or constrain freedom and agency. Collective agency, as an expression of collective capability, is therefore critical in enabling individual or group influence on the places in which they live.

All in all, Sen's and Nussbaum's versions of the capability approach do not offer a comprehensive approach to the extent to which social structures, environmental factors and individual conditions may or may not influence *capability spaces* and thus the expansion or contraction of human agency (individual or collective). Other complementary elements need to be taken into account in such an evaluative exercise.

This brings us to the subsequent chapter, which outlines an analysis of the cooperative movement as an expression of collective agency. The key question of this paper is: can a cooperative facilitate capability spaces in a fragile society? This question reflects on whether the agency of the cooperative and its members can mitigate or facilitate these capability spaces to deliver new functionings in the presence of a socially fragile situation. Key questions in the review of this literature are: how can social enterprises be empowered, and can they underpin collective agency in a fragile environment?

3. Cooperatives, capability spaces and the idea of justice

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the significance of cooperatives for enhancing human development and situates this significance in the context of societal fragility. It also explores the role of cooperatives in contributing to more just forms of development.

3.2 Capability space and individual and collective capabilities: Which capabilities to select and how to measure their value?

As described in the first chapter, a central question within the capability approach and the associated selection of capabilities is who should determine which functionings are relevant to a particular capability space. As mentioned in section 2.2, this question is of particular significance in the above review of Sen's and Nussbaum's differing formulation of the capability approach. Sen leaves the approach intentionally incomplete and open to public discussion. His ambiguity in relation to the question of how to select capabilities can be explained by his ideal of individual agency. This means that each individual or group should select, weigh and prioritise capabilities that they value. This selection should be done through public discussion and open debates so that "it can lead to a better understanding of the role, reach, and significance of particular capabilities" (Sen, 2004, p.80). This idea forms the basis of his argument against a set list of capabilities (as defined by Martha Nussbaum; see Chapter 2 for full discussion).

Reiterating Nussbaum's justifications over her Central List of Human Capabilities, she justifies it by arguing that "each of the capabilities is needed in order for a human life to be not so impoverished that it is not worthy of the dignity of a human being" (Nussbaum, 2000, p.72). She also argues that this list derives from an "*overlapping consensus*" (ibidem, 2011, italics added) and that it is open to constant revision and scrutiny. Sen has consistently declined to support a "one pre-determined canonical list of capabilities, chosen by theorists without any general social discussion or public reasoning" (Sen, 2004, p.77). However, and as abovementioned, Sen has never offered a detailed account on how such a selection of relevant capabilities should be done. A number of scholars, such as Alkire and Crocker, have offered various explanations on how to fill in this lacuna. For instance, Alkire (2002, chapter 2) suggests

that the selection of capabilities should be done through a "practical reasoning approach" (by asking questions such as "why do what I do?") that could truly reflect on reasons for acting. Crocker considers the role of deliberative democracy in the development of an "agency-sensitive capability approach" (Crocker, 2008, p.298) and argues that this should be the basis for selecting capabilities. Frediani introduces the idea of 'capability spaces' (Frediani, 2010) that aims to understand the command, ability and opportunity or choice over resources (commodities or goods and services that are available to individuals) and is essential for transforming them into achieved functionings.

3.3 Cooperatives and capability spaces for enhancing human development in a fragile environment

Drèze and Sen mention that "the options that a person has depend greatly on the relations with others and on what the state and institutions do (...) we shall be concerned with those opportunities that are strongly influenced by social circumstances and public policy" (Drèze et al., 2002, p.6). Based on this concern, this following section will attempt to explore to what extent participation in a cooperative can enhance members' capabilities.

The cooperative movement can offer an alternative to traditional economic models. Cooperatives play a crucial role across a wide range of human aspirations and needs; they offer vital services in health care, banking and housing; they promote gender equality and education programmes; and they encourage sustainable development and workers rights (Bibby et al., 2005). The role of cooperatives in fighting poverty and inequality has been widely acknowledged and international organisations have focused on the benefits of cooperatives to development (e.g., UN International Year of Cooperatives, 2012). According to the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) (2012a), a cooperative is: "*an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise*". The social structure of the cooperative as an autonomous member-owned enterprise is its principal characteristic, thus implying that decision-making processes should be participatory, and all members should be given the possibility to join in management decisions.

Cooperatives are "important vehicles for mobilization of local resources into a critical mass" (Majee et al, 2011, p.52); that is, they promote economic benefits as well as networks of social capital and trust. Yet, despite the merits of ICA's definition, values and principles of cooperatives, there remains much more on what defines a cooperative as suggested in the UN's Guidelines on the Promotion of Cooperatives, and the ILO's Recommendation on Cooperatives. Nevertheless, the following core cooperative principles and values, as defined by ICA and summarised in Table 3.1, have been adopted for the purposes of this study.

However, as pointed out by Birchall et al (2008, p.20), "it should be noted that co-operatives cannot (and should not) be expected to do everything and to be a panacea for all development problems". Their operations should be facilitated and complemented by government and other actors' actions.

In this regard, the capability approach seems to provide the most adequate framework for evaluating the contribution of cooperatives in expanding human development. In Sen's notion of development, deliberative participatory processes are the foundations of development from which it cannot be disassociated. In line with this perspective, cooperatives can expand the ability of groups to participate, influence and negotiate with institutions that shape their lives. In consideration of the cooperative values in Table 3.1, each member thus has an equal right

to participate in common decisions, which represent a form of democratic consensus. This process of collective empowerment may have a strong influence in people's lives as cooperative members, and their associated communities, become aware of unequal power relations. This is a significant assertion in relation to, for example, having a say over resource uses or public policies that enable the provision of basic capabilities.

This succinct introduction to the cooperative movement is pertinent to the proposed research because it is assumed that cooperatives can make a difference in people's capabilities in various ways. However, key questions must be asked when attempting to investigate cooperatives in a fragile environment: what difference can they make in a fragile society? And can they be agents of change by allowing their members to exercise a degree of choice and freedom - thus expanding their capabilities?

Let us briefly consider the notion of "fragility". Definitions of "fragile" states diverge, yet most definitions emphasise similar kinds of vulnerabilities. For instance, the Department of International Development (DFID) defines "fragile states as those in which the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people" (DFID, 2005). Fragile states are usually described as "incapable of assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for their citizens" (Stewart,

Table 3.1. Cooperative principles and values. Source: International Cooperative Association (ICA)

- 1. Voluntary, Open Membership:** Open to all without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.
 - 2. Democratic Member Control:** One member, one vote.
 - 3. Member Economic Participation:** Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. Economic benefits are returned to members, reinvested in the co-op or used to provide member services.
 - 4. Autonomy and Independence:** Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.
 - 5. Education, Training and Information:** Cooperatives provide education and training so members can contribute to the development of their cooperatives and inform others about the benefits of cooperation.
 - 6. Cooperation among Cooperatives:** Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, regional, national and international structures.
 - 7. Concern for the Community:** Working together for sustainable community development through policies accepted by members.
- Cooperative Values:** Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

2010). Increasingly, weak state legitimacy is seen as the principal defining element of state fragility. Recent literature now seems to favour the term "situation of fragility" or "fragility" instead of "fragile states". These two terms seem to capture the fact that fragility cannot be entirely determined by the nature of the state, but also determined by the *state of society*. As explained by Dubois et al. (2007, p.1), "if such states are fragile, it may be because their societies are fragile".

In this regard, in a turn to "non-state" organisations when a state "fails", cooperatives can play a pivotal role in meeting the needs of its citizens. In fact, cooperatives

can act as a strategic arm of minimal state intervention by offering a response to market failures (and thus reinforcing a neo-liberal agenda). Additionally, the engagement of individuals in various forms of affiliation can generate *collective agency*. Understanding the background and the various factors in which cooperatives are operating (i.e., *capability space*), will allow us to appreciate their implications in the expansion of collective and individual agency. The following chapter will introduce an adapted capability approach framework for this research, which broadly seeks to understand whether cooperative enterprises can facilitate the expansion of human capabilities in a fragile society.

4. The role of cooperatives in facilitating capability spaces: A conceptual framework for this research

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the conceptual framework for this investigation, which adapts the language and concepts of the capability approach to an evaluation of cooperatives' capacity to enable capabilities or new functionings in a fragile society. It considers cooperatives' facilitation of their respective capability spaces, which in turn may expand or constrain cooperative members' ability to achieve valuable functionings.

4.2 Main components of the capability approach

Chapter 2 has introduced key elements of agency and capabilities. The purpose of this section is to highlight the concepts of 'functionings' and 'conversion factors' and their relationship to capability spaces, as they are essential in the use of the following conceptual framework.

The capability notion rests on the concept of *functionings*. In the words of Des Gasper, a "functioning sounds like an activity of doing, being, operating" (Des Gasper, 2002, p.448). An individual's functionings reflect "the "beings and "doings he/she actually achieves whereas a person's capabilities correspond to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for him/her to achieve" (Sen, 1999, pp.74-76). It is upon individuals, through the exercise of their agency, to address questions that really matter to them. Thus functionings are valuable activities that make up individual and collective wellbeing – such as being healthy and well nourished, being safe, and being educated and having a good job.

To complement the abovementioned concept of functionings, it is important to refer to the notion of *conversion factors*. They represent "how much functionings one person can have as a result of transforming a good or service" (Robeyns, 2011). They describe the degree to which a person can *convert* a resource into a valuable functioning (Frediani, 2010). Conversion factors highlight the fact that resource ownership is not the crucial piece in assessing wellbeing; rather it stresses that we need to know more detailed information about the person and the circumstances in which he or she is

living. It is in the *capability space* that evaluative exercises should take place. We need therefore to take into account the specific circumstances in which people exercise choices over opportunities available to them.

4.3. A conceptual framework for the analysis of cooperatives' capacity to facilitate capability spaces

The capability approach seeks to evaluate human development in the space of people's freedoms to live the life they have reason to value. That is, development is evaluated in terms of people's opportunities, abilities and choices to use and transform resources into achievements or new functionings. The following framework in Figure 4.1 provides an assessment of cooperatives as a means for achieving valuable functionings within their respective capability space. It is a synthesis of the three positions as described in the previous chapters: Sen's evaluation of capabilities rather than functionings, complemented with Frediani's notion of capability space, and Nussbaum's list of central human capabilities.

Elements of the conceptual framework

These three propositions are reflected in the following elements of the abovementioned conceptual framework for this research.

Means: Resources-facilitated choices, abilities and opportunities

It is possible to choose among different means such as an individual enterprise or a collective one (e.g. cooperative). The command, ability and opportunity or choice over resources (commodities or goods and services that are available to individuals) is essential for transforming them into achieved functionings.

Conversion factors: Personal, environmental and social

As explained in section 4.2, *conversion factors* describe how resource characteristics effectively can enable functionings. This understanding of conversion

factors is fundamental to the understanding of the role of cooperatives as a means to the achievement of human capabilities and their ability to control resources.

approach "tends to be holistic rather than deal with isolated factors" (ibidem, p.36). This enables researchers to emphasise relationships and social processes to explain *why* certain outcomes might happen.

Capabilities as (new) achieved functionings

Lastly, there are the capabilities as described by Nussbaum: the freedom to choose amongst various functionings will guarantee a "minimum account of justice" (Nussbaum, 2011) and a life worthy of living.

Selection of case study cooperatives

The case studies were chosen on the basis of their relevance to the theoretical issues undertaken in this research. Given that many organisations fit the self-help description, as well as considerations of convenience due to the author's limits of time, resources and data availability, it has been necessary to restrict the case studies to a typology as follows: cooperatives legally registered and operating in Timor-Leste.

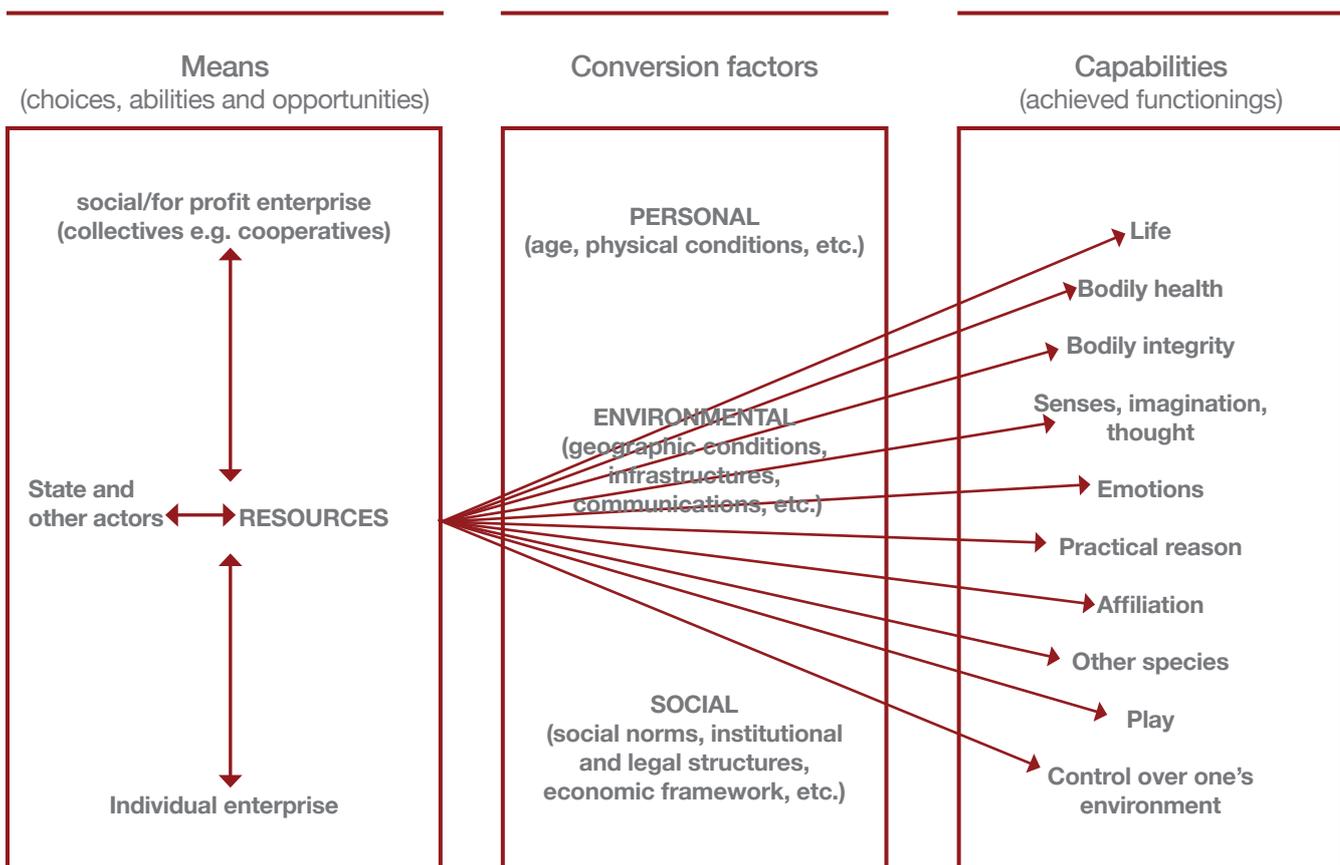
4.4 A typology of cooperatives for investigating capability space

Why use case studies for this research?

The case study approach was selected as the most appropriate method of analysis for meeting the objectives set out for this research. This approach allows an "illuminating [of] the general by looking at the particular" (Denscombe, 2007, p.34). This means that the case study approach focuses on individual features that can have wider implications. Furthermore, this

The cooperatives were selected with two concerns in mind. First, the organisations had to fit within the criteria defined above (i.e., cooperatives working in Timor-Leste). Second, sufficient information on the cooperatives needed to be presented as to allow an assessment of their capability space. This information was gathered from a variety of academic journals, reports, books, newspaper articles and websites. Based

Figure 4.1. Capability space: An evaluative conceptual framework for this research
 Source: Adapted from Frediani (2010), Vicari (2011) with reference to Nussbaum (2000, 2003, 2011)



on these criteria, three cooperatives were selected for the present research (described in detail in the following chapter).

Limitations of the adopted approach

The case study selection does not reduce altogether the limitations of using individual occurrences and the credibility of the use of generalisations (Denscombe,

2007, p.45); quantitative information on cooperatives' outcomes in Timor-Leste is limited. The sample also can be influenced by more successful cases as information on these is more widely available. Lastly, other small but nonetheless important cooperative models may not have been captured by the author. As a result, the analysis of the extent of cooperatives' impact on their respective capability space is not exhaustive by any means (see Chapter 7 for concluding discussion of research findings).

5. Timorese cooperatives: A case study background

5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the Timor-Leste country context as well as the selection of case studies that will be the object of analysis in Chapter 6.

5.2 Timor-Leste: A brief introduction

Why Timor-Leste?

Timor-Leste's recent struggle for independence shows that moving from conflict to stability is a long and demanding socio-political process. Ten years after gaining independence, key development challenges clearly remain as obstacles to achieving an inclusive form of development, such as "high population growth, lack of a modern private sector, reliance on subsistence agriculture for employment and an oil sector that brings spending capacity to the country but not jobs" (Lundahl et al, 2008). In this context, collective initiatives such as cooperatives will be evaluated to determine whether they encourage community resilience through some contribution to a "minimum account of social justice" (Nussbaum, 2011: 71).

Country Context

Timor-Leste is located in Southeast Asia, in the east of the Indonesian archipelago and to the northwest of Australia. It also includes the islands of Atauro, Jaco, and the enclave of Oè-Cussè.

According to the latest demographic census, the population of Timor-Leste is just over one million people, with a large concentration living near the capital of Dili. The official languages are Tetun and Portuguese, although much of the population does not speak either language, as there are more than 30 languages used in Timor-Leste. Regarding religious groups, the majority of the population is Catholic, with small groups of Hindus and Muslims.

The presence of Europeans can be traced back to as early as the sixteenth century, with the Dutch and Portuguese traders and missionaries establishing contact with the island. The island was divided in the nineteenth century between both countries, during which the Portuguese consolidated control over the eastern part of the island that is now Timor-Leste.

After the Portuguese left unilaterally in 1975, the island was annexed in 1976 by Indonesian authorities, under the pretext that the island was a potential communist threat to their national security. This led to the start of an armed struggle between both sides, which lasted until 1999 when a referendum was held and 78% of the population voted in favor of independence. Research has indicated that people killed numbered just over 100,000, with possibly as many as 186,000 people killed due to violence, starvation and illness during the occupation (Globalism Research Centre, 2005).

The first few years after gaining independence were full of political and economic optimism and people of Timor-Leste were finally free to rebuild their nation. However, the first signs that political and social disorder was still a real threat came to light during 2006 and 2007. A new government was formed in 2007 amidst social and economic turbulence. Prevalent, and in some areas of the country, deepening, poverty and the strong sense that independence has not necessarily resulted in immediate wellbeing, has contributed to a profound sense of collective frustration. Combined factors such as a historical leadership rivalry between villages, and the predominance of a patriarchal system of values, set in a context of post-conflict social and political fracture, has led to the intense division of political groups while weakening the state's capacity to attend to the population's basic needs (Brown, 2009). In addition, an intricate feeling of injustice linked to years of conflict, and a failure to create steady employment for youth has led to a sense of exclusion and gang related violence (Hodal, 2012). In the latest Human Development Report, Timor-Leste ranks 143 out of 187 (UNDP, 2011), which shows that, despite considerable efforts from the country's leaders, human development indicators in many of the Millennium Development Goals may not be attainable by 2015.

The legacies of conflict continue to impact on Timor-Leste's path of development as it continues to push ahead with its nation building efforts. Many of the challenges such as poverty, low levels of development, as well as uneven resource distribution, can further conflict in a country with such disparity in development.

In this scenario it is important to ask what social structures, such as cooperatives, can do to reinforce social links, thereby encouraging social cohesion and contributing directly to the reduction of societal fragility.

6. Cooperatives' ability to facilitate capability space: An analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an analysis of case study cooperatives' ability to facilitate their respective capability spaces. The analysis will take into consideration the conceptual framework elements as described in Chapter 4 (see Fig. 4.1). The aim of this study is to explore the extent to which cooperatives can be effective agents of development in a fragile society.

6.2 Mapping capabilities to cooperative-facilitated capability space

Cooperative for Tais, Culture and Sustainable Development (CTKDS)¹

The 'Tais Kultura Desenvolvimento Sustentavel' (CTKDS) was formed in 2008 to consolidate three existing weaving collectives: 'Feto Kiak Buka Moris' (Poor Women Looking for Life), 'Materestu' (The Survivors) in central Los Palos, and 'Feto Faluk Buka Moris' (Widows Looking for Life).

CTKDS is run and operated by women, with the main beneficiaries being widowed women as well as their communities. CTKDS currently has 86 female members, who come from the poorest and most disadvantaged families in the region. Many of the members are illiterate and have limited access to farmlands (ETWA, 2011).

The main resource of CTKDS, as a *collective enterprise*, is their weaving skill (design and techniques) in *tais* production, which has been handed down through a matrilineal lineage for centuries. The supply of raw materials, such as cotton and plants to make dyes, is widely available, although recently it has been replaced by easier options such as synthetic threads. *State and other actors* play a significant role in the development of the cooperative by providing significant external resources. For example, CTKDS has been supported by 'Timor-Leste Women Australia' (ETWA), a Melbourne-based NGO. The purpose of this partnership is to support the socio-economic wellbeing, self-sustainability and cultural empowerment of Timorese women, especially those who live in remote villages.

However, these resources are conditional. *Environmental conversion factors* can affect the regularity of the cooperative's activities, mainly due to the lack of social infra-

structure. Finding and accessing external markets for tais is hampered by the cooperative's location in an isolated sub-region of the island. Additionally, the production of raw materials necessary for tais production has diminished due to the use of pesticides.

Personal conversion factors can hinder individual participation in social and economic life. For example, a widowed old woman may not be able to get access to any source of income because of her age and health conditions, deepening her dependence on relatives or community members. This is particularly concerning for CTKDS, of which approximately 25% of the women are widowed without any means of income or access to land, and the illiteracy rate is over 50%. Moreover, the emotional trauma suffered during the occupation and transition years, has led to the increase of mental health related illnesses.

Social/economic/political conversion factors also condition a cooperative's capacity to facilitate a capability space for its members' pursuit of new 'functionings'. Institutional barriers, such as predominant social norms (e.g. patriarchal attitudes, power structures, division of labour), cannot be assessed here due to the methodological scope of this research (see chapter 4 for full discussion). However, it is worth noting that the principles underpinning CTKDS' operations are based on *Fulidai-dai*. *Fulidai-dai* are unique to the Makalero people of Ili-omar. It is a socio-cultural norm that promotes greater cooperation, honesty, openness, mutuality and equality, reinforcing the capacity of CTKDS as an empowering institutional force among its members.

So do these conversion factors condition CTKDS's resources and compromise its capacity to facilitate its capability space? The following table maps selected capabilities from Nussbaum's list (see Table 2.1) to this cooperative-facilitated capability space.

Timor Coffee Cooperative (Cooperativa Cafe Timor - CCT)²

Timor-Leste's share of global coffee production may be small, but its production is crucial to the country's overall economy. It is currently the most important source of foreign exchange for Timor-Leste, and it serves as the primary source of income for some 44,000 families (Oxfam Austral-

ia, 2009). This cooperative is different from the CTKDS and others because it is the main private healthcare provider in rural areas of Timor-Leste (see Table 6.2).

Individual and collective enterprise is inherent to the success of CCT as a coffee producer. However, Timor-Leste's coffee producers have not been favoured by the volatility of global coffee markets. This has been especially evident among those who made investments in their plantations and lost with lower (market) rates on the return to their investment. *State and other actors* have been providing support since the cooperative was established in 2000, helping to re-establish coffee production after the turmoil of post-independence. A recent marketing strategy from Starbucks and Fair Trade Label also has aided CCT's expansion into organic markets; however, high certification costs have hampered these efforts. Lastly, USAID has been a prominent international actor in developing CCT's health care services.

These organisational resources have been conditioned by several factors. *Environmental conversion factors* include the aged and neglected state of plantations that result in poor yields, poor physical access to processing facilities and thus increased costs for alternative means of transport, and poor coordination between cooperatives. Nevertheless, the quality and characteristics of the coffee beans

in Timor-Leste are atypical, which outweighs the disincentive of higher costs.

Personal conversion factors among coffee farmers is principally centred on the few or no alternative sources of income; these farmers and their families depend on earnings from coffee production to provide for schooling, clothing and other needs. CCT has helped to increase cash yields with wider economies of scale, but farmers remain vulnerable to price fluctuations, and low yields.

Social/economic/political conversion factors are associated with this adverse condition of the globalisation of local production. The volatility of commodity prices may have an impact on cooperative production and profit share, which may cause unemployment and social unrest. Furthermore, economic price deregulation means that small farmers may not get a fair price for their production. This may be illustrative of CCT's vulnerable position under these potential future circumstances and its capacity to politically mitigate them in a fragile societal context (see Chapter 5 for discussion).

What does this mean for CCT's capacity to facilitate its capability space? The following table maps the above consideration of CCT conversion factors against selected capabilities from Nussbaum's list:aal

Table 6.1. CTKDS: Mapping capabilities to cooperative-facilitated capability space

Tais Kultura Desenvolvimento Sustentavel (CTKDS)

Capabilities and achieved functionings

Life

This capability can be indirectly influenced by the ability of this cooperative in providing a means of income to women where previously there was none. By creating new opportunities, the cooperative has given a choice to improve the lives of women. However, environmental and economic factors, such as the lack of social infrastructure (health clinics/schools) and poor market access, suggest that personal opportunities and choices for these women remain constrained.

Bodily health

As explained by one of the cooperative members: "profits from the sale of tais assists women to be able to send their children to school and buy food for their family" (ETWA, 2011). Support from ETWA has helped the construction of three new weaving buildings as well as facilities to carry out health clinic workshops.

Senses, Imagination and thought

The women of Ilomar have been able to apply their weaving skills and make beautiful handcrafted tais. Apart from making this traditional cloth, their handcraft has diversified into making dolls, wristbands, bags, bookmarks, notebooks etc. Weaving centres also have provided spaces for individual and communal expression and creativity.

Affiliation

CTKDS developed an internal constitution and code of conduct last year, which was scrutinized and approved by the CTKDS Board. This was prompted by cooperative members' response to the legal process to become a fully registered organisation. It also reveals that these women want to be in control of their own future and able to demand their rights. As mentioned by ETWA Community Development Officer, Debra Salvagno: "without a Constitution, the women feel there is no legitimate basis on which to base their decisions when influencing processes outside of their groups, but beyond this, the document places them in a position of power which defuses their disadvantages due to gender to some small degree" (ETWA, 2011).

Note: For the capabilities' core concepts see Table 2.1 in Chapter 2

Ai – Funan Cooperative (Ai-Funan)⁹

Ai-Funan started as a small self-help group of 23 women, making hand-made soaps. Each of the soap bars is hand-made and contains 100% natural ingredients including locally produced organic coconut and palm oils. These natural ingredients are sourced locally. However, the collective and individual enterprise among Ai-Funan and its members have lacked the marketing skills to help increase market entry. External support additionally has been provided by state and other actors like the Hummingfish Foundation. The Foundation has helped women to re-brand and export their line of natural soaps; the re-branding project has added value to their product and has enabled access to international markets.

Like the previous case study cooperatives, the resources controlled by Ai-Funan are subject to conversion factors that condition its capacity to facilitate a 'capability space' for its members. *Environmental conversion factors* include poor physical infrastructure that results in increased transport costs and limited access to external markets. Yet despite this, and with the support of the Hummingfish Foundation, Ai-Funan has recently launched the sale of their produce internationally among a market niche of organic soap producers.

Personal conversion factors remain those of general business skills and marketing. Moreover, like the previous coop-

eratives of CTKDS and CCT, the principal concern is little or no alternative source of income, leaving Ai-Funan members largely dependent on soap production earnings for school, clothing and other needs provision. The patriarchal local culture in Timor-Leste is the most evident of *social/economic/political conversion factors* for Ai-Funan, which restricts the role and participation of women in economic and social spheres. Whilst this is a cross-cutting issue for all case study cooperatives in this study, its prevalence is due to the local cultural practices.

Nevertheless, the above support network for Ai-Funan members helps to mitigate this local culture and empower women. The following table maps the extent to which this Ai-Funan-facilitated capability space has helped to contribute new capabilities or 'functionings' toward the greater well being of its members.

6.3 Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided an analysis of three selected cooperatives and their ability to facilitate capability spaces in Timor-Leste. CTKDS has given the women of Iliomar an opportunity to improve their lives and to sustain the customs and traditions of Timor-Leste. Cloth weaving plays a key role in social and cultural life. It also provides spaces

Table 6.2. CCT: Mapping capabilities to cooperative-facilitated capability space

Cooperativa Café Timor (CCT)

Capabilities and achieved functionings

Life

Coffee represents an estimated 90% of the annual cash income for at least 30% of Timor-Leste's population. The number of small farmer families directly affected by the coffee production is estimated to be 23,000 (Oxfam, 2009). These subsistence farming families depend on this cash for many of the goods and services they cannot produce themselves. As a wholesale purchasing co-op, CCT benefits local communities by providing consumer goods at affordable prices.

Bodily health

The Clinic Café Timor provides quality and free health care services for remote rural communities (cooperative members and non-members). The network of clinics now has expanded into 16 fixed clinics and 4 mobile clinics. It has become the largest private health service provider in the country, treating more than 10,000 patients per month (USAID, 2009). It offers primary care as well as maternal and child health programs. Its operations are helping the most vulnerable people in getting free primary care, increasing the likelihood of maintaining good health.

Other species

Approximately 80% of coffee production is organic and forest grown (Oxfam, 2009). In social and economic terms, organic coffee production is beneficial for coffee producers as well as consumers because it aims to preserve soil fertility, to curtail pollution and to mitigate environmental impacts.

Control over one's environment

'Material' considerations include having the opportunity to engage in income-generating activities. This was achieved either directly as a result of employment opportunities generated by CCT or indirectly when CCT enabled conditions to engage in income-generating activities. 'Political' considerations include the active participation of CCT members in promoting political participation in public life.

Note: For the capabilities' core concepts see Table 2.1 in Chapter 2

for individual and communal expression and creativity. The whole process fosters and strengthens intergenerational relationships and processes of cooperation between the three communities of Iliomar. CTKDS has been able to engage its resources and positively shape a capability space in the interests of Iliomar women despite the conditioning factors of a fragile Timorese society. CTKDS is not unlike Ai-Funan. Both are largely female-run cooperatives. Yet the apparent emphasis by Ai-Funan on mitigating the patriarchal local culture in Timor-Leste seems to suggest that other more pressing issues have not been present; though only field work can determine how individual and shared conversion factors weigh differently on the activities of the case studies for this research and other cooperatives in Timor-Leste.

Finally, the collective efforts from CCT also have generated positive results. Unlike the narrow focus of CTKDS and Ai-Funan on tais and soap production respectively, CCT runs several projects that have been democratically chosen by

its members. These projects include health and business skills development programmes, and wholesale purchasing access that benefits CCT members as well as local communities by providing them goods at affordable prices. In response to the lack of affordable health care in rural areas of Timor-Leste, CCT also has allocated a substantial part of its fair-trade premium fund to healthcare programmes through Clinics Café Timor. More recently, with the support from UNDP, CCT has helped set up production facilities for fortified food that will be used to target malnutrition among children and mothers. This has raised the profile of CCT as an international example of the potential contribution of cooperatives to just forms of development (see Chapter 7 for discussion).

The next chapter brings these final considerations to revisit the idea of justice, to consider the above case study cooperatives' capacity to mitigate several conversion factors and to facilitate their respective capability spaces toward the enhancement of central human capabilities.

Table 6.3. Ai Funan: Mapping capabilities to cooperative-facilitated capability space

<p>Ai-Funan Cooperative (Ai-Funan) Capabilities and achieved functionings</p> <p>Life This capability can be indirectly influenced by Ai-Funan's capacity to provide a means of income to women where previously there was none. By creating new opportunities, the cooperative has increased the chances of a better life for its members.</p> <p>Bodily health The cash income from the sale of soaps assists women to meet their family needs, including nutrition and health needs.</p> <p>Senses, Imagination and thought Women were able to apply their soap-making skills and to make beautiful and organic hand made soaps; the support from Hummingfish Foundation has allowed for the construction of a small soap factory that provides spaces for individual as well as collective forms of creativity.</p> <p>Practical Reason and Affiliation Ai-Funan has challenged the patriarchal local culture because it has allowed women to freely participate and become members of the cooperative. It has purposely set out to enhance their self-identity through work.</p> <p>Control over one's environment The knock-on effects of these efforts have empowered other women and may have political influence. The active participation that women have achieved as members of Ai-Funan has increased their self-esteem and confidence; they are seen as role models for other young women.</p> <p>Note: For the capabilities' core concepts see Table 2.1 in Chapter 2</p>
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NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. Cooperative for Tais, Culture and Sustainable Development (Tais Kultura Desenvolvimento Sustentavel - CTKDS). URL: <http://www.etwa.org.au/about-etwa/about-ctkds>
2. Timor Coffee Cooperative (Cooperativa Cafe Timor - CCT).

URL: <http://coopcoffees.com/what/trading-partners/cafe-timor-east-timor>

3. Funan Cooperative (Cooperativa Ai Funan), URL: <http://hummingfish.org/projects-timor-leste/soap-making-coop-in-timor-leste/>

7. Concluding discussion: Cooperatives, capability spaces and the idea of justice

7.1 Initial considerations

The inherent influence that cooperatives can have on central human capabilities is evident in the present analysis. Indeed, as a member of a Timorese cooperative, it can be a life-changing event. These case study cooperatives have created opportunities for generating income, for upholding good nutrition levels and good health, for contributing to self-esteem, and for encouraging the self-confidence of its members - especially women. Moreover, the active participation of female members has challenged prevalent patriarchal systems, enhancing their role in social and economic spheres. Additionally, the application of the capability approach framework as outlined in Chapter 4 has allowed us to explore people's opportunities, abilities and choices to use and transform resources into new functionings in a fragile environment.

7.2 Cooperatives and capability spaces: Collectivities within a capability approach

These initial considerations of the selected cooperatives for this study lead to the following main conclusions: CTKDS, CCT and Ai-Funan are effective agents in facilitating capability spaces in the fragile society context of Timor-Leste. They contribute positively to overcome societal and personal fragility through recognition, empowerment and participation in social life. They are democratic and just forms of business, thereby promoting their members's active participation in public life. In fact, this participation may improve members' empowerment and recognition, contributing to the realisation of human agency. This is central to the debate raised in this research (see Chapter 3). The mapped capabilities for each of these selected cooperatives (see Tables 6.1-6.3) suggest that their respective capability spaces have enhanced their members' willingness to act as agents in their own or collective interest, which in turn may have been used to claim for rights and provisions that are fundamental for its members and the community in general.

However, the extent to which these cooperative-facilitated capability spaces impact on individual capabilities cannot be assessed here. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that these spaces have been responsible for the positive change in cooperative members' lives and their associated communities by providing new opportunities for collective engagement and new functionings. These new (or

recreated) spheres of economic and social life are evident in the narratives that speak to *collective agency* and the community social networks that make it possible (Majee and Hoyt, 2011). The argument of this research is that the benefits of this agency are possible, *providing that an evaluation of interdependent conversion factors are taken into consideration as they may affect the long-term viability or effectiveness of a cooperative.* In fact, the methodology used here is hindered by relying on available material on cooperatives, without individual interviews. It would be interesting to explore further to find out if individuals have actually perceived or experienced an enhancement of the capability space, and the ways in which that has occurred. Nonetheless, the consistent use of the framework reveals the positive benefits of the collective agency and the possibility that cooperatives offer a governance structure within which capability space can be enhanced.

At the start of this research, a critical issue is addressed with regard to cooperatives' role in the advancement of human development: Can a cooperative facilitate capability spaces in a fragile society (evident in the above conversion factors)? This question asks whether the agency of the cooperative can mitigate or facilitate this capability space to deliver new functionings or capabilities.

The findings of this research suggest that the answer to this question is YES. A fragile society can compromise a cooperative's capacity to facilitate capability spaces, considering the above evaluation of interdependent conversion factors. Yet the agency that constitutes all case study cooperatives in this research illustrates that these potentially compromising factors can be mitigated. ***What remains an outstanding issue for this research are the questions of social justice between unequal parties of actors.*** These questions of "unjust structures" (Deneulin et al, 2006) of power and institutions have been beyond the scope of this research. Only fieldwork can determine how individual and shared conversion factors weigh differently on the activities of the case studies for this research and other cooperatives in Timor-Leste (further discussed below).

7.3 An idea of justice

Cooperatives, as social structures rooted in the principles of democratic consensus and participation, can contribute to the attainment of a "minimal account of social jus-

tice” (Nussbaum, 2011); they can reinforce the rights of their members and generate collective agency (see Chapter 2 discussion of Sen's competing perspective of 'ethical individualism'). Cooperatives are directly contributing to a theory of justice by aspiring to involve all members equally in decision-making processes and a participatory way of working. This suggests a mutual social contract between parties of 'approximate equals' (see, for example, Nussbaum, 2006 on Rawlsian theories of justice). In this regard, the right to participate in decisions concerning cooperatives' activities embodies the right to fair access to economic and political spheres. This is an assumption that Nussbaum challenges and one that she feels can be overcome with a consideration of a “minimal account of social justice” (see Table 2.1 for central list of human capabilities).

Nussbaum's perspective on the *idea* of social justice has been central to the conceptual framework for this research (see Figure 4.1). Thus the findings once more suggest that this minimal account of social justice has been identified in the evaluation of CTKDS, CCT and Ai-Funan (see mapped capabilities in Tables 6.1-6.3). These cooperatives can rebuild community identity and thus enhance community trust and networks, which may help transition them from a situation of fragility to a one of increased economic security and social wellbeing. They are not the panacea solution to all development problems (Birchall et al., 2008, p.20); however cooperatives, as a social structure created and run by communities, have the potential to build on *local capability spaces* that allow people to aspire living well together and, in turn, aspire for values of social justice.

7.4 Policy recommendations and areas for further research

The research findings in the previous chapter may be useful to policymakers, wanting to enable favourable conditions for the creation, flourishing and long-term viability of cooperatives. This could include the facilitation of a legal framework that encourages the creation and viability of economic cooperative enterprises in Timor-Leste. Moreover, cooperative work with communities should be complemented by public and private investments in all policy areas (e.g. infrastructure planning) to ensure improvements are informed by all members of affected communities, and not predominantly dictated by cooperative members or steered by international aid organisations. As mentioned above, *research could be carried out to investigate the barriers of entrenched power relations that may have an institutional impact on cooperatives*. For example, this could be complemented with an analysis of how the chronically poor engage in cooperative formation. Further research to find out if individuals have actually perceived or experienced an enhancement of the capability space, and the ways that has occurred, could be carried out to complement the findings of this paper.

*Timor à vista. / Uma enseada. /
Nuvens tranquilas, / montanha alta
Chegada, Ruy Cinatti*

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SPECIAL ISSUE

Locating capabilities in the
built environment:
socio-spatial products and
processes and the capability
approach

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1. Introduction

Spatial form is intimately related to the social processes that create it and which are enabled by it. Despite several recent controversial statements from big-name architects expressing that spatial form should be removed from considerations of social justice (Wisniewski, 2014), the dynamics by which social processes affect spatial form and vice versa have powerful implications for equitable development. Harvey declared that space is a “container for social power” (1980 cited in Kallus, 2001, p.131) and Foucault suggested architecture can resolve social problems if it coincides “with the real practice of people in their exercise of their freedom” (Rabinow, 1991 cited in Dong, 2008, p.87). Following the early era of town planning which “did not yet acknowledge or even attempt to understand the mechanisms that might link spatial form to social process,” (Batty and Marshall, 2009, p.553), there has been a growing interest among architects, planners, philosophers, and urban scholars in defining and unpacking the increasingly evident, yet still elusive, nature of the relationship between the physical environment of the city and the invisible forces that shape it.

For the field of Urban Design, the relationships between social and spatial processes and their outcomes are particularly important. Sometimes characterised as a hybrid between architecture and urban planning, urban design simultaneously tackles physical form, the traditional domain of architecture, and the political, cultural, economic, and managerial processes that have been claimed by urban planning. Madanipour (1997, p.17) defines urban design as “a process which deals with shaping urban space; and as such is interested in both the process of this shaping and the spaces it helps shape.” Encapsulated in his interpretation is yet another distinction that urban scholars are tackling: process, as the forces and decisions that go into the shaping of space, and product, or the tangible outcome of those processes. If Madanipour’s definition is accepted, then urban design locates itself at the crossroads of socio-spatial processes and socio-spatial products that are manifested in the built environment. But, how to trace which processes result in particular urban outcomes, and how does the built environment simultaneously influence those same processes? Recent work on deciphering the interrelationships between process and product in urban design derive from a range of entry points, including exploring behavioural responses to sensory experiences of the city, community organising around urban projects, and the effects of digitally-based urban design tools and systems of urban governance.

Meanwhile, urban growth in the global South is proliferating at an unprecedented rate with informal, low-income settlements composing the greatest part. Equitable urban growth may be one of the most serious challenges of the next century (UN-HABITAT, 2009). While low-income urban dwellers have frequently built for themselves, increasingly, low-income communities are taking building for better into their own hands, producing powerful political and social implications. If development urbanists want to support and strengthen grassroots initiatives, it is imperative to address socio-spatial processes and products from the perspective of these communities. The “everyday urbanism” perspective (Chase et al, 2008) extends the concept of urban design to ‘non-designers’ by recognising urban design as a synthesis between urban dwellers’ handling of economic, political and social situations in space and urban designers’ interpretation and re-producing those forms. Yet, while urban design in development contexts has become more tactical, localised, and people-centred in order to deliver or imagine bottom-up responses based on users’ needs, the designs taken under consideration to make up the empirical basis of the field are largely the ones done by architects and planners. Given the scale of urbanisation, and that the instances in which regular citizens transform space far outnumber those in which design or development professionals do, understanding the process and product link in informal or ‘everyday’ cases done by ‘non-designers’ brings us closer to understanding how the majority of urbanisation happens, and closer to supporting the needs and desires of its millions of makers.

As the urban design and planning fields become more aware of the limits to social change effected by top-down processes (Batty and Marshall, 2009), wider participation and bottom-up approaches have gained traction in urban projects with social goals. The capability approach, a development paradigm that is interested in people’s well-being and agency in achieving ‘the good life,’ opens this door wider for considering how human development can flourish or decay with spatial form. A capability approach to urban design provides the theoretical space to question people’s and communities’ capabilities to shape their environment. This paper builds on urban design theory and the early advances of the capability approach into design theory to find that concepts from urban design can be translated into a capability approach framework. This method sheds light on the linkages between processes and products in the built environment from the grassroots

viewpoint. Simultaneously, an urban design focus from within capability approach theory reveals greater scope within the latter to address collective action and better envision group capabilities.

As a mechanism to discern these linkages, the paper develops a diagram to explore how low-income urban communities shape their local spaces. Diagrams are conceptual tools that help to explore questions that are difficult to conceptualise and encourage new ways of thinking about known issues. For the problem of unpacking socio-spatial products and processes, diagramming is therefore a promising vehicle with which to explore what is hypothesised, yet still not quite tangible. While diagramming as a tool has been picked up frequently in the urban design field, it has tended to focus on representing various forms

of 'hard' data or models or social and cultural networks (Schwarz and Lewis, 2012). The diagram developed here, and the ones discussed throughout the paper, instead explore the interaction of theories that might shed new knowledge on how urbanisation takes place.

This paper first examines three perspectives from the urban design field on the relationships between process and product in shaping the city. The capability approach and its relevance for the design discourse are then discussed. A conceptual diagram is introduced to explore processes and products in the built environment from the perspective of low-income communities and a case study is used to further illustrate the diagram. The last part is a reflection on diagramming and an evaluation on what new insights can be gleaned from this paper's approach.

2. Review of socio-spatial processes

The literature surrounding urban design, as both a professional field and as an organic process, has roughly distinguished social processes, spatial processes, social products and spatial products as the basic elements in the shaping of space. The relationships between these elements are revealed in different ways, depending on the focus of the research and its motivations. Agency, meaning, and participation and power relations are three conceptual areas within urban design of particular relevance for unpacking the linkages between the spatial and the social, between urban processes and products. While these areas are certainly not comprehensive of the ways this question has been addressed in urban design literature, they are discussed with the objective of setting up a basis for reflection on socio-spatial processes and products, and of establishing conceptual entry points for using the capability approach in urban design.

2.1 Agency in the built environment

The work of Turner (1976), Dovey and King (2011), and Rapoport (1977, 2005) illustrate the role that human agency has in shaping the built environment, mainly through the study of the choices people make in shaping space. Turner's well-known phrase, not what housing is, but "what it does" (p.61), stems from his view that maximising people's agency to shape their environments will enable them to achieve wider goals. Noticing the mismatch between institutional housing providers' priorities and beneficiaries' needs, Turner advocates putting the process of building houses into the hands of individual households, limiting government agencies' role to providing the necessary resources for households to make their own choices on how to build. In a similar vein, Dovey and King (2011) see spatial forms in informal settlements resulting from different configurations of the poor's resources, including abundant social and cultural capital. The seemingly haphazard and chaotic morphology of slums is the result of the agglomeration of individual choices that creatively and flexibly maximise these resources, resulting in highly tailored outcomes. Turner's and Dovey and King's arguments suggest that poor people can and should intensely manipulate spatial products to achieve tangible social ends.

Within the field of Environment Behaviour Studies, Rapoport (2005) describes the built environment as the accumulation

of systematic group choices. These choices are determined by cultural filters; thus, the range of real design choices available is narrowed to a limited set of perceived choices, as ideals, values, and norms effectively eliminate all but a few culturally appropriate design scenarios. Rapoport offers an evolutionary perspective, where environments are shaped over long periods of time and people continually search for the habitat that meets their culturally specific needs and values. This argument portrays people exercising some degree of agency in choosing which environments to inhabit and how to shape them, but their agency is based on ingrained preferences. Rapoport claims that people are not "somehow placed in environments that then have an effect on them" (2005, p.11), rather, environments facilitate or inhibit certain behaviours that are culturally or innately inscribed. However, this position is not shared by other urban scholars, as will be shown in the next section on meaning.

2.2 Meaning of space

In response to the architectural tendency for 'abstracting' space, (Kallus, 2001) there has been an emphasis on the "subjective reading of urban space" (p.129) based on people's everyday experiences of moving through and living in space. The meaning of space has since proved a well-used vehicle for discussing socio-spatial relationships and process-product linkages, especially on the topic of public space. Many authors (Kallus, 2001; Low & Niel, 2005; Landman, 2005; Rios, 2008; Madanipour, 2010;) argue that when people attach a particular meaning to space this produces significant repercussions on what then happens within and to that space. For example, Madanipour (2010) finds that people's perception of the accessibility of a public space, formed by group relations and perceptions of the proper purpose and users of the space, may encourage or deter particular groups of potential users. The sense of accessibility of a place can be formed by physical features, such as permeable perimeters, and symbols that trigger different ideas for different publics. Madanipour concludes that for accessible public spaces to exist, there must be inclusive processes that bring them about.

Landman (2010) finds that people's interpretation of built form can prompt them to undertake spatial change to affect social ends. She traces how South African gated communities produce the fragmentation of the urban fab-

ric when various neighbourhood organisations closed off street access to non-residents, attempting to create islands of security in response to their fears of crime. Her example and framework (Figure 2.1) of continuous spatial transformation explain “the process of social drivers influencing spatial change, leading to specific social interpretation and response” (p.134), based on the interplay of spatial form, function, and meaning that people attach to space. Low and Smith’s (2005, p.6) claim that the “the spatiality of the public sphere potentially transforms our understanding of the politics of the public” support Landman’s findings. These arguments suggest that attaching meaning to space is an important cognitive and societal mechanism through which social understanding is translated into spatial form, and through which spatial products in turn affect the processes that act upon space.

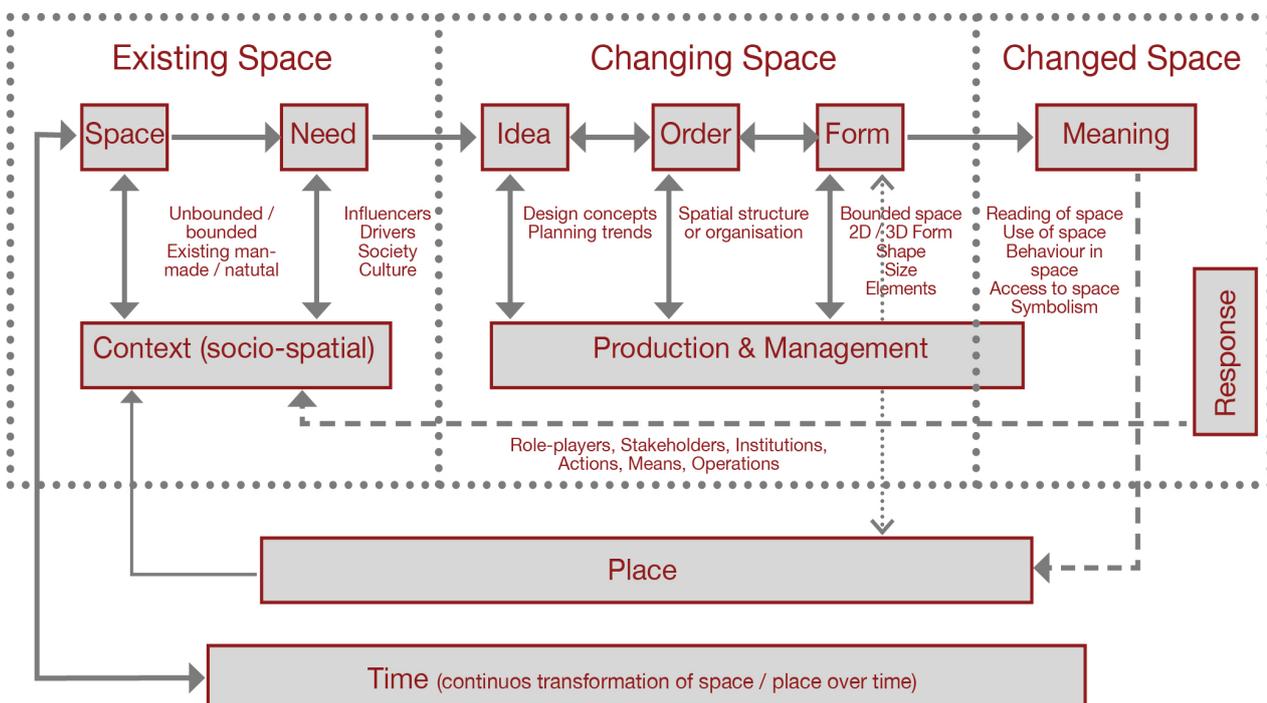
2.3 Power Relations and Participation

A constituency within the urban design and planning fields have demonstrated how spatial change can transform social relations, focusing on notions of democracy, citizenship, and processes of deliberation in the urban realm. Participatory design processes and co-production are two practice-based concepts that aim to bring about more equitable relationships between groups via spatial arrangements and conscious organisation of urban initiatives. Through the example of re-designing a

transit plaza in San Francisco, Rios (2008) shows how a participatory urban design process that involved conversation and consensus-building among different users resulted in more inclusive political scenarios. Reflecting the previous arguments on agency and meaning, Rios suggests that participatory design processes can produce more meaningful spaces that more closely reflect the needs of different users, thereby becoming more inclusive. He argues that in addition, participatory processes of spatial transformation can be the means to wider social transformation, locating space as the medium through which social processes occur and have the possibility to be magnified.

The co-production of service provision to marginalised urban communities has been explored as a method of widening the political arena to become more inclusive of diverse publics (Mitlin, 2008). Although co-production, with citizens and the state sharing the production of public services, is a pragmatic way for local governments to address the basic needs of underserved populations, it has been adopted by some grassroots organisations as a strategy to secure relations with the state that enable negotiations for greater benefits to take place. Co-production can have major democratic implications when residents and the state come to see the communities as centrally located in the decision-making process. Through the process of co-production, service provision also evolves from a standard bureaucratic endeavour into a “process of social construction where actors in self-organising systems negotiate rules, norms, and

Figure 2.1. Landman’s (2010) framework for spatial change



institutional frameworks instead of taking the rules as given" (Bovaird, 2007 cited in Mitlin, 2008, pp.357-8). In other words, shaping the city through service provision can have profound consequences for the formal and informal institutions that shape those processes.

Taken together, the above notions suggest that urban design happens on a micro-level, with individuals making decisions about their built environment based on available resources and in accordance with preferences, structures, and meanings accumulated over time. Additionally, urban design can be a conscious and collective endeavour by regular citizens and 'non-designers' as a way for a particular group to advocate for its interests or

for diverse groups to better work together or coexist. Of the three lenses explored for unpacking the relationships between space and society, the participation and power relations lens is the most supportive of attempting urban change. Yet, as Frediani and Boano (2012) note, while design process and design product have been explored with regards to participation in urban design, they have been explored independently of each other, resulting in social and physical determinism in participatory design practice. Once again, this highlights the need for a more integrated theory on social and spatial processes and products. The rest of this paper attempts to bridge this gap by framing the discussion on each of the above lenses within the capability approach.

3. The capability approach and urban design

Although urban design and the capability approach have not been extensively studied together, there is a growing body of literature that suggests the capability approach is useful for analysis of the built environment and the design process. The capability approach has been applied to studying the effects of the built environment on health (Lewis, 2012) and to unpacking the role of place in evaluating poverty (De Hert and Marivoet, 2011). Dong (2008) advocates for a capability approach to design policy in order to fulfil the potential of participatory design processes. As will be shown in further detail, Frediani and Boano (2012) find the capability approach useful for unpacking the relationship between process and product in participatory design. Additionally, applications of the capability approach to the field of technology design, particularly in ICT for development (ICT4D), offer potentially useful concepts that can be applied to design in the built environment context.

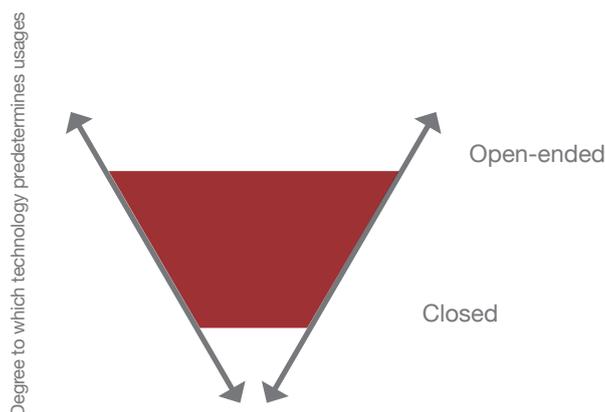
The capability approach has become recognised as a powerful discourse because it can capture some of the theoretical aspects of development that are not easily explained in other theories. With regards to ICT4D, Klein (2010, p.675) argues, “mainstream ICT4D discourse remains heavily focussed on economic growth, which is too narrow to capture the impacts of ICT.” Traditional ICT4D theory also views people as passive receivers of new technology that is supposedly good for them (Oosterlaken, 2012a, p.12) instead of as actors in pursuing certain outcomes and influencing change. These are some of the gaps in ICT4D that the capability approach can fill by

emphasising well-being and agency. On the other hand, the capability approach has been critiqued for focussing too narrowly on individual agency and capabilities, ignoring the importance of power structures, institutions, and groups in development issues (Oosterlaken, 2012a; Stewart, 2006). The following explorations on the applicability of the capability approach to urban design issues expound these concepts further.

Recent work in applying the capability approach to ICT4D has yielded some interesting directions for design. One example is the concept that choice is imbedded in a technological device. Klein’s Determinism Continuum (Klein, 2011) (Figure 3.1) suggests that the more that specific uses are prescribed and ideologies imbedded in a particular technology at the moment of its origin, the fewer the choices users will have when using it. Oosterlaken (2012b) explains this framework with the example of a programme that distributes devices to cattle raisers in Zimbabwe in order for them to obtain relevant agricultural information through podcasts. The devices could be used to access the specific podcasts but not any other kind of information, partly because the Zimbabwean government was concerned that the devices could lead to political mobilisation in rural areas. The Determinism continuum allows us to conceptualise how the possibilities for the device to advance a wide range of capabilities valued by the cattle raisers were stunted from the design of the device and the programme. In the same vein, the Choice Framework (Klein 2010) (Figure 3.2) sees the expansion of choices as the most important development outcome as this increases an individual’s agency and makes social structure more supportive of individual empowerment. Although the Determinism Continuum and the Choice Framework were developed in the field of ICT4D, the notions that choice is imbedded in an object that will be used by someone to achieve well-being and agency, and that the expansion of choice has reverberating effects on the individual and on society, resonate with the goals for urban design in development.

Oosterlaken (2009) introduces the concept of capability-sensitive design, building on value-sensitive design developed with regards to ICT. Value-sensitive design aims to satisfy the user by delivering the fulfilment of certain values, such as comfort, excitement, or usability, through the design of the product. Oosterlaken argues that this does not necessarily contribute to expanding users’ capabilities. Capability-sensitive design, however, operates

Figure 3.1. Klein’s (2011) Determinism Continuum



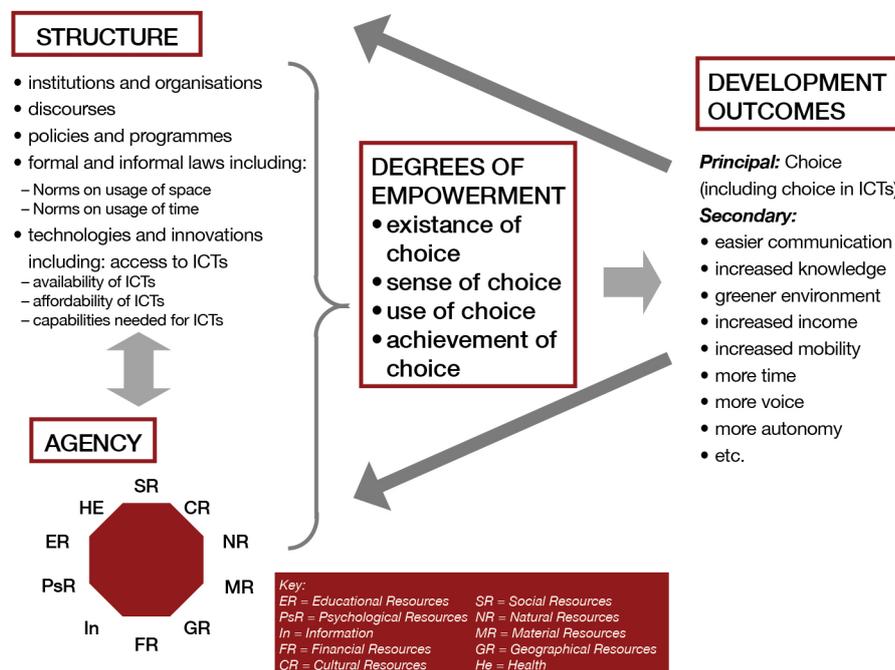
on a more interesting ethical level, as its aim is to increase the capabilities of the user and is grounded in the notions of human rights and dignity. Capability-sensitive design has potential to step beyond its cradle in ICT and into urban design theory. Borrowing an example from Lewis (2012), capability-sensitive urban design could address design standards from the perspective that good design facilitates equitable benefits to people. A neighbourhood park, for example, should be conducive to all local children achieving good fitness and health by accounting for the human diversity that puts some at a disadvantage for turning this resource into a capability.

The above body of literature suggests that the capability approach has great potential for exploring the design of spatial products, but its scope for contributing to design processes is also being revealed. Dong (2008) argues for the capability approach to be used to develop a pluralistic design policy that enables people to be able to “do” design. “People have the right to user participation in design only if there are effective policies that make people truly capable of design” (p.77). Based on the ‘capability to control one’s environment’ in Nussbaum’s list of central capabilities for well-being, Dong flushes out a Design Capability Set (information – knowledge – abstraction – evaluation – participation – authority) (see Figure 2.3) that covers the basic capabilities required for people to achieve the capability to design. Dong advocates for truer public deliberation on designing the built environment, claiming that political deprivation of capabilities hamper democratic production of space, even in the most advanced democracies. It is important to note,

as Nichols and Dong (2012) do, that design does not only mean the production of a physical object. They use the term to mean “a projection of possibilities, of the creation of a world that does not yet exist” (p.191), acknowledging the processual as well as object-related aspects of design. Tackling the public design process with the aim of expanding capabilities and suggesting that certain capabilities form the backbone for participatory design are two notions that show how the capability approach could inform design policies aimed at supporting more inclusive urban design.

Frediani and Boano (2012) take up Dong’s notion of the capability to design in a framework that includes both processes and products in participatory design, addressing the process of acquiring the capability to design and the effect of the spatial outcome of participatory design. In the Capability space of participatory design diagram (Figure 2.4), they link process freedoms with product freedoms in participatory design via a common set of values or functionings that citizens pursue with regards to “the deliberation and production of design” (p.212). Under process freedom and product freedom, they identify three components (choice, ability, and opportunity) that together help account for context and internal and external factors on multiple scales that might affect citizens’ freedoms in participatory design process and product. Drawing from critical theory, the authors examine the notions of marginality, recognition and solidarity, and coalition through dissensus as values that help to navigate “through processes of transformation and tyranny ... [and] guide thinking and application of participation in the

Figure 3.2. Klein’s (2010) Choice Framework



process of design.” (2012, p.219) In their view, aiming for ‘processes for just products’ requires examining power relations, ideologies, and social structures that influence the production of space, with special attention to the ability of groups to collectively achieve valued functionings. This is an important contribution to the literature on capabilities, which is often criticised for focussing too narrowly on the individual’s agency.

This chapter has outlined several ways that the capability discourse affords new perspectives on urban design questions of how space is shaped and the imbedded interplay of product and process. First, the capability approach positions objects as a vehicle for achieving non-material objectives. In the literature on socio-spatial processes, this relationship is also recognised, for example, in the idea that inclusive public spaces enhance perceptions of citizenship. The Determinism Continuum and the Choice Framework take this further by offering the notion that previous external choices are also imbedded in physical objects, affecting the users’ potential to achieve capabilities that are directly and indirectly related to using the object. By highlighting how physical barriers (Oosterlaken, 2012b; Klein, 2010; 2011) as well as power structures (Frediani and Boano, 2012) can restrict or enhance capabilities for achieving valued outcomes, this discussion also opens the door wider for exploring the limits on the agency people can exercise in shaping space.

Second, the pivotal role human diversity plays in converting resources into functionings in the capability approach implies that spatial form needs to be flexible enough to be appropriated by a diverse public. Spatial form can only be capability-enhancing for a diverse public if that public is involved in producing space in the first place. The discussion on citizens’ achieving capabilities to ‘do’ design also relies on acknowledging human diversity in envisioning what and how to design, or when to refrain from doing design. Finally, the capability approach, although it is imbedded in philosophical liberalism and holds the individual as the primary unit of concern (Robeyns, 2005), is able to account for the effects of social structures, including institutions and groups, on the capacity for people to be agents in the built environment. Dong’s (2008) pursuit of a publicly held capabilities to participate in designing the city and Frediani and Boano’s (2012) discussion of collective agency demonstrate that capabilities can, in some cases, be created or enhanced when they exist on a group level rather than within individuals. With the current preoccupation for participatory design approaches in urban design, probing publicly held capabilities to effect more just spatial form should be a high priority. Conceptualising socio-spatial processes and the process-product relationship within the framework of the capability approach is still in its infancy, but has a promising future to which this paper attempts to usefully contribute.

Figure 3.3. Dong’s (2008) Design capability set

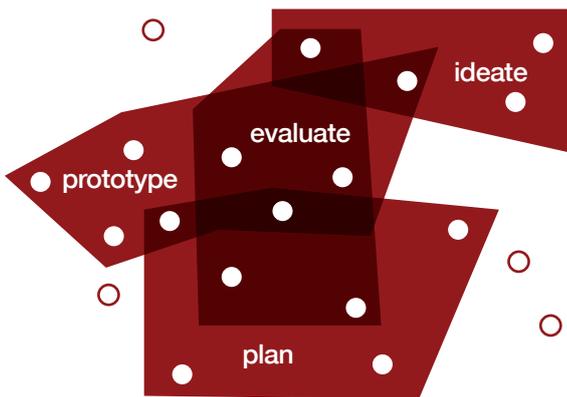
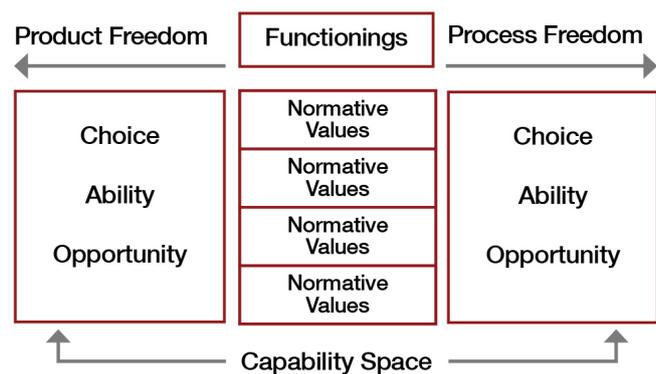


Figure 3.4. Frediani and Boano’s (2012) Capability space



4. Towards a conceptual framework

This paper formulates its contribution to operationalising the capability approach in the urban design field by way of diagramming the socio-spatial processes in low-income urban areas that undergo spatial change. As discussed below, diagrams offer unique advantages to theory building. The diagram that is developed further on in this paper is based on several diagrams that have been discussed in the literature on the capability approach and socio-spatial processes and products. This strategy is intended to reveal more nuanced dynamics in the way low-income communities create space.

4.1 Why Diagram?

Diagrams are recognised as an important tool and method in many fields due to their helpfulness in exploring complex or unknown subjects and in communicating ideas. According to the Open University (2012), diagrams “allow us to think in new ways and approach problems differently” and are helpful in “exploring areas we normally aren’t able to think about.” While ‘scientific’ diagrams attempt to determine relationships and components to arrive at a correct answer or analysis, ‘semantic’ or ‘syntactic’ diagrams are not as concerned with finding an answer to a problem as with inventing new problems or framing problems differently (Lueder, 2012). Both purposes rely on diagrams to help clarify thinking and arrive at otherwise unattainable conclusions. Cognitively, diagrams are more related to meaning than other forms of communication, and thus are easier to understand. “[Diagrams] may be incomplete, ambiguous, difficult to interpret, yet on the whole, they are more directly related to meaning than, say, language” (Shah & Miyake, 2005, p.22). Therefore, although often they include text or exist as annotations to text, diagrams can be useful for both concrete and abstract themes that otherwise would be more difficult or time consuming to explain.

While several of the diagrams shown up to this point in this paper illustrate how conceptually complex ideas are rendered much simpler through diagrams (for example, Klein’s [2011] Determinism Continuum, Figure 3.1), Landman’s framework on spatial change (Figure 2.1) demonstrates how diagrams can uncover new pathways for thought. While the diagram may appear confusing without a textual explanation, it lends an interesting perspective to the question this paper attempts to address, perhaps unintentionally. In creating a framework that investigates and

explains the process of spatial change via social drivers, Landman’s diagram connects spatial components (such as form, space) with social components (need, idea, order) without placing parameters on these categories. Furthermore, her diagram describes a process that includes product-like components (form, place, space), depicting them as moments in an ever-continuing cycle of urban change. This offers a potential pathway to erasing the “unhelpful dichotomy” (Frediani and Boano, 2012, p.204) between process and product and integrating social and spatial processes without having to tread the treacherous path of defining their boundaries first.

While diagrams can take thought in new directions, they are simultaneously entrenched in their ontological context. “Diagrams are both the instrument of thought and its mirror” (Vidler, 2006 cited in Lueder, 2012, p.215). Foucault’s claim that prevailing discourses impose ways of thinking and acting, producing the world as we see it (1980 cited in Rose, 2001), would suggest that someone’s interpretation and depiction of something has as much to do with their historical and geographical context as with their individual thought process. This argument is particularly relevant when diagrams, such as the one developed further on in this paper, seek to interpret processes that exist in contexts foreign to the author. Nevertheless, Rose (2001) points out that it would be a mistake to interpret diagrams simply as reflections of their context; while they do exist within and because of certain discourses, they also have their own effects, and, sometimes, the power to create new discourses.

As shown in the previous chapters, research on urban design and the capability approach has frequently employed diagrams. The following section develops a diagram that attempts to manifest the qualities of a useful diagram as discussed above, visually representing the content it tries to explain, and providing an outlet into new thought processes.

4.2 The Capability Locus Framework for Socio-spatial Change

This diagram (Figure 4.1) attempts to explain how people and communities shape space in informal settlements. It builds mainly on Klein’s Choice Framework (2010; 2011), Landman’s framework for spatial change

(2010), and Frediani and Boano's capability space for participatory design (2012), while also reflecting the discussion in on social and spatial products and processes in Chapter 2. The diagram can explain an individual's interaction with product and process, but its focus is in describing how communities collectively produce space. First, a quick overview of the diagram's components is presented, followed by an in-depth explanation of the ideas behind each.

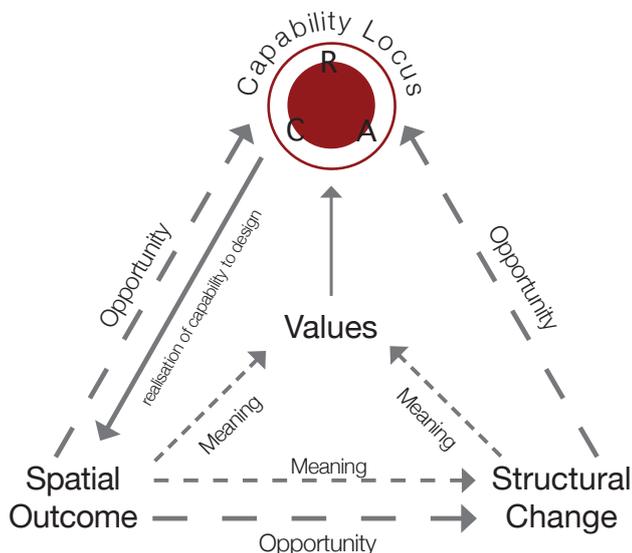
At the top, the capability locus is composed of the determining factors of a building or spatial form: resources at people's disposal, the choices they make among the available alternatives, and their ability to achieve their choices by appropriating resources. The capability locus is influenced partly by people's values for what constitutes a good life. Spatial outcome is determined by the choices, resources, and abilities of the people shaping it. The spatial outcome of people's efforts goes on to effectuate change in social structure on a household scale, community scale, city scale, perhaps even on a national or global scale. Spatial outcome and structural change affect values and the capability locus through the twin forces of opportunities and meaning.

In the capability locus, resources, ability, and choice together produce capabilities, the principal capability for this diagram being the capability to shape space. "Resources can, depending on individual conversion factors, structural conditions, and crucially, an individual's own choices, be converted into capabilities" (Klein, 2011, p.123). In this diagram, structural conditions are seen as a less direct factor in the actions they take to shape their environments, affecting them instead through opportu-

nities. Nevertheless, the resources communities have at their disposal and their ability to use them in meaningful ways form a direct link to their decisions in shaping space. The Choice Framework distinguishes ten kinds of resources – material, natural, geographical, educational, psychological, cultural, and social resources, as well as health and information. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework identifies just five types of capital – human, natural, financial, social, physical – to convey the same idea. The important thing is to recognise that poor people can be rich in non-material ways that help them achieve valued capabilities (Klein, 2011). The capability approach's focus on resources as an instrument for freedoms avoids giving resources, especially commodities, undue significance as stand-alone indicators of well-being. In this sense, choice and ability temper the weight of resources in the spatial outcome.

Choice is conceptualised as in Frediani and Boano's (2012) capability space of participatory design, encompassing both product freedom and process freedom. Choice includes what to build and what materials to use, in addition to when to build, who participates in building and how, what roles they take and who makes key decisions. Choice can be seen as various levels of agency (see Figure 3.2). This diagram's emphasis is on the choices groups make collectively, acknowledging the conflicts this can generate as individuals within groups struggle to achieve valued functionings on a personal level. Within the community, some individuals are able to exercise stronger agency than others, resulting in outcomes that can be inequitable for some members (Cleaver, 2007). However, in this analysis, group capabilities are more than the sum of individual capabilities (Stewart, 2006) and the overall effect of exercising agency in numbers is viewed as a capability-enhancing condition, especially since this paper is primarily concerned with low-income people who, on an individual level, have traditionally exercised relatively little agency in shaping urban environments.

Figure 4.1. The Capability Locus Framework for Socio-spatial Change. Source: author



Ability refers to the capacity to use the available resources in a way that achieves the desired outcome. This refers equally to appropriating the design process and the material and intangible resources that the community possess that will affect their design. Ability most closely reflects the internal and external conversion factors that determine resources becoming capabilities. Robeyns (2005) identifies personal, social, and environmental factors that determine the conversion of a resource into a functioning, acknowledging the structural influences on ability. Frediani and Boano (2012, p.213) note that "ability relates not only to individual characteristics, but also collective capacities, such as the ability to generate collective action initiatives ... as well as collectively appropriating, changing, maintaining, or improving the existing built environment." As with choice, the collective focus is a crucial point in this diagram.

Resources, ability, and choice are supported and influenced by values. Choice very clearly relies on notions of what is good, fair, important, and productive in order to deliberate between options. Resources are also influenced by values – health, for example, can be influenced by moral or religious norms of what is appropriate to eat, how much, and when, while family- or community-centred values may enhance social and cultural resources in different ways (White, 2010). Other values may restrict resources. Individual values may clash with collectively-held values, although this tension is not fully developed in this diagram. Rapoport's (2005) parallel notion of cultural, group, and personal filters which define one's interpretation of the built environment is relevant in this discussion; while filters are not the same as values, the multiple scales of perception point to the complexity of overlapping interpretations of the good life.

Resources, abilities, and choices, based on the values of the people involved, together produce a spatial outcome. This could be a house, a plaza, a neighbourhood re-blocking plan, or a sewage system. The spatial outcome is a configuration of the resources that people have to dedicate to their built environment (Dovey and King, 2011). It is also the reflection of the choices they have made to allocate their resources, and the embodiment of their ability to attain the choices they made. This concept is supported by Rapoport's (2005) evolutionary view of built space, its overall form being the accumulation of choices made by humans. This perspective is also helpful in conceptualising the capabilities of groups to achieve spatial outcomes, instead of focusing solely on individual capabilities. The continuous arrow represents the capability to design (Nichols and Dong, 2012) becoming a functioning, and then reality.

The spatial outcome in turn is a vehicle to achieve a changed social outcome. In this diagram, the social outcome is called structural change, referring to change in the 'rules' of society on multiple scales. Structure is both formal and informal and includes the management of spaces, institutions, power relations between people and groups, and norms and perceptions that govern behaviour (Mitlin, 2008; Rios, 2008). The impact from the spatial outcome affects structural change through meanings and opportunity. This diagram does not intend to deny that non-spatial efforts also produce structural change, but it is primarily concerned with the relationship between space and structure and therefore does not specifically address processes that do not have a spatial component.

New or altered meanings emanate from spatial form and structural change about the built environment and the capabilities behind it. Meaning is the most "latent aspect" of activities people carry out in space (Rapoport, 2005), profoundly imbedded in the things people choose to do. Landman (2010) defines meaning of space as the inter-

pretation and experience of space, and, along with form and function, meaning makes up the components of 'place.' The meaning of space is associated with reading of space, use of space, behaviour in space, control of space, access to space, and symbolism. Landman positions meaning as the culmination of the needs, ideas, order, and forms generated around changing space, itself generating a response to the spatial outcome (see Figure 2.1). In this diagram, the response is filtered by the values and the elements in the capability locus. Structural change produces new meaning through new realisations and altered interactions between people and groups. Recognition for the work done, a feeling of solidarity from enhanced community understanding or integration, or a sense of increased citizenship derived from more acknowledgment from authorities or better visibility are ways that a changed sense of being is effected by change in the societal structure (Mitlin, 2008; Boonyabanha and Mitlin, 2012). New meanings from spatial change directly influence change in structure through the processes of shaping space and by enabling different behaviours via spatial form. The experience of producing space in a certain way (based on factors in the capability locus) often influences social relations with long-lasting effects on inter-group dynamics (Rios, 2008). Additionally, new spatial configurations can enable new behaviours when space is perceived differently, potentially affecting norms of behaviour and inter-group relations (Madanipour, 2010). Changed meaning in spatial form and in structures hence impact values, as people's notions of the possibilities in space change and existing social structures are taken less for granted.

Increased or diminished opportunities arise from both Structural Changes and Spatial Outcomes. Changes in social structure have repercussions on the resources available to people and their ability to mobilise those resources toward valued functionings. In co-production, for example, changed social structures afford new opportunities for active communities to become involved in the decision-making process, often leading to a variety of increased resources (Mitlin, 2008). Modified spaces also generate new opportunities. Spatial features can enhance or inhibit the way resources are converted into functionings. For example, the ability of an elderly person to convert the resources of an urban park into functionings for well-being may be increased if the park includes frequent benches and handrails (Lewis, 2012). These changes affect the choices that are made in subsequent shaping of the built environment. This diagram splits up the Choice-Ability-Opportunity triad presented in the capability space for participatory design framework (Frediani and Boano, 2012) not because it disagrees with the premise that they are all essential for process and product freedoms – in fact, the way these components are presented in increasing scale of factors that determine freedoms in each is conceptually very helpful. Since opportunities are determined by "outside forces" (spatial

environment and social structure), this diagram, working from the point of view of informal communities, places opportunities as a power that affects the resources that are immediately available and the ability to turn intentions into outcomes.

The Capability locus framework for socio-spatial change explores how low-income communities produce space in their local environments. It is directed to informal settlements that often lack regulation by outside (government) forces and, because of their scarce resources, are at an even greater obligation to make meaningful spaces that accomplish what they were made for. Theoretically, the diagram unearths a new perspective on the relationship between spatial and social processes and products using a capability approach lens. Visually, the diagram stresses the cyclical and integrated nature of the production of space. By placing values at the centre, the diagram emphasises the core tenet of the capability approach that achieving capabilities (in this case, the capability to shape the built environment) is first and foremost based on individual and group understanding of the good life. With the capability locus, spatial outcome, and structural change composing the three angles of a triangle, the diagram indicates that these components are of equal value in the equation of explaining the social and physical relationship in the

process of shaping the built environment. With arrows for meaning operating on an interior level and opportunity on the outside of the triangle, the diagram also attempts to visually represent the nature of relationship between the capabilities, spatial outcome, and structural change. The thick, continuous arrow connecting the capability locus and spatial outcome represents capabilities taking on physical form.

Like the 'capability space for participatory design' (Frediani and Boano, 2012), this framework puts values at the centre of unpacking the links between spatial products and the processes that led to them. Inspired by Klein's Choice Diagram (2010; 2011) and Landman's (2010) framework for urban space, it identifies meaning and opportunity as two ways that spatial outcomes and social structure mutually affect each other. With values at the centre, the diagram can easily be used for explaining other groups' processes of shaping space.

The following chapter will apply this diagram to a case study Thailand. Experiences from the case study will illustrate how the components in this diagram relate to each other, on the whole forming a more complete picture of how informal communities produce space based on their values, capabilities, and understanding of social forces.

5. Applying the framework to Baan Mankong

The following case study is based on fieldwork undertaken by students in MSc Building & Urban Design in Development and MSc Urban Development Planning courses at the Development Planning Unit. It draws on the experiences of three communities in the city of Nakhon Sawan, Thailand, that are participating in the Baan Mankong (Secure Housing) programme, a process in which communities lead neighbourhood upgrading. These conclusions drawn from their experience are supported by studies on other communities in the programme and literature about Baan Mankong in general. First, an overview of how the programme works is presented, followed by a description of the communities and, finally, an analysis of how they go about shaping their environments in the framework of the diagram.

The Baan Mankong (BMK) programme began in 2000 when the government of Thailand embarked on an initiative to address the twin most pressing housing needs of the urban poor, secure tenure and decent housing. Operated by Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI), the programme provides loans to community groups to finance collective land purchases and house and neighbourhood upgrading.

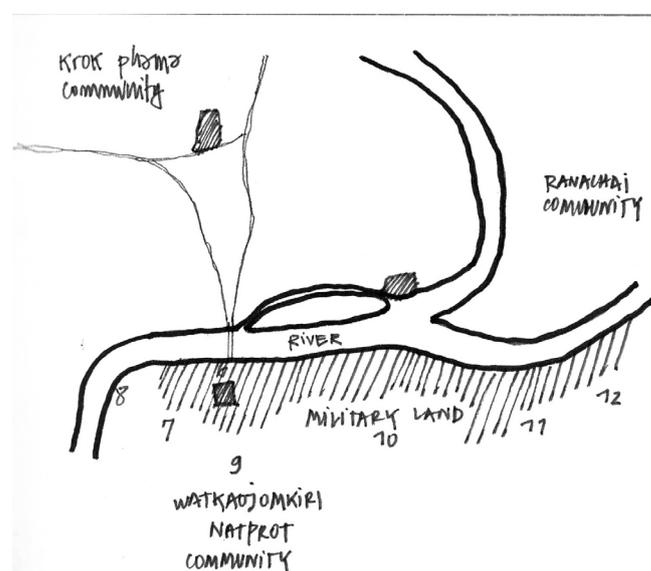
Communities that are eligible to participate must have a certain amount of collective savings (about 10% of the project cost) and must show that they are organised as a group, as loans can be made exclusively to community groups, not individuals. Paid back over a period of 15 years, loans allow the communities to collectively purchase or rent land, rebuild or repair houses, or re-block neighbourhoods and install neighbourhood infrastructure. Typically, communities are squatting on private or government-held land and must negotiate with landowners to purchase or rent the land in the long term. An architect normally works with the communities to design the houses and neighbourhood plan, and community builders ensure the smooth-running of the building process and advise on materials and building techniques. Once the loan is made, community members themselves carry out the building.

Nakhon Sawan is an important city in central Thailand that experiences yearly flooding due to its position at the confluence of three major rivers. Masters students spent four days with three Baan Mankong communities which are at different stages of the programme and in different locations in the city, and hence, with different

experiences with the building process. Wat Kao Pom Kiri community have completed housing upgrading with BMK and are currently building a flood-barrier wall to minimise flooding in the future, since they are located across the river from the central district, on a flood plain (see Figure 5.1). Ranachai community are in the initial stages of implementing the programme; they have secured land from the Treasury department, decided on the models of house to be built, and designed the layout plan of the neighbourhood. Kroak Phama, built on a mountainside overlooking the city, have upgraded some of the houses with BMK loans and want to widen the streets to allow vehicular access and install water and sewage infrastructure, as the whole neighbourhood currently relies on water deliveries.

The BMK programme has been celebrated as the key to many opportunities for those living in informal settlements with low income and no land titles in Thailand. Indeed, some see in it the potential to change the way development works, moving towards decentralised empowerment for the urban poor (Boonyabanacha and Mitlin, 2012). Communities going through the BMK process are shaping their neighbourhoods after their hearts' desires and negotiating existing powers, resources, and

Figure 5.1. Three BMK communities in Nakhon Sawan, Source: Olmos, 2013.



opportunities in order to achieve the environments that permit them to live valued lives. They are changing the physical environment and changing themselves, and, potentially, the way things get done in Thailand. This makes it a useful case study to explain and explore the Capability locus framework.

Values: Communities in BMK value cooperation highly since their survival in the city is often dependent on family members and neighbours helping each other (Boonyabancha, Carcellar Kerr, 2012). Additionally, Thai culture particularly values compromise and negotiation over confrontation, in part because of a Buddhist worldview. Cooperation and non-confrontation are a resource in the communities' joint endeavours and in their relations with outside groups. For example, negotiations between communities and landowners for land-sharing agreements or cheaper selling prices are surprisingly fruitful thanks to these widely-held values. Secure land rights can also be seen as a value, as land ownership is almost ubiquitous in the countryside, yet often unattainable for low-income urban groups. Securing land tenure is a major draw to participate in the BMK programme.

Resources: Family and neighbourly help is an important form of social capital. Households in BMK communities can also count on the financial resources from the loan to undertake greater upgrading initiatives than they could otherwise. With CODI's increasingly renowned international profile, communities sometimes can gain access to extra resources: the Wat Kao Pom Kiri community expected a small grant from the World Bank for a pump for the flood barrier wall (see Figure 5.2). Communities often reuse materials from their previous dwellings in their new houses (Archer, 2012), contributing physical resources that are deployed during rebuilding. Geographical resources such as

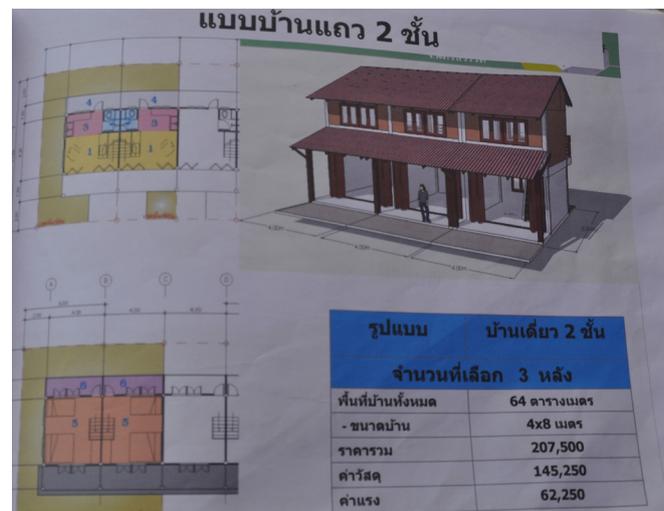
location are also important; the Ranachai community secured land from the Treasury department near their previous settlement and close to the market where many community members earn their living. This offers better odds for repaying their portions of the community loan, thereby generating more financial security for the whole community and making the decision to pursue BMK more palatable. In the hills, Kroak Phama are safe from floods, although they face the additional risk of land slides; their built forms reflect this distinct condition. Additionally, their resource from higher ground also becomes a resource for lower lying communities who are welcomed onto the mountainside during floods, reflecting the communities' values.

Choice: The BMK programme encourages communities to design their own houses and neighbourhood re-blocking plans. Nevertheless, the real choice for the spatial outcome is restricted in several ways. With architects normally creating the drawings, though with input from community members, sometimes households' desires are lost in the architect's interpretation of their needs (Chutapruttikorn, 2009b). CODI provides a handbook with over 100 house designs that communities can choose from, increasing the alternatives communities may consider and perhaps also unintentionally restricting the variability of the spatial outcome. It is cheaper for the community to all choose the same few models of house as this requires less time with the paid architect. Small land parcels that must accommodate many families also represent a scarce resource spread thin, restricting choices for the size and shape of homes and community facilities such as open space and roads. In Ranachai, some community members were concerned that the plans didn't allow enough space on the streets for vehicles (such as fire trucks), enough open public space for community activities, and houses that were

Figure 5.2. Flood barrier wall in progress near Wat Kao Pom Kiri. Source: Olmos, 2013.



Figure 5.3. Example of model house in CODI handbook Source: Olmos, 2013.



big enough to meet household needs and that had a ground level (see Figure 5.4). Thus, there is a mismatch between the choice that the community supposedly has in shaping their space within the constraints of BMK, and the real alternatives that can be chosen among. Additionally, group choice sometimes confronts individual choice. For example, the ability of some residents to realise their choices for their homes and environment can be compromised by group pressure to standardize the houses for financial or aesthetic reasons (Chutapruttikorn, 2009b). This fulfils the desires and needs of some people, but prevents others from achieving the homes and neighbourhoods they perceive would help them achieve desired functionings. On the other hand, all households have the choice to participate or not in the programme, although if they do choose to take part they must agree to follow the BMK procedures.

Ability: Restrictions on the agency of communities from external and internal forces can hamper the realisation of choices and resources into the spatial outcome. In Ranachai space was very limited to begin with, and recently the municipality declared a two-meter easement along the front of their property, further restricting the space in which to build. Wat Kao Pom Kiri's aim is to severely stem the flooding around where they live, but it is not clear that a flood-barrier wall will accomplish this given their location on a flood plain and increasingly severe weather patterns in the region.

Spatial Outcome: The choices communities make, based on their resources, and influenced by their abilities to realise their choices, determine the spatial outcome of the upgraded houses and neighbourhoods. The resources, choices, and abilities of each community are visible in the spatial form. The cramped layout in Ranachai's upgrading plans indicate that physical space is scarce (Figure 5.4), but that the community members

prefer that each house be accessible from the ground level than to build higher buildings that would leave more space for streets and open area. One reason for this is that many households rely upon home-run businesses out of their front rooms, which would be difficult or impossible if the front rooms had no street access. The community members have chosen almost identical house models, which vary only slightly depending on the size of the family, because of cost restraints and preference for a conforming aesthetic. Houses belonging to households from an extended family are grouped together, a physical manifestation of the smaller groups within the whole community (Boonyabancha, 2009).

Structural Change: As brand new or upgraded neighbourhoods become part of the urban fabric, the city acknowledges them and adapts to their presence. Often the new visibility literally puts communities on the map and induces local politicians and authorities to pay more attention to them, for example through courting them before elections or making contributions to community funds. The huge achievement by the BMK communities often proves to local authorities that they are credible development partners, making them more likely to engage communities in future city planning projects (Boonyabancha and Mitlin, 2012).

Structural change also occurs as the communities begin to see themselves differently, having succeeded in providing for themselves what the government couldn't provide for them, and believing in the strength of their collective action. Communities that have upgraded their neighbourhood often take on other projects subsequently, such as community welfare or education funds. They also help other communities set up savings groups and become involved in the programme, strengthening the BMK network across the city and the country. The network has become a powerful political tool based on solidarity, able to mobilise vast crowds to support or decry policies that affect the urban poor.

Figure 5.4. Tight space in Ranachai. Source: Olmos, 2013.



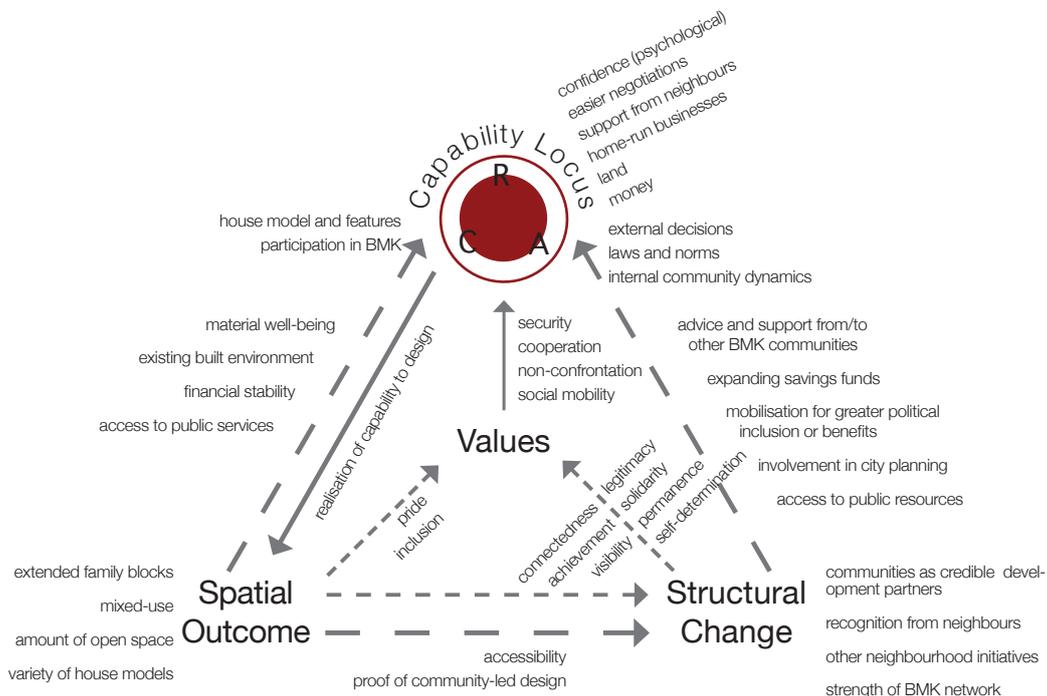
Opportunity: The spatial outcomes emerging from the BMK programme offer several tangible opportunities that can be turned into resources. The house itself presents the opportunity for greater financial manoeuvring by individual households, using the house value as collateral, although there are restrictions given the collective land ownership agreement. Partial physical upgrading often paves the way for communities to access local services and for municipalities to make other improvements, such as connection to municipal water and electric services. For Kroak Phama, for example, a community priority is to widen the streets so that fire trucks can access houses higher up on the mountain-side. On the other hand, previous construction in Kroak Phama did not account for vehicle access; this spatial outcome now restricts the opportunity for re-blocking. Opportunities arising from structural change span a

wide range of social and political circumstances. Some of the most visible from BMK are the acceptance and recognition of BMK communities by local and national authorities and other groups of city dwellers. In Kroak Phama this has led to better-off neighbours in the area also contributing to the community savings group in order to support plans to bring running water into homes and to widen the streets. On an larger scale, success in small community-led loans and upgrading has led to pooling community funds into City Development Funds to finance city-wide upgrading led by communities (UN-HABITAT, 2005). Local governments have also been known to solicit BMK communities to advise on changing planning regulations, based on what has been proven to work through BMK upgrading, to enable more pro-poor building in the future (Boonyabancha and Mitlin, 2012). On a more individual level, the practice of achieving spatial change exercises leadership and community organising skills, which are transferrable to other projects and form an important part of social and psychological resources that communities have at their disposal. These examples show how small-scale neighbourhood upgrading can push wider city-shaping processes in a direction that is more enabling for the urban poor, increasing the overall opportunities for them to shape the city after their idea of the good life.

Meaning: Spatial outcomes are highly meaningful in BMK communities. The finished houses and neighbourhood infrastructure represent social inclusion in the Thai middle class, visibility to neighbours and politicians, and a deep sense of pride and achievement for indi-

vidual families and BMK communities. A new house or pathway in itself communicates the family or the community's status and financial security (Chutapruttkorn, 2009a), but more specific features of a house go even farther in transmitting this message. For example, many BMK neighbourhoods display bright blue roofs because blue paint is more expensive and expresses the owner's financial security to all who see it. Likewise, many communities choose a standardised house model for the entire community because the conforming aesthetic is an allusion to upper middle class gated communities (Archer, 2012; Chutapruttkorn, 2009a). Upgraded houses and infrastructure have more potent political significance as well. A concrete walkway or bridge represents connectedness to the formal city in a way that a bamboo pathway does not (Boonyabancha, Carcellar and Kerr, 2012). Likewise, a solid house speaks of permanence and firmness; in a context where slums are constantly under threat of eviction, this shows that the owner has no intention of being thrown out and will stay his or her ground. Structural change also produces meanings that, interpreted by values, affect the resources, choices, and abilities communities have at their disposal. For example, when communities see themselves as more enabled and legitimate members of society, this constitutes a psychological resource. Communities may consider a wider range of choices for future activities because they feel that their actions can lead to positive change. This has prompted all three communities in Nakhon Sawan to develop other initiatives to improve their well-being, such as welfare funds and flood-barrier walls.

Figure 5.5. Capability locus framework applied to three BMK communities. Source: author



6. Conclusion

The Capability locus framework for socio-spatial change offers a community-based perspective to the forces that determine what the built environment looks like and how it affects the people and events that happen in it. The goal of this framework was to unpack the dynamic relationships between socio-spatial products and processes. While the diagram doesn't refer specifically to products or processes, it finds more precise expression in the terms spatial outcome and structural change, which can be seen as spatial and social products, respectively. The diagram itself shows a process that derives its dynamism from people pursuing valued lives through shaping their environments. However, it does not provide the space to analyse the shaping process itself; rather, it reveals a process that, over time, links the shaping of space to communities' internal criteria and forces external to them.

By applying the framework to the communities in Nakhon Sawan, it is easier to assess how well the diagram accomplishes the main purpose of diagrams, which is to help in understanding complex systems and framing problems differently in order to come to new conclusions. This diagram exposes the question, do the specific characteristics of the spatial outcome directly affect structural change, and is the process of building and the meanings and opportunities from how it is built what really matter? By visually juxtaposing spatial outcome and structural change in the diagram it may lead to discovering something new about the cause-and-effect relationships between the characteristics of the two. Does building houses in groups of extended family affect how the community may subsequently undertake a welfare fund? Does recognition from neighbours have more to do with symbols of financial stability (such as blue roofs) or with the tangible benefits they experience as a result (such as public infrastructure)? These questions and others may be better explored when positioned in this framework.

As this framework is based in the grassroots point of view, it would tell a very different story if taken from the perspective of a developer, development practitioner, government institution, or policy-maker. For a broader perspective, socio-spatial processes and products

should be represented by intersecting diagrams for multiple groups. It is possible to accommodate other groups' perspectives using this diagram by inserting their values and circumstances into the framework. In this sense, this paper contributes to the discussion by offering a model for understanding socio-spatial relations that is based on one group but applicable to others.

In relating notions from the capability approach to urban design ideas that tackle the process-product question, the framework opens the door wider for capability-led studies of the built environment. Furthermore, this paper uses the capability approach in a collective context, looking at group values, decisions, and capabilities, which are also concerns in the area of urban design that is interested in power and participation. While this is not the first work to address the individualism critique of the capability approach, it joins others in providing convincing evidence that the capability approach can be usefully employed to discuss group well-being and agency in the process of urbanisation. With a focus on collective agency, the framework treats spatial outcomes and structural change as enablers or impediments to communities' capacity to shape their environment. This could be considered an example of how diagrams can help "construct new narratives that offer an enticing glimpse of a transformed city" (Schwarz and Lewis, 2012, p.1), in this case, through bridging social development theory and urban design theory.

This paper, like many others that involve development researchers explaining something on behalf of the people experiencing it, is guilty of the Foucauldian critique of reproducing dominance through using dominant discourse (Rose, 2001). The terms used in this paper may not be exactly the ones that the Nakhon Sawan communities would use to describe their endeavours, and certainly the diagram, produced half-way around the globe from Thailand, also reflects the author's way of seeing things. Nevertheless, this diagram is both a mirror and instrument of thought (Lueder, 2012) and outside perspectives can sometimes shed new light on local issues. By offering a tool for reflection and strategy, this work aims to contribute to the efforts of communities shaping their local environments in pursuit of the good life.

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Design for freedom
A paper examining urban
design through the lens of
the capability approach

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1. Development through the lens of the capability approach

1.1 Introduction

How does one conceive ‘development’? The concept of development has undergone many iterations and changes, particularly over the past few decades. Development is largely concentrated around the ‘human’ aspect, assuming different interpretations depending on the particular entry point used, such as economics, medicine, social science or matters concerning the ‘urban’ (Alkire, 2010). The gap between theory and practice has always been a matter of concern particularly in a rapidly changing world where the time between theory and application is often too long for fruitful action and results. “Theory often seems like an expensive luxury, in the face of immediate and critical problems and the need to act promptly and decisively” (Marcuse, 2010, p.5). The gaps between theory and practice point towards fundamental and systemic issues in their approach towards solutions which are conceived as end-states. Analysis points towards an urgent need to be fluid and open towards both the understanding of the problem and towards the solution. This is particularly true in the nature of problems and solutions that are related to the built environment which are more visible as end-states rather than part of an underlying dynamic. It is important to understand the relationship between how development is conceived and urban development practice in order to bridge the gaps.

Traditionally, the three major disciplines that deal with the built environment – architecture, urban design and urban planning – have been segregated according to their scale of intervention and influence (Sternberg, 2000), which is again a reflection of the end-state methodology that is sometimes a barrier for integration of the largely fluid nature of social influences. These end-state methodologies have preconceived notions and forms for each category of scale, urban elements and social domain. Another handicap of this praxis is the commodification of the ‘urbanscape’ (Sternberg, 2000). For example, this deep seated commodification is exemplified within the tools used in master planning – shelter means housing, health means health centre, and public area means park or playground. “... markets tend to fragment, differentiate and commodify space through town planning mechanisms which tend to fragment, rationalize and manage space, and also through the legal and customary distinctions between the public and private spheres, with a constant tension between the two and a tendency for the privatization of space” (Madanipour, 2007, p.165).

Although master planning has been principally abandoned due to its weaknesses in being prescriptive and top-down, it continues to be the legally binding planning document in many countries. At the other end of the scale, architecture as a discipline has the potential of addressing concerns of the poor but at a typological scale of operation which tends to be repetitive and imposes homogeneity. Operating primarily within the brackets of capital and technology, its ‘products’ are visible, yet have limited influence. The discipline of urban design, by its positionality of scale, can deal with both the experiential qualities of the built environment and with the collective socio-economic dynamic, aided by its conventional domain that deals with the public realm. Due to its positionality, it is also best suited for generating the grounds for negotiation between the market and the needs of the poor. In an operative sense, it is best suited to generate a dialogue and a connection between potentially competing goals of market and society due to the range of tools available. “Urban design is an effective tool with which to develop place-based visions and strategies, which can be used as instruments of good governance, bringing together a diverse range of parties and allowing them to agree on a common programme of action and to act in unison” (Madanipour, 2006, p.186). It is here that the discipline can forge a relationship with development theories to establish a rhetoric that is socially responsive.

Alkire (2010) traces the evolution of the concept of human development within the UNDP published Human Development Reports (HDR) since 1990. Throughout its evolution, the concept has stressed expanding people’s choices as one of the major objectives of developmental endeavours. Contemporary discourses on participation and urban design stress similar objectives through the principles of inclusion, equity and social justice, emphasising the collective. From traversing between the basic needs approach and the sustainable livelihoods approach, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen’s writings since 1990 on the ‘capability approach’ offer a philosophical yet practical ground to the enquiry of development (Alkire, 2010). Since then, many theorists on human development have criticised, elaborated on, and expanded the approach, drawing principles for application in diverse fields related to development (Alkire, 2010). “The core characteristic of the capability approach is to de-emphasize an exclusive preoccupation with income-led evaluation methods, and to focus more generally on the ability people have to achieve the things they value”

(Frediani, 2010, p.175). This thought opens numerous possibilities as well as challenges for the various fields of development that had until now worked with normative lists, commoditising developmental initiatives. It also offers new grounds for participatory exchanges and for negotiations in order for people to act as their own agents for development.

Of particular interest to this paper is to explore possibilities of grounding the theory of urban design in development through the capability approach. The paper critically explores and unpacks the parallels between the capability approach and urban design theory in terms of their potential for expansion of 'freedom' and 'functionings'. It further proposes a framework of social and spatial processes that generates spaces for amalgamation of 'freedoms', 'functionings', 'unfreedoms', 'agency' and 'benefits' in order to explore a mutually reinforcing and evaluative expansion of opportunities. An analysis based on secondary data on Dharavi, Mumbai has been undertaken using the framework to reinforce the idea of complementarity between various 'freedoms'.

This section will primarily deal with exploration of the capability approach and associated debates to bring out elements that can be used further along with principles and elements of urban design theory explored in the second section. The second section will deal with formulating a capability-led framework for urban design that will be used in Dharavi as an example in the third section.

1.2 The capability approach, its interpretations and operationalisation

The concept of the capability approach

Clark (2006) traces the development of the capability approach in Sen's writings and through various authors in the past two decades. "It is now widely recognised that the capability approach manages to bring together many of the concerns of basic needs theorists ... into a single coherent philosophical framework" (Clark, 2006, p.3). Frediani (2007, p.135) quotes Sen (2005), "the people have to be seen, in this (development as freedom) perspective, as being actively involved – given the opportunity – in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programs".

Sen offers an approach to look at development as an evaluation of freedoms that the social structures afford to individuals within society and an expansion of the same. Frediani (2010, p.175) quotes Sen (2005) "A functioning is an achievement of a person: what he or she manages to do or to be, and any such functioning reflects, as it were, a part of the state of that person". 'Functionings' is described as "doing 'X' and choosing to do 'X' and

doing it" (Frediani, 2010, p.175). It is associated both with agency and resources in an operational sense. It also deals with 'power' and decision making, where the choice to do something one values lies with one's own self. Capabilities have been associated with 'freedoms', which brings in the importance of governance structures that allow that freedom. Hence, the 'agency' of change (the people themselves) assumes great importance in achieving those freedoms. Capabilities have also been associated with 'values', which brings in the notion of culture and traditions, but also emphasises broader societal values associated with development, such as inclusion and equity.

The capability approach identifies human dignity in an operative sense as 'capabilities' and 'functionings', refocusing the lens of developmental efforts on human agency, throwing out any instances of normative prescriptions to have a bearing on the future direction of development. With 'capabilities' as the driving force, the approach has a temporal element interwoven within it. Changing 'capabilities' and 'functionings' can realign the direction of development with people in the saddle.

Criticisms of the capability approach

One of the key criticisms of the capability approach is that it does not suggest a set of 'capabilities', which makes it incomplete and open for interpretation (Frediani, 2007). Additionally, "some freedoms limit others; some freedoms are important, some trivial, some good and some positively bad" (Nussbaum (2000) in Alkire, 2007, p.5). It is argued that a central set of 'capabilities' will outline the commitment towards a positive set of freedoms and cull efforts of stronger classes or communities to impose their set of values.

Sen does not elaborate on any universal list of capabilities that would operationalise the theory in different cultures on the premise that a 'list' would be normative and would cull the freedom of participants to decide on capabilities and values important to them. "There is reason to believe that the openness of Sen's approach is a strength, rather than a weakness; it provides an inclusive conceptual framework that captures the multiplicity and diversity of the perception of human well-being" (Frediani, 2007, p.138). Frediani (2010, p.177) quotes Sen (2005) "The problem is not with listing important capabilities, but with insisting on one pre-determined canonical list of capabilities, chosen by theorists without any general social discussion or public reasoning. To have such a fixed list, emanating entirely from pure theory, is to deny the possibility of fruitful public participation on what should be included and why."

In an operative mode, the direction of efforts can focus on people's priorities, on what can be achieved, when it can be achieved and how it can be achieved, rather

than on what 'should' be achieved. This touches on a fundamental principle advocated by the participatory approach which will be discussed later in the paper. Among other criticisms based on the operationalisation of the theory include the question of prioritisation of 'capabilities' (Clark, 2006). The process of prioritisation of 'capabilities' involves a number of choices that are linked to 'functionings'. Here, relative reasoning to value certain choices over others can become subjective and counter-productive. The questions of 'who' decides and 'how' to overcome this constraint need to be addressed. The role of the practitioner then becomes central to the questions and the positionality of the problem.

Operationalisation of the capability approach

In the past decade, attempts have been made to 'complete' the theory and make it operational. Foremost is the work of Martha Nussbaum (Clark, 2006), who proposed a list of "central human capabilities" which are of "central importance in any human life", including life, bodily health, bodily integrity, emotions, other species, play and political and material control over one's environment. On Nussbaum's project, Clark (2006) assesses that "...it is not so much the method itself that is fraught but its potential for abuse" (p.7). Alkire (2007) suggests a set of selection methods that can be used to identify capabilities or dimensions. These include "a) existing data or convention, b) assumptions, c) public consensus, d) ongoing deliberative participatory processes, and e) empirical evidence regarding people's values" (2007, p.7). Clark (2006) points out shortcomings of the above by not identifying capabilities with the above methodology through case examples and not considering the many different conceptions of poverty itself. However, the methodology does offer a set of guidelines that is a mix of Nussbaum's normative list and ascertaining facts on the ground through a participatory approach. It offers an opportunity to compare normative assumptions with actual fieldwork and develop a more robust direction for future action.

However, it remains to be seen how the above can be operationalised as the positionality, prejudices, inclinations and assumptions of the practitioner also come into play. Questions that need to be answered include, how to weight normative assumptions against fieldwork findings? How to prioritise? And, how to interpret and attach weight to values? Frediani (2007) emphasises the use of participatory approaches in the operationalisation of the capability approach, also suggested by Alkire (2002). Frediani (2007, p.138) refers to Ellerman (2001), "By choosing and weighting valuable capabilities and functionings through participatory methods, the capability approach can aim at improving people's ability to escape poverty, while still preserving and expanding their social and cultural identities". Alkire (2007) has devel-

oped the methodology for ascertaining the dimensions of poverty with participation as one of the cornerstones. Alkire (2007) recognises that the participatory approach is fraught with shortcomings that require careful judgement along with strong interpersonal skills, hinging on the success or failure on the practitioner and specific methodology employed.

1.3 Implications of the capability approach on urban development

The capability approach can offer an alternate perspective in analysis of issues related to urban development at the level of policy and at the practice level. An attempt for expansion of freedoms can potentially have a much larger effect, enhanced by the active economic mass of the city. This idea recalls Sen's dual conception of freedom which on one hand is 'constitutive' to being fully human (by being able to make and pursue one's choices), and on the other is 'instrumental' to achieving greater freedoms (freedom to achieve a particular functioning can lead to additional freedoms and functionings) (Sen, 1999). Policy is the first level of intervention as suggested by Khosla (2002) where the goal should be "removing unfreedoms" and to expand existing freedoms. He points out the existing information base primarily consists of income based analysis that is highly inadequate to advocate effective policies (Khosla, 2002). And, Sen (1999) conclusively points out the deficiencies of income-led analysis of development and poverty. He elaborates that income can be one of the means of achieving something; however, numerous other factors related to social structures, culture, governance, equality and justice play a major role in the access to those achievements. Hence, policy can play a fundamental role in creating the conditions for development with the primary aim of expanding the "capabilities", expanding "opportunity freedoms" and "process freedoms" (Sen, 1999, p.17). "Sen's thinking therefore opens up an opportunity for urban theorists and planners to break from the enlightenment positivist epistemology and accept the dimensions of multiplicity and movement in conceptualizing urban policy" (Frediani, 2007, p.140).

At the practice level, the capability approach offers new grounds for cross comparison of needs, aspirations, capabilities and opportunities within communities and with individuals. It can offer a monitoring and evaluation framework based on effective expansion of 'capabilities' that have been expressed, prioritised, and targeted. Frediani (2007) has applied the theory for a case study of slum dwellers in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. He has used a participatory approach to undertake a survey of slum dwellers, assessing the impacts of an upgrading program. He comes up with a set of 'freedoms' expressed by the slum dwellers to acquire dignified shelter; "the freedom to in-

dividualize, the freedom to expand, the freedom to afford living costs, the freedom to have a healthy environment, the freedom to participate, and the freedom to maintain social networks” (Frediani, 2007, p.146). Each of the ‘freedoms’ expressed above have a ‘value’, a ‘capability’ (that cannot be a ‘functioning’ due to lacking ‘freedom’), and a (proposed) ‘functioning’ attached to it. Also, each of the above has interconnections that point towards legal structures, governance structures and mechanisms, social structures (customs, traditions, and norms), family structures, and economic conditions. For example, the ‘freedom to expand’ is directly associated with ‘freedom to a healthy environment’ (due to constraints of space) which bring the people in direct conflict with legal and governance structures. For achieving this ‘functioning’, ‘freedom to participate’ and ‘to maintain social networks’ is of utmost importance as it imparts a structure to their efforts through effective leadership and representation. ‘Freedom to afford living costs’ is also directly related to ‘freedom to a healthy environment’ through provision of water, electricity and sanitation. Affording a multi-dimensional analysis of such conditions and magnitude can go miles towards conditioning a solution that deals with effective, measurable, and constantly evolving expansion of efforts and solutions. To afford such an analysis, Frediani (2010, p.178) introduces the concept of “capability space” which has “individual, local and structural factors” influencing “people’s choice, ability, and opportunity to transform resources into achieved functionings”. He also emphasises the concepts of ‘agency’ (ability to choose) and the concept of ‘power’ that become instrumental in operationalising the ‘capability space’. He has used the example of a bicycle as a mode of transport with the ‘capability space’ having other modes available as well, including bus and car. It is through an operation of choice influenced by abilities, opportunities, external factors, and values reaching to that one or more ‘functioning’ of which mobility might or might not be the most desired one (Frediani, 2010).

1.4 Conclusions

Development discourse lays emphasis on the ‘human agency’ where tapping the potential of the people is key for achieving sustainable development. The capability approach reorients the focus of development towards the ‘subjects’ and ‘beneficiaries’. It proposes a revolutionary step away from the prescriptive notions that are suggested by ‘lists’ imposing set standards of facilities, amenities and infrastructure. It proposes a framework that is based on ‘capabilities’ and ‘functionings’ that places the ‘decisions of development’ in the hands of the people. This resonates with decades of thought and discourse that centres on employing participatory mechanisms that incorporate the synergies of economic status, social networks, political inclinations and environmental opportunities and constraints. It also suggests grounds for devel-

oping a framework for negotiation within and in between development discourse that would fundamentally deal with ways and means of expansion of freedoms.

‘Capabilities’ and ‘functionings’ offer a complex web that needs to be unpacked in terms of the attached freedoms and values. With ‘freedom’ being the operative word, ‘capabilities’ and ‘functionings’ revolve around the concept in achieving the same through a value-based judgment. Such values are subjective, dynamic, and interchangeable with continuous expansion of freedoms that open new doors and create new opportunities that can lead to abandonment of one value-based judgment in favour of another. Also, what is valued need not necessarily be a ‘capability’ as there may not be enough freedom to achieve it and thus cannot be realised into a ‘functioning’. The concept of ‘capability space’ is useful in understanding such a set of choices that are available towards a desired ‘functioning’; however, it can harbour enormous complexities in understanding it when applied to complex scenarios. The understanding of all of the above terms is an iterative process that involves dimensions of time resulting in redefinition of the terms and renegotiation of relationships between each ‘freedom’, ‘capability’, ‘functioning’, and ‘value’.

There are obvious opportunities for urban development policy to reorient itself towards creating possibilities for expansion of freedoms that can have far reaching effects on practice. In practice, the capability approach offers an alternative framework that can connect its roots with the overall objectives of development itself rather than being an isolated, self-serving, and mono-visionary operation. “By applying Sen’s thinking to an urban development context, it is possible to identify an emerging paradigm that moves away from a dualistic perception of cities (formal and informal; included and excluded) to one based on freedoms, interaction, multiplicity and diversity” (Frediani, 2007, p.139). It can connect to the philosophical and ideological roots of development that through a dynamic framework, can unpack the complexities, repercussions and renegotiations that are usually absent in the analysis, implementation and evaluation of such endeavours that are usually understood as homogeneous in nature, with vague or imposed ideas of quality of life, and are static one-time, end-state interventions.

The next section will delve into a relativistic discourse of urban development praxis, sieving out the positionality of urban design in addressing concerns of the poor. It will attempt to justify the position of urban design as a praxis best suited to gather and inculcate the capability approach towards a framework that, along with participatory methods, can be used in understanding and focusing the energies of a development practitioner in an amalgamative, principle-based methodology, working towards expansion of developmental opportunities of the people in various timelines.

2. Theory to practice: exploring a new basis

2.1 Relative positioning of urban development praxis: planning, design & architecture

In general, the realm of urban development essentially has three core practice areas – architecture, urban design and urban planning (Sternberg, 2000). Each of these deals with specific scales, domains and elements within the city with overlaps between each other. It is with this background that one attempts to understand urban development praxis and explore the positionality of urban design and its alternate value, exploring a basis with the capability approach to reconnect with the core meaning of development, at the centre of which lies the individual and the society.

Master planning has been the conventional form of practice that incorporates inputs from all streams of urban development praxis, synthesising them into a spatial development framework that incorporates governance structures, environmental regulations and development standards. However, this process has been criticised heavily primarily due to its prescriptive nature and also due to lacuna in its implementation. Strategic planning has shown new inroads towards a less restrictive form of planning that targets key areas of concern, allowing enough flexibility for local and ground level concerns to have space and exercise influence. “Strategic planning is selective and oriented to issues that really matter. As it is impossible to do everything that needs to be done, ‘strategic’ implies that some decisions and actions are considered more important than others and that much of the process lies in making the tough decisions about what is most important for the purpose of producing fair, structural responses to problems, challenges, aspirations, and diversity” (Healey, 2010, p.440, quoting Albrechts, 2004). This process has also received criticism: “...it may not help to systematise experiences, for example through surveys about opinions and issues, as this may well smooth away the experiential depth out of which clues about what is going on and what is important may emerge..... There is no substitute for becoming “street-wise” as a way of accessing experiential knowledge, or for recognising that any place has many different streets and spaces of encounter” (Healey, 2010, p.448). This reiterates the need for strategic thinking blended with local needs, and a framework that strategically enhances ‘freedoms’, enabling expansion of ‘capabilities’ resulting in ‘functionings’ that are based

on a value set that is self-determined rather than prescriptive. On the other hand, the scale of operation of master planning and strategic planning affords a lesser level of interaction with the “spaces of encounter” which is the primary domain of urban design.

In terms of scale of operation of urban design, it is larger than that of the discipline of architecture and smaller than that of planning, however, it has elements of both within it. “... in ... attempts to define urban design, ... we see a variety of foci: some are dealing with the domains of urban design, especially with its involvement with the physical fabric of the city; others have focused on its scale, its points of departure from, or congruence with, planning and architecture, its political and management aspects, or its place in the planning process” (Madanipour, 1997, p.12). There are a variety of interpretations in defining the scale, domain and elements of urban design as a discipline (Kallus, 2001). One school of thought defines urban design as an ‘outcome’, that which deals with the sensory details. The other defines it in terms of a ‘process’ that deals with management and time. Both impart a great deal of body to the discipline in terms of spatial aspects and the processes behind it. On one hand the definition and scope of urban design comes close to that of planning; on the other, it deals with concerns related to art, aesthetics and architecture (Madanipour, 1997). One of the primary ambiguities has been described as “the spatial or social emphasis of urban design” (Madanipour, 1997, p.13). This, among other ambiguities, places the discipline at the crossroads of the urban development praxis. In a negative sense, this creates enormous ambiguity in the scope of urban design in its applicability in the spatial and social realms. A strong inclination towards the spatial and visual aspects might lose out on the social undercurrents of inclusion, diversity and plurality. “The fundamental relationship between space and social process is inevitably pushed aside when the position of the users is diminished and space is viewed strictly morphologically” (Kallus, 2001, p.135). On the other hand, a contrary position of urban design towards social emphasis creates confusion in terms of the discipline’s primary domain of dealing with the physical realm. In a positive vein, it lends enough flexibility to the profession to base itself on a platform that is both strategic in the sense of the larger whole (in the sense of a master plan), and symptomatic to the issues at hand (in the sense of solutions related to design). It creates a space of practice that can act in between the

boundaries of the physical and the non-physical, lending itself to either, within and outside the strict demarcations of practice. “Urban design therefore can be seen as the socio-spatial management of the urban environment using both visual and verbal means of communication and engaging in a variety of scales of urban socio-spatial phenomena” (Madanipour, 1997, p.16).

2.2 An alternate value to urban design

Traditionally, urban design has had elitist undertones serving interests of power and capital. “Design is a sign of social status and good aesthetic taste, providing an added bonus to the products in the marketplace that carry a designer’s label” (Madanipour, 2006, p.179). With this standing, urban design as a profession has come to serve commercial interests, adding measurable financial value to development. However, ‘good’ design can also deliver tangible and intangible benefits in terms of social and environmental aspects (Carmona et al, 2002). Social value of urban design has been defined “as a broad concept that should rightfully spread beyond the confines of the users of the immediate site, requiring in particular that development should be designed to integrate into its surroundings and infrastructure at a larger spatial scale” (Carmona et al, 2002, p.78). This definition has a particular standpoint that deals with urban design within brackets of space, as an intervention viewed from outside, as a product that has attributes and qualities that are directly interacting with the outside world. The environmental value as defined by Carmona et al (2002) is more amalgamative, touching on aspects such as health and hygiene, safety, aesthetic qualities, accessibility and permeability which dilutes the brackets and looks at a continuum. “Better-designed urban environments, therefore, improve the quality of life for more citizens, offer a wider range of opportunity and choice, add comfort and liveability, and encourage cultural exchange and social integration” (Madanipour, 2006, p.186). From a role that is conceived as an end in itself, that which is more visual and dogmatic, urban design is seen as a means to achieve a set of ideals that transcend traditional domains, operating at various scales. “... urban design and its roles are contested along the lines that stratify society, and the success or failure of urban design and development depends on how far they are able to cross these lines and serve large sections of their users” (Madanipour, 2006, p.185). Kallus (2001) gives the example of the Nolli map of Rome (1748) where space, in the interiors as well as in the open, is represented as a continuum that dissolves the boundaries lending an expression to the experience of public space, streets and squares in a flow. Devoid of abstraction, urban space is represented as a set of inter-relationships that are bound to have attributes that define the experience within that space and in transition from an abstracted space such as square-to-street-to-interiors of public buildings.

Hence, in relative terms, within the urban development praxis, the discipline of urban design has the primary potential of interacting with the built environment dealing with the socio-spatial phenomena in terms that are more flexible than the domain of architecture as a discipline, and in terms that are closer to ground than the scale of master planning. Within urban development praxis, it can deal with scales, domains and elements that are common to master planning and architecture, incorporating principles of social justice, inclusion, plurality and diversity, among others.

2.3 Drawing parallels between the capability approach and urban design theory

“One of the crucial insights of the capability approach is that the conversion of goods and services into functionings is influenced by personal, social, and environmental conversion factors; and that it should not be taken for granted that resource provision leads to increased capabilities or functionings” (Oosterlaken, 2009, p.92). This argument is one of the cornerstones of the framework of the capability approach, wherein the expansion of freedoms and capabilities can lead to alternate values and ‘functionings’ that were never thought feasible before. Sen (1999, p.62) cites “adaptation and mental conditioning” as one of the critiques of the utilitarian approach wherein status-quo is maintained even with availability of resources. Frediani’s (2010) concept of “capability space” offers an insight into the dynamics involved within expansion of freedoms that is influenced by “individual, local and structural factors” (p.178). The boundaries of that “capability space” are defined by the ‘freedoms’ afforded by and attained by society and individuals directly influencing the rationale of opportunities and choices leading to a set of ‘functionings’, of which a sub-set of ‘values’ influences the eventual outcome. The expansion or contraction of this “capability space” is directly influenced by all three factors that subsume both formal socio-structural factors such as laws and governance, and informal socio-cultural factors such as traditions, beliefs and practices. This positive expansion of ‘freedoms’, ‘capabilities’ and ‘functionings’ is fundamental to development and hence, to any such attempt via urban design.

Towards an expansion of ‘freedoms’

Sen (1999) focuses on five types of instrumental freedoms that are essential for an individual to live freely. He describes these as “(1) political freedoms, (2) economic facilities, (3) social opportunities, (4) transparency guarantees, and (5) protective security”. Described separately, each forms a part of a complex web of relationships within a larger whole contributing to creation of choices and opportunities for individuals and society. The “po-

litical freedoms” as defined by Sen includes freedom to choose ideologies and entitlements. These freedoms go hand-in-hand with “economic facilities” where there are opportunities to utilise economic resources within the formal and informal structures. “Social opportunities” is implied for access to healthcare and education that contribute to the overall well-being of the individuals. The last two, “transparency guarantees” and “protective security” refer to freedom within the process of exercising the above with built-in mitigation measures for combating vulnerability in the system.

These ‘freedoms’ echo Henri Lefebvre’s (1967) concept of “right to the city” which, he describes, “is like a cry and a demand ... the right to information, the rights to use of multiple services, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in urban areas; it would also cover the right to the use of the centre” (quoted in Marcuse, 2009, p.189). With activist undertones, the concept rallies around the rights of the deprived, but also highlights the conflict in the exercise of those rights between various stakeholders within a city. The “right to information” and “to make known their ideas” is directly related to “political freedoms”, while the “right to use of the (city) centre” is related to “economic facilities”. While Sen’s ‘freedoms’ and Lefebvre’s “right to city” have a characteristic standpoint towards development in general and towards the city in particular, and primarily from the point of view of the deprived, contemporary urban design discourse through Madanipour (1996, 1997, 2003, 2006, 2007), Carmona (2002, 2007), and Kallus (2001) attempt to look at urban design within the urban development praxis serving both ends of the pole, private and public, rich and poor, government and governed. It is acknowledged that the discipline is intertwined with the socio-economic undertones of each society it comes to be used in, and that its position within the praxis places it best to serve in a socio-spatial mode of operation (Madanipour, 1996).

The position of urban design to deal both with the process and the product of urban development is unique and imparts the profession a freedom to act with a similar characteristic standpoint as described above. The transition of reading space from purely an abstract form to a more subjective interpretation (Kallus 2001) is key towards formulating the foundations for operationalisation of ‘freedoms’ and interpreting their relationships in space and time. At the same time, the “expressive-subjective process” (Madanipour, 1996) of design imparts the element of flexibility and dynamism leading to the creation of opportunity space for the exercise of choices not only from the practitioner’s view, but also from the users standpoint. Carmona (2002) gives examples of the benefits of ‘good’ urban design (in the United Kingdom) delivering benefits which are economic, environmental and social in nature driving towards an expansion of opportunities and ‘freedoms’.

Towards expansion of ‘capabilities’

Oosterlaken (2009) highlights that design has an “effect on human capabilities”. However, real and effective enhancement of capabilities is not only a function of resources (which can be in terms of new design), but also in terms of horizontal expansion of choices afforded by that design. This is fundamental to Frediani’s (2010) concept of “capability space” wherein multiple choices are afforded by presence of multiple ‘freedoms’ which then translates into ‘functionings’ based on certain values. How can urban design as a practice work towards expansion of ‘capabilities’ of individuals and society? Carmona (2002) expresses the social benefits of urban design as enhancements in accessibility, identity, security, inclusivity (also Madanipour, 2007), diversity and, not least, economic value. Public spaces can and have been appropriated in a variety of ways by societies to express themselves either through congregations or meetings exchanging experiences. Accessibility to facilities and amenities means lesser degree of duress for individuals enhancing their productivity affecting other ‘capabilities’. Greater security, especially for women, enhances their ‘capabilities’ manifold, contributing towards development of other ‘capabilities’. Security is also achieved through inclusion which in itself promotes mixed use and diversity within the community, bringing approaches and experiences of varied nature into the mainstream. The most measurable benefit of ‘good’ urban design is in terms of enhancing economic capabilities in terms of reduced maintenance costs and greater investment. An expansion of such capabilities can be termed as “real and effective” that enhances opportunities and affords choices to individuals and societies.

Frediani (2007) tested the capability approach in Brazil in outlining a set of ‘capabilities’ expressed by the inhabitants of Salvador da Bahia. His analysis included ‘freedoms’ to individualise and expand, which were directly related to their built environment. These can be termed as expressed or proposed ‘capabilities’ of the population as there are specific sets of ‘freedoms’ required to achieve those ‘capabilities’. For example, expansion of their dwellings would not only command financial resources, but also require ‘freedoms’ to negotiate and appropriate the space, which takes us back to the interpretation of “instrumental freedoms” of Sen (1999), specifically “political freedoms”, and “economic facilities”. Their ‘capability’ to expand is limited by ‘freedoms’ to do so even when they have necessary financial resources. Hence, the process to expand becomes more important than the actual ‘functioning’. The use of current ‘freedoms’ for negotiation of desired ‘freedoms’ needs to be addressed through the process as well as the product, offering enough dynamism and flexibility in the built environment for expression of newly acquired ‘capabilities’ to be translated into ‘functionings’. Here, the “objective-rational process” (Madanipour, 1996, p.93) in

urban design assumes alternative goals that deal with future products (with foreseeable negotiated ‘freedoms’ and ‘capabilities’) within the present set of ‘capabilities’. An example of this is the work of ‘Elemental’ in Quintas Monroy, Iquique, Chile. Available financial resources (government subsidy, loans, etc.) permitted a built volume of 50% per household. Hence, the design incorporated a porous structure that could be expanded when the family had more resources. Cultural considerations did not permit them to build high-rise and one family per one lot were accommodated reducing the number of families that could be settled on the same site. However, they achieved the required density at site with a semi-private space for 20 families each (Elemental, n.d.). They used the existing ‘capabilities’ of the families and the group as a whole towards designing an environment that negotiated with foreseeable ‘capabilities’ to expand and appropriate the space. The tools of urban design were used along with the technical capabilities of architecture to achieve a dynamic and flexible solution.

While the example has received criticism, for example, for being far from city services, Quintas Monroy highlights the importance of design as an integrated realm of operation that not only dealt with public realm, but also

defined and designed the private space to encapsulate the essence of the approach using what is present and usable, while preparing for the future. It also highlights the importance for negotiation as a tool within the process that was present within the design, and that was aided by the design of the public space itself. The public space jointly used by 20 families presented a platform for all stakeholders to participate in a process of iteration that kept all possibilities open before their eyes. Madanipour (2003) emphasises the importance of design of public spaces as places of vitality and expression that lend a platform for the voices of the people to interact and mix. They are more visible and hence can form an exemplar for endeavours that stretch beyond the public into private and also into other parts of the urban fabric. The ranges of possibilities that can be explored within the public realm are enormous and far reaching. Market squares, public gardens, streets, pathways, pedestrian walkways and ceremonial or religious spaces, among others, offer a potential for negotiation of conflicting and contrasting realities that be used to shape potential ‘capabilities’ for the future.

2.4 Participation as a tool within the process

Figure 2.1. Quinta Monroy - before and after. Source: <http://directoriarco.blogspot.com/2009/01/elemental-architecturequinta.html>



Frediani (2007, p.138) quotes Ellerman (2001), “By choosing and weighting valuable ‘capabilities’ and ‘functionings’ through participatory methods, the capability approach can aim at improving people’s ability to escape poverty, while still preserving and expanding their social and cultural identities.” Sen (1999) recognises the need for participation as key for developing a contextual set of ‘capabilities’ rather than a normative list which assumes so-called universal values. Frediani (2007, p.139) draws parallels with John Turner’s self-help approach where “people are perceived as agents of change, and not mere recipients; commodities are analysed by what they do to people’s lives and not by what they are.” The translation of ‘freedoms’ to ‘capabilities’ to ‘functionings’ and to utilities has the key covenant of ‘values’ attached to the process that can primarily be assessed through participatory methodologies. ‘Values’ can often subscribe to the subjective judgement of the individual or the society, or can be based on cultural or religious preferences. Sen (1999) has emphasised that certain values hold greater urgency than other seemingly obvious ones and a participatory weighted valuation is required for ascertaining the same.

Participatory Action Planning, by Hamdi et al. (1997) proposes a movement between problem-based analysis to a strategic solution-based process. A generic Action Planning process is described sequentially as Problems and Opportunities, to Goals and Priorities, to Options and Trade-offs, to Resources and Constraints, to Project

Teams and Tasks, and to Implementation and Monitoring. The process attempts to work with the existing 'capabilities' of the people identifying how they can be used in the best possible scenario. It also identifies how those capabilities can be expanded in the future through assessment of current trade-offs and options. These can then be negotiated with development of future capabilities. Values are built into the decision making process through the identification of goals and priorities where tasks can be identified based on a timeline with most valued (read important, preferred or urgent) tasks gaining precedence over others. These are then realised into 'functionings' through implementation strategies that either work with individual capabilities or pooled resources and collective capabilities. The solutions proposed within the whole process aim to be strategic by addressing core issues such as gender, empowerment and health, albeit through visible and feasible tasks. These strategic issues are the 'freedoms' that need to be achieved for real and effective development.

The Baan Mankong (secure housing) programme in Bangkok, Thailand exemplifies the principles of participation used towards expanding the 'freedoms' and 'capabilities' of slum dwellers towards achieving large scale housing and slum redevelopment. The programme places the people's agency as the focal point of all development activity. All efforts are focused towards expansion of their financial capabilities, technical skills, and decision-making powers. Through the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI), the programme channelled cheaper funding for the upgrading works directly to the communities and individuals in the form of subsidised loans. It also helped communities network together and, with non-governmental organisations, to develop a collective knowledge pool of experiences and technical knowhow. The people themselves recognised and chose the direction and type of development as per their capacities – in terms of land, types of houses, materials, open spaces and even neighbours. Community plans developed with active participation of the people have resulted in communities taking charge of their surroundings and spaces with regards to safety, security, access to amenities, and identity (Boonyabanha, 2009).

2.5 Capability-led framework for urban design

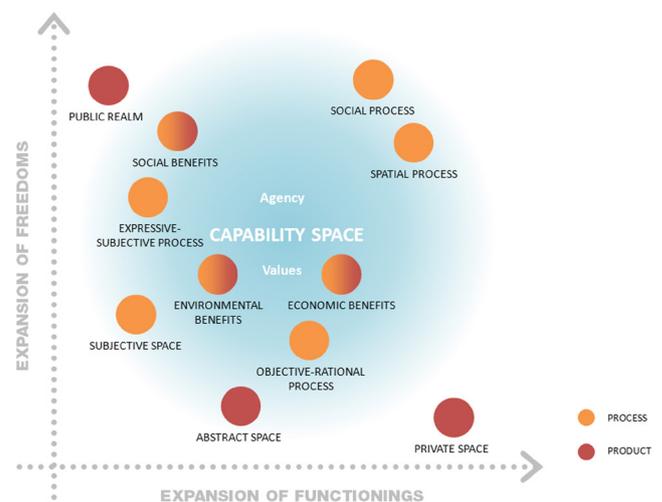
The connections between contemporary urban design theory and the capability approach can be translated into a framework that operationalises the theory into practice. An examination into the parallels will lead to further clarity for the framework as a means to explore the connections between theory and practice. Figure 2.2 explores the relationship between capability ap-

proach and urban design theory as a means and ends of expanding 'capability space'.

'Capability space' has been conceived as an intersection of expanding 'freedoms' and 'functionings'. It can grow when "real and effective" freedoms are translated into 'functionings' through the filter of values and agency. It creates a field of opportunity that allows this translation to take place. Various aspects of urban design theory have been plotted within the capability space in terms of their influence on expansion of freedoms and 'functionings'. They have also been segregated within 'process' and 'product' dimensions to emphasise the characteristics of operation of the theory within capability space. This also reiterates that both 'process' and 'product' play a crucial role in expansion of 'freedoms', 'capabilities' and 'functionings'.

Figure 2.2 also suggests a temporal dimension to the whole process of expansion of 'freedoms' and 'functionings'. An expansion of 'freedoms' leads to expansion of the capability space which can lead to alternate "functionings". This is the central idea for developing a capability-led framework for operationalising urban design within the capability approach. The framework not only needs to link design practice with the expansion of capability space, but also needs to incorporate the changes brought about by expansion and inform the transformation of space itself. It also inherently needs to have an evaluative mechanism to go back and forth in assessing whether "real and effective" expansion has taken place. The framework should have means to explore alternate freedoms and capabilities in order to explore how best to utilise current capabilities and to negotiate for future expansion of capability space.

Figure 2.2. Drawing parallels between urban design theory and the capability approach. Source: author



The framework is conceived as a social process that moves from an assessment of ‘current ‘functionings’ towards establishing ‘current capabilities’ of the people. This can generate information on current ‘freedoms’ afforded by formal and informal structures and the nature of agency ‘freedoms’. The assessment of ‘current functionings’ towards ‘current capabilities’ also establishes the values that go towards translation of those ‘functionings’ from ‘capabilities,’ informing the process of translation of opportunity to choice. According to Sen (1999), Alkire (2007) and Robeyns (2005), the process of participation is fundamental towards enriching the debate on expanding capabilities and therefore capability space itself. Hence, it is pertinent that any such framework have participation as one its primary processes in establishing a list of desired capabilities that works towards a set of ‘functionings’. These ‘desired capabilities’ stem from the set of “instrumental freedoms” which can be expanded further. An assessment of these freedoms needs to be undertaken in order to establish connections and conflicts between each other, and for the establishment of further capabilities that they might lead to. “Desired capabilities” are also linked to the values expressed earlier, adding and subtracting older values along with expansion of ‘functionings’. As a social process, these ‘desired capabilities’ and ‘desired functionings’ form the basis of the spatial process which can point out the action areas based on a prioritisation of ‘desired functionings’. Each ‘desired functioning’ needs to be examined within the overall framework for connections, conflicts and congruence with other ‘capabilities’ and ‘functionings’. It is important to note that some ‘desired capabilities’ will need to be negotiated with other stakeholders generating the required agency freedom for their translation into ‘functionings’.

At the start of the spatial process, each of the ‘functionings’ needs to be unpacked for its social, economic and environmental benefits, again establishing connections, conflicts and congruence, working towards determination of the ‘spatial realm’ – public realm, private space, or a combination of both. Each element within specific ‘spatial realm’ will spawn its own process requiring an assessment of alternatives and negotiations between stakeholders. The results of this process depend very largely on agency freedoms afforded and negotiated by and between the various stakeholders. The design of the product itself needs to be part of the larger process, as a means to generate more opportunities and increase the choices available for further expansion of the capability space through expansion of ‘freedoms’ and ‘capabilities’. The design is informed by the process of translation of ‘capabilities’ into ‘functionings’ through careful consideration of the catalytic nature of values. It not only delivers the benefits where required, but also informs the design in terms of its transformation in the near future.

Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4 synthesise the framework into a set of relationships that generate various types of spaces within the social and spatial process. ‘Space’ here is not meant in physical terms, but in terms of interactive, correlated and cogenerated fields that arise out of the synergies of ‘freedoms’, ‘functionings’, ‘benefits’ and ‘agency’. The temporal and expanding nature of these aspects is represented and incorporated in the framework. The spaces also interact with each other contributing and exchanging aspects and elements between each other. These spaces can expand or contract along with the axial elements, however, the boundaries of the spaces are not dependent on the elements, but on the nature

Figure 2.3. The social process. Source: author

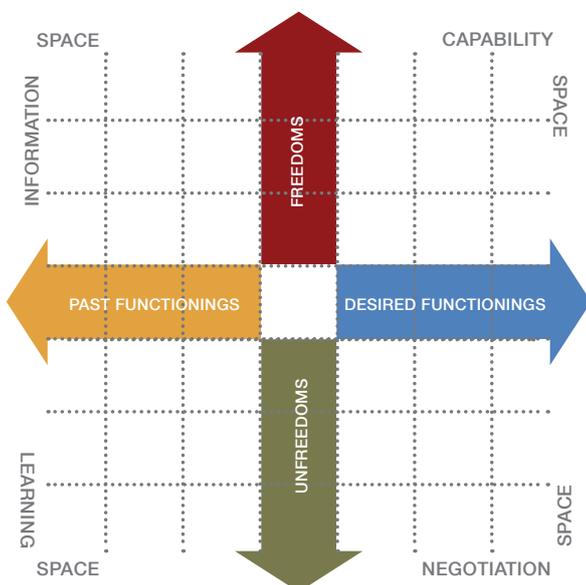
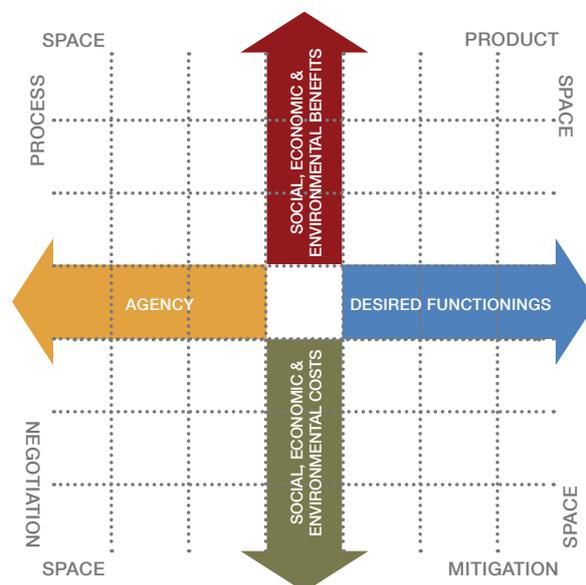


Figure 2.4. The spatial process. Source: author



of the aspects being discussed themselves. Past ‘functioning’ contributes to the development of an ‘information space’ that yields an exploration into ‘freedoms’ that are available to the community and the individual. This ‘information space’ consists of the ‘values’ that led to those ‘functionings’ informing the catalytic process with which opportunities were translated into a choice. This space also consists of the components of those ‘functionings’ in terms of agencies involved, costs incurred and interventions undertaken. Similar to ‘information space’ is the ‘learning space’ that is generated from the interaction of past ‘functionings’ and ‘unfreedoms’. ‘Unfreedoms’, a term used by Sen (1999), is not only opposite in meaning to ‘freedoms’, but also includes exclusionary practices, lack of access and vulnerability, among others. The ‘learning space’ generates information regarding ‘unfreedoms’ both in relation to past ‘functionings’ and as a field of information, analysing the interplay of various stakeholders and their standpoint. They directly contribute to determining the boundaries of the other two spaces. The axial element of ‘freedoms’, apart from existing freedoms, also includes ‘freedoms’ that would be required for ‘desired functionings’, and the space generated with the interaction of the two is the ‘capability space’. This space directly borrows from ‘information space’ the values that existed towards conversion of ‘past functionings’ and from ‘negotiation space’ which is generated with the interaction of ‘unfreedoms’ and ‘desired functionings’. It has an indirect relationship with ‘learning space’ borrowing aspects via ‘negotiation space’ and ‘information space’. ‘Negotiation space’ itself discussed aspects related to ‘unfreedoms’ (vs. ‘freedoms’) and other vulnerabilities in relation to ‘desired functionings’, searching for aspects that can contribute to the expansion of ‘capability space’ itself.

The spatial process takes off in parallel with the ‘desired functionings’ in the social process. An iterative process can be undertaken for determining the optimum ‘desired functionings’ in conjunction with their ‘social, economic and environmental benefits’. The interaction of these two elements is translated into a ‘product space’ where options can be discussed for implementing the ‘desired functionings’ in the spatial realm along with the nature of that intervention. The interaction between ‘social, economic and environmental benefits’ and ‘agency’ leads to ‘process space’ that deals with the delivery of product or intervention and its possibilities. ‘Process space’ is also influenced directly by ‘capability space’ in terms of the discussion between what capability and whose agency is being employed for contribution towards the ‘product space’. The interaction between ‘social, economic and environmental costs’ and agency discusses aspects related to functioning of the agency and draws from the ‘negotiation space’ in the social process in terms of the ‘unfreedoms’ expressed earlier. It indirectly contributes to ‘product space’ influencing its boundaries and nature of intervention. ‘Mitigation space’, a result of ‘desired functionings’ and ‘social, economic and environmental costs’

works in parallel with both ‘product space’ and ‘negotiation space’, and indirectly with ‘process space’, in order to mitigate ‘costs’ or foreseeable effects of ‘desired functionings’ such as severing of social networks, gentrification, commercialisation and rising rentals resulting in a push-out effect on the population.

The foundations of the framework are within the capability approach which deals with the creation of opportunities and the possibilities of choices available to individuals and communities. The different types of spaces generated in the framework offer a degree of self-evaluative flexibility due to their intersections with each other, and relationships with others. Each space has to be dealt with independently and together as a whole tying up with the larger picture.

2.6 Conclusions

Urban Development praxis is fraught with issues in terms of its analysis of the urban, being influenced by a multitude of subjects and disciplines at the same, and more often than not, the analysis being partial and exclusionary. It is a practice that is divided between brackets on the basis of scale, domain or element that is dealt with. Nevertheless, these brackets are important enough to bring order to our comprehension of a very large reality, although bringing with it a lesser hold on the larger picture.

Within urban development praxis and between the three disciplines, urban design has come to be recognised as having to deal with attributes of architecture and urban planning. It is placed in-between the scale of practice of architecture and urban planning, dealing with both social and spatial aspects that also creates a great degree of ambiguity in its scale, domain and elements of operation. It places the discipline at the crossroads of practice, in a debatable positionality of being a process or delivering products. However, this ambiguity lends it the freedom to deal with urban socio-spatial phenomena better than the other disciplines. ‘Good’ design is known to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits that lead to an expansion of opportunities for individuals and communities. This has a direct link to the expansion of the ‘capability space’ of individuals and communities that is determined by ‘freedoms’ and catalytically influenced by their values.

The expansion of ‘freedoms’ has an echo of Henri Lefebvre’s concept of ‘right to the city’ in terms of the “instrumental freedoms” described by Sen (1999). The positionality of urban design in dealing with the socio-spatial, public and private, government and governed, rich and poor, offers it a unique opportunity towards delivering positive expansion of ‘freedoms’ for the deprived. The enhancement of social benefits such as accessibility,

identity, security, inclusivity, diversity and economic value has a direct impact on the expansion of 'capability' of individuals and communities. Design can offer solutions geared towards enhancing the flexibility and dynamism of the built environment in order to horizontally increase the number of options available for the future. It has been argued that dealing with both 'process' and 'product' simultaneously will truly have a "real and effective" impact on the expansion of 'freedoms' and 'capabilities'. Sen (1999) argues for a participatory basis of negotiation for further increase in the number of options, and more importantly, for identification and prioritisation of 'capabilities' and 'functionings' based on the catalytic attribute of values. Proponents of participatory theory such as John Turner have argued in a similar tone (Frediani, 2009). Active participatory programs such as Baan Mankong in Bangkok, Thailand, have displayed that with agency freedom, development within communities has taken effective dimensions that years of policy and planning could not achieve.

These warm linkages between the capability approach and urban design theory have been used to propose a framework of a social process and a spatial process aiming towards an expansion of 'freedoms' and 'functionings' through an expansion of 'capability space' which is defined by the translation of opportunities into choices through the catalyst of values. The framework proposes a number of 'spaces', starting with 'capability space', that are fields generated out of the synergies of the axial elements. Expanding and contracting in an interactive mode, 'product space' within the spatial process yields the results of a temporal process that is also self-evaluative.

The next section tests the framework in Dharavi, Mumbai, India, which is the largest slum settlement in Asia. Although limited by data from secondary sources, the framework examines the issues from the perspective of the capability approach, exploring new opportunities and capabilities.

3. Dharavi: searching for new ‘capabilities’

3.1 Introduction

“Social opportunities” is a form of “instrumental freedom” described by Sen (1999) that is fundamental for our futures. Multi-dimensional poverty as described by Sen (1999) is also related to absence of ‘freedom’ or ‘unfreedom’ that are imposed by practice, perceptions or dogma. Discussing “rights to the city”, Marcuse (2009) highlights the fact that it is the demand from the oppressed, deprived and have-nots that is usually involuntary, and is itself subject to marginalisation (also Boano, 2009). Then, this paper takes a view of the need for ‘freedom’ for those deprived to be addressed as a qualification for “real and effective” development process. The marginalised are often deprived of the supposedly mainstream planning process as well, a process that has evolved along the lines of market-based economies with land as a commodity. Having no access to sufficient resources for a fruitful participation in the real estate market of large metropolitan cities, these people, largely consisting of migrants, settle in seemingly uninhabitable parts of the city or encroach on unused (usually government) land, giving birth to slums. Their financial deprivation also results in other forms of marginalisation such as that within the formal planning process or design also owing to their illegal occupation of land. Over the decades, communities have flourished in these slums. Treated as vote banks, many of these slums, such as Dharavi in Mumbai, India, house the third or fourth generation of slum dwellers. Living in an extremely complex web of social, cultural and economic interrelationships, these slums pose a significant challenge for redevelopment efforts in terms of comprehension of spaces within a tightly woven built environment. These spaces have been created and transformed through the agency of the slum dwellers to offer them ‘freedom’ towards expanding their ‘functionings’. Piecemeal efforts in terms of slum redevelopment projects are just symptomatic in addressing the problem.

The capability approach offers an alternate view towards understanding the issues of development within these settlements. The role of ‘freedom’ as described by Sen (1999) is both “constitutive and instrumental”. The social and spatial process proposed in Chapter 2 recognise this and evaluate ‘freedom’ and ‘functionings’ in a web of spaces that draw from each other and maintain a series of ‘checks and balances’, keeping the boundaries loose and flexible for exploring alternatives. The product

is the start of the next cycle that helps towards further expansion of ‘freedom’ and ‘functionings’. This section will analyse Dharavi through the proposed framework, in order to explore the potentialities offered through expansion of ‘freedom’. Limiting the paper to this exploration, the analysis will help identify and solidify the linkages between the capability approach and urban design, as an alternate means of interpreting and propagating the agenda of development.

3.2 Conflicting realities

Dharavi in Mumbai is dubbed as “Asia’s largest slum,” housing an estimated one million people (Savchuk et al, n.d.). Spread across 550 acres of land at the heart of Mumbai, Dharavi is sandwiched between the posh southern Mumbai referred to locally as ‘town’, and the posh central suburbs of Bandra and Andheri. Mumbai, with an inner city density of around 35,000 persons/ sq km, is bursting at its seams, limited by its geography (Urbanage, 2007). And it is places like Dharavi that are facing pressure from the rest of the city towards lending space, leveraging the squatter’s illegal status as the land is owned by Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM). “... the poor are used as bulldozers to fill swamps, even out the land, make it habitable and just after this happens the city moves in and they are moved out – to another uninhabitable plot of land” (BUDD, 2009 quoting Jockin, leader of National Slum Dwellers Federation).

Dharavi is far from being a squatter settlement by definition. It has around 5000 industrial units (KRVIA, n.d.), boasting a vibrant economy estimated to be around US\$ 500 million (Savchuk et al. n.d.) with activities like pottery, textiles, leather processing and services being carried out and exported to rest of the world. The land alone is estimated to be around US\$ 10 billion (Narain, 2008). The Dharavi Redevelopment Plan (DRP) proposed by the Slum Rehabilitation Authority and prepared by an architect Mukesh Mehta proposes to divide the land into pockets to be taken by developers for building high-rise buildings that also house the slum dwellers and sell extra space in the real estate market for profit. The state government has raised the Floor Space Index (FSI) for Dharavi to 4 compared to 1.33 for rest of Mumbai. This has intensified the issue as slum dwellers have

been promised only a 225 sq ft one-room house per family, increasing the floor space available for developers to sell. The design of the proposed buildings plans to house the small scale industries in ghetto-like conditions in 2 to 4 floors at podium level. This will severely disrupt many businesses that are dependent on space, access, light and air, apart from networks that have formed over the years. The buildings pose a threat to social spaces interwoven in the daily lives of the community as places of meeting and socialising that create a sense of security and identity within communities (BUDD, 2009). These conflicting realities stare deep into the lives of the slum dwellers, who have raised a voice with the help of non-governmental organisations like the Alliance constituting of Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), NSDF and Mahila Milan (a community micro-finance organisation) assisted by KR VIA.

3.3 A design-led solution

In Dharavi, at one end of scale, the design propagated by the DRP is being used to justify evictions or least of all, a realignment of the way the population relates to space, and on the other end, design-based solutions are being mulled to resolve issues of density and infrastructure. A wealth of work has been undertaken as an answer to DRP, exploring alternatives that are sensitive to the diversity of Dharavi (KR VIA, n.d.).

The primary criticism of DRP comes from its sweeping proposal of ‘podium’ typology of buildings that will disrupt the livelihoods and functioning patterns of the residents drastically. The other criticism of DRP is in relation to the high floor space index resulting in high-rise towers generating saleable floor space as means of com-

pensating the developers. Schwind and Kärcher (2008) have explored this aspect in detail in their thesis work. Dharavi displays a variety of shapes, sizes and configurations in terms of internal and external space that are organised along the lines of trade or along community structures.

The above debate highlights the role of urban design within the larger issue of ‘who has rights to what’. On one hand, the product-based approach of DRP is colluding with the interests of developers whose aim is to get maximum returns, and on the other, alternate proposals like KR VIA’s highlight the livelihood and cultural debates. Both the approaches are concentrated around the product debate, aligning with opposite camps. And secondly, both approaches deny importance to the process of people’s agency. Although KR VIA’s and Schwind and Kärcher’s work realise the importance of a process, it is more aligned towards the eventual outcome or its possibilities. It is pertinent that for “real and effective” development, those possibilities include the people’s agency within the design process as well, rather than just a means of resistance or for consent.

The role of design here is that of negotiator between contrasting and conflicting realities of the city and the site. The enormous real estate value of Dharavi, and its importance in the geography of Mumbai cannot be ignored. At the same time, the rights of the residents of Dharavi cannot be marginalised. DRP and KR VIA are attempting to design a product that negotiates between these two realities through production of space. However, the process of production leaves little room for development of the residents themselves. ‘Freedoms’ achieved through that process hold greater importance than the product itself. The process will primarily influence the expansion of ‘functionings’ through production of space.

Figure 3.1. Location of Dharavi in Mumbai, India. Source: BUDD, 2009

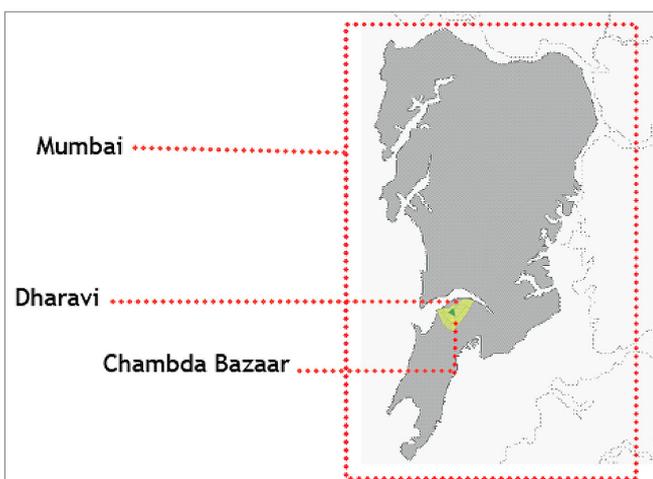
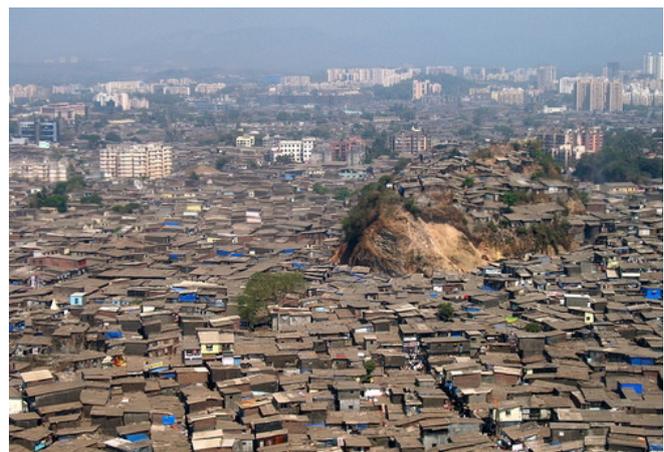


Figure 3.2. Dharavi. Source: http://www.pwindia.in/News/Metro/09-12-10/Dharavi_Redevelopment_still_mired_in_controversy.aspx



3.4 Applying the framework

The process, as proposed in the earlier sections of this paper, attempts to connect the purpose of the product with a methodology that has its roots deep within the capability approach. The goal is expansion of 'capability space' that can translate into real 'functionings' based on values. This scope of this paper is limited in application of the framework because of the lack of primary engagement with the communities to ascertain 'freedoms' and 'desired functionings'. There is an attempt to overcome this limitation by gathering information from interviews conducted by BUDD students in 2009 (BUDD, 2009) and from online sources. This paper limits its scope to analysis of the 'capability space'. The interviews in recently built buildings along with others in the huts give a number of indications regarding 'freedoms' and 'desired functionings'. For the people in the huts and buildings alike, 'participation in design' is a means to express themselves in either the process of rehabilitation or in the DRP. This can also be termed as an 'unfreedom' as women and non-committee members were excluded from the process. Nevertheless, a desire to do so indicates attainable 'capabilities' that can lead to 'functionings'. 'Social Capital', or the lack of it, is another 'freedom' that people in the buildings express as important or lost from their prior environment. People in the huts also expressed the same in one way or another leading to 'desired functionings'. 'Economic facilities' is one of the priorities of many of the dwellers of Dharavi and attaining the same leads to many other 'freedoms' for both people in the buildings and huts below. A few

direct 'functionings' were expressed in the interviews. People in the buildings and huts below emphasised the need for space for both family and business. This is an 'unfreedom' for people in the buildings as they have no scope for expansion with their growing families. People in the buildings also expressed the need for having community spaces that they lost from being in the huts.

'Tenure' was an important 'capability' expressed by the building dwellers that was achieved, and was desired by the hut dwellers. The interrelationships between 'freedoms' and 'functionings' are visible in terms of the values that have been expressed towards the 'capabilities'. Multiple 'freedoms' are required for similar 'capabilities'

Figure 3.4. A design-led vision of Dharavi. Source: Schwind et al, 2008



Figure 3.3. Developer's vision of Dharavi. Source: <http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?p=60448115>



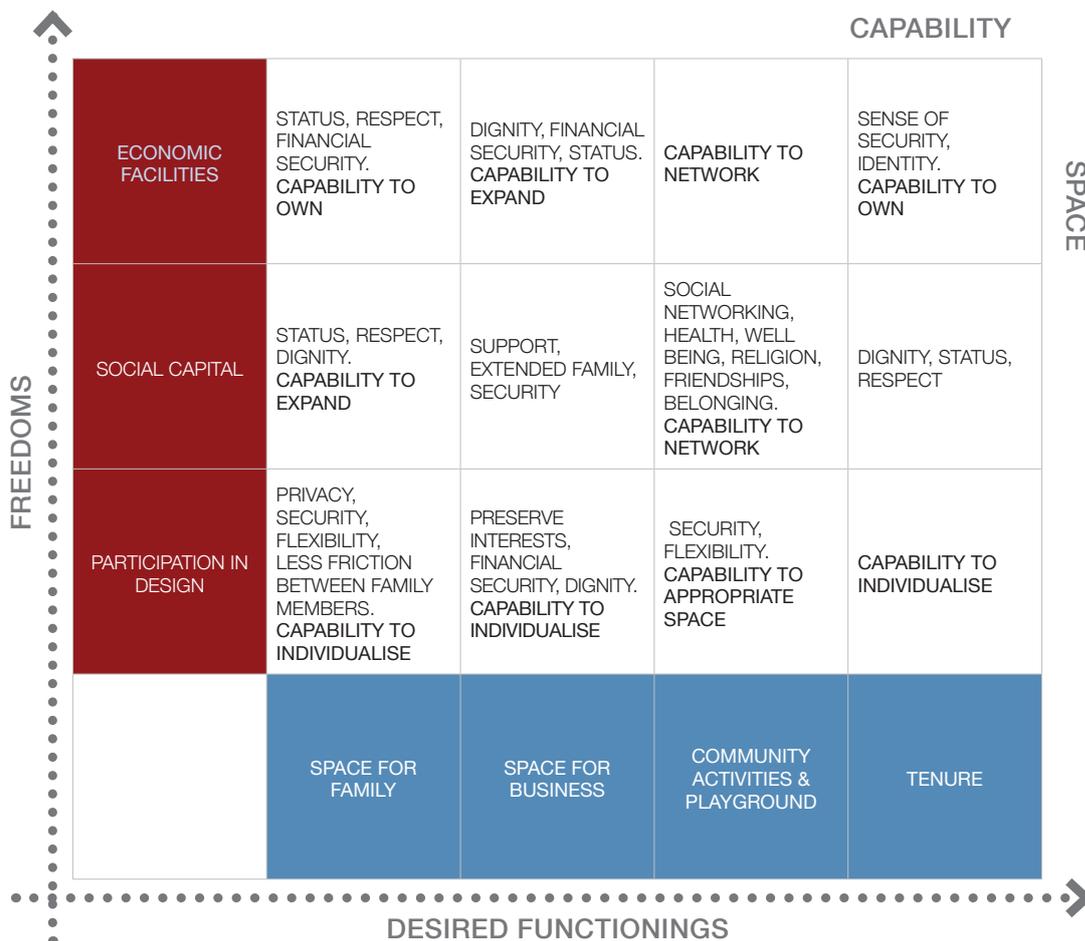
and 'functionings', and multiple 'capabilities' are required for one or a set of 'functionings'. 'Freedoms' and 'functionings' have been examined within the 'capability space' for values that go towards translating 'freedoms' into the particular 'functioning'. 'Space for family' as a 'functioning' has embedded values of privacy, security, status, respect and dignity that go towards a better quality of life. They directly point towards the 'capability to own and expand' the space that in both cases is limited by many factors. 'Space for business' has a similar undertone as that of the above, having a direct relationship with the 'freedom' of economic facilities that allows financial security, enabling other 'functionings'. 'Capability to expand and individualise' have similar undertones as that analysed by Frediani (2007) for the dwellers of Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. Space is thus pertinent for future expansion of 'freedoms' and 'functionings', keeping the family together in one case and increasing business opportunities in the other. Similar values have been expressed for the need for community space that brings the community together. It creates a sense of belonging and imparts a sense of identity to the place apart from providing a secure place for children to play. This has parallels with

Madanipour's (2003) analysis of public spaces. For the dwellers of Dharavi, their 'capability to network' is also dependent on the 'capability to appropriate space' for that use, which in itself is extremely limited. The demand for tenure is an expression of these very insecurities stemming from 'unfreedoms' of economic facilities and social opportunities. The interplay of multiple capabilities requires further examination in terms of 'past functionings' and 'unfreedoms' to further unpack various other spaces that are part of the framework. These spaces then contribute to the 'process space' and 'product space' with 'negotiation space'.

3.5 Conclusions

The capability approach holds a promise in furthering the cause of development for the marginalised and deprived. The framework emphasises the need for participation as a means and an end in attaining those 'freedoms', highlighting the role of people's agency. Urban environments, such as slums, exhibit the 'unfreedoms' plaguing today's society and unpacked

Figure 3.5. Capability space simulation for Dharavi. Source: author



through the capability approach, are part of a larger socio-economic dilemma that assumes political and systemic overtures. While design can allow many 'freedoms' to manifest into 'functionings', it can also work towards liberating the potential of people's agency to create new 'capabilities'.

Dharavi showcases the ability of people to use space in an optimum and efficient manner. Design liberated a select few from the huts to create new 'capabilities', but also created new 'unfreedoms' in terms of lack of personal and community space. In Dharavi, design is being used as the meeting ground for conflicting realities of the city. Attempts by KRVI and others showcase the importance of design in order to attain a better standard of living for the people, and at the same

time, allow the city to venture in. This negotiation, both at physical and political levels, is towards the expansion of 'freedoms' for the people of Dharavi.

The analysis of Dharavi through the framework proposed in Chapter 2 reveals the relationship between space and the expansion of 'freedoms'. The needs and aspirations of individuals expressed through the interviews point directly towards a set of 'desired capabilities' that are a result of multiple of 'freedoms'. These sets of 'capabilities' then contribute towards one or multiple 'functionings' that need to be further examined along with 'past functionings' and 'unfreedoms'. How these can then be translated into a process and product requires further application of the framework in the social and spatial processes.

4. Conclusions

Over the past decades, urban design has been struggling to break away from a product-based approach to a process-based approach. As a profession, it has seen its role redefined to serve multiple scales, function in various domains and deal with various elements of urban development. From a purely product-based visual interpretation of reality, urban design has come to encompass not only the physical, but also deal with the social. In its ambiguities lies its true strength. In this socio-spatial mode of operation, the responsibility of urban design becomes ever more critical in furthering the cause of development.

This paper began on the premise of searching for parallels between urban design and the capability approach. ‘Functioning’ both as a means and an end for development, the positionality of urban design offered it the liberty of operating within and in-between the urban development praxis. The end product has to conform to the means, which itself becomes the means for liberation. This premise is captured with the capability approach by Amartya Sen (1999) where ‘freedom’ is seen as both the means and the end of development.

The “instrumental freedoms” are a reading into developmental aims that define existential values. These offer a set of ‘capabilities’ to individuals and communities to be translated into ‘functionings’ based on their value judgments. The creation of fields of opportunity – a ‘capability space’ – allows multiple capabilities to interact with each other and expand the field of ‘functionings’. Human agency is an important factor in this whole process that lays the foundations for “real and effective” development to take place. Participation is key to the process of involving human agency in this endeavour. Principles of participatory processes, such as John Turner’s Self Help Approach, have parallel idioms that run deep within capability approach (Frediani, 2009).

Urban design theory developed in the past few decades has emphasised the importance of process and product aspects of design to be amalgamative and complementary. From being a mere means of visual representation, urban design can no longer be a witness from the sidelines towards what ends it serves. As a responsible practice, its reinterpretation is key for the practice to remain relevant. This reinterpretation has many parallels with the capability approach in terms of expansion of ‘freedoms’ and ‘functionings’. As a social process, urban design has enormous effect on the expansion of

‘freedoms’ in terms of generating a ‘capability space’ whose boundaries are further negotiated by opportunities for negotiation. Urban design theory exhibits the benefits of ‘good’ design of public spaces as having enormous impact on the health and wellbeing of communities delivering spaces that are accessible, secure, diverse and inclusive. This has a direct impact on the opportunities available to individuals and communities in order to realise their aspirations. As a spatial process, urban design has the potentiality of delivering a product that increases the opportunities of individuals and communities in various ways. Foreseeable ‘functionings’ can be realised with sensitive design of the built environment that has an enormous liberating effect on the community. This has been exhibited in Quintas Monroy by Elemental in Chile. The delivery of social, environmental and economic benefits by ‘good’ urban design have been documented by Carmona (2002). The duality of these benefits is parallel with the expansion of ‘capabilities’ based on past ‘functionings’.

This paper proposes a framework of social and spatial processes that can integrate the two theories into an operational model. The framework operates with various ‘spaces’ that are a result of the interaction between ‘freedoms’, ‘functionings’, ‘unfreedoms’, ‘agency’ and ‘benefits’. The framework exhibits the interrelationship between various ‘freedoms’ and ‘functionings’ to be mutually dependent and, at the same time, to be cohesive towards contributing to the expansion of the ‘spaces’. Serving as a means to highlight practices for the deprived and marginalised, in the same vein as the ‘right to city’ approach, the framework has been used to partially analyse the relationship between ‘freedoms’ and ‘desired functionings’ and how ‘capability space’ is fashioned in Dharavi. It was observed that ‘freedoms’ have a complex web-like relationship with the ‘capabilities’ they enable, which further has a web-like relationship with ‘functionings’ that are achieved. Values act as the catalyst within this process translating ‘capabilities’ into ‘functionings’. Further analysis of the framework is required to establish the translation of the social and spatial processes into products.

Further research is warranted into the effects of design on ‘freedoms’ and ‘capabilities’ to solidify the relationship between urban design theory and the capability approach. These contributions can be amalgamated into urban design theory, further enriching it and grounding it in a developmental basis.

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'Participatory Capabilities' in Development Practice

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1. Introduction

The role and concept of participation is at the crux of current development thinking and practice. Participation has been advocated through various discourses and by a diverse spectrum of interests and intentions. Some articulate participation from an apolitical and pragmatic perspective: better involvement of ‘beneficiaries’ in development projects and initiatives would lead to responsive solutions, addressing people’s diverse needs and aspirations. Others have used cost-benefit analysis to argue that participation is operational as a mechanism to reduce the expenditure of programmes by engaging local communities in the implementation and maintenance of interventions. Such perspective follows by arguing that a sense of ownership over interventions would logically motivate the continued maintenance and cultivation of project outputs.

As already explored in existent literature, this apolitical and instrumental approach to participation has led to a series of problematic applications of participatory methodologies, often reproducing processes of exploitation and perpetuating the causes of injustices. However, rather than focusing on such instrumental role of participation for project effectiveness, the original motivations for bringing participation to the heart of the development process have been to enable individual, collective and structural processes of empowerment.

Such perspective on participation resonates with the underlying values associated with concepts of freedom put forward by Amartya Sen and further developed through the capability approach. On the one hand, the capability approach is concerned with personal and societal transformation. Freedom is defined as the choice, ability and opportunity people have to pursue their aspirations (Sen, 1999). Therefore, the capability approach is precisely interested in revealing both the processes that shape what people value and the enabling/constraining environments that influence the freedom to pursue such values. At the core of such a concept of freedom is the notion of agency comprising the ability of individuals and collectives to act upon what is valued.

This article argues that the capability approach is a comprehensive theoretical framework that can contribute to

the elaboration of methodologies and approaches seated in line with the original Freirian tradition of participation thus focusing on how people “gain confidence and abilities to alter unjust conditions and structures” (Freire, 1997).

Meanwhile, this article argues in parallel that the capability approach can also enhance its information space by incorporating participatory methodologies. While often it is stated that the capability approach puts “people at the centre of development” to see “people as agents of change”, people’s capabilities are pursued, studied and reported frequently without such participation from the poor. Therefore this article argues that there are complementary aspects between the capability approach and participatory methods. On one hand participatory tools can democratise the application of the capability approach, meanwhile Amartya Sen’s concepts of freedom can provide a comprehensive framework to guide and safeguard the transformative roots of participatory approach.

With the objective to assess these complementary aspect between the capability approach and participatory methods, this paper expands on the concept of “participatory capabilities” to propose a framework for the application of participatory methods through a capability approach perspective in a way that unfolds both the limitations and opportunities for transformative change of the participatory initiative. After the introduction, the paper compares the participatory literature with that of the capability approach, revealing similarities, limitations and points of symbiosis between both approaches. Afterward, the article will focus on how participation has been addressed with further depth in the capability approach literature. In the fourth chapter of the paper, the participatory capabilities framework is introduced. The framework is further elaborated by an analysis of mechanisms to identify dimensions of participation building on Drèze and Sen’s (2002) notions of democratic ideals, institutions and practice. Finally, procedural recommendations on the application of the framework are examined by focusing on participation as a collaborative learning process and an explicit incorporation of debates on guiding principles on deliberation.

2. Participation and the capability approach: a comparison

Since the 1970s, many different participatory approaches to research, policy-making and planning have been proposed. However it has only been since the 1990s that participatory methods have entered the development mainstream (Brock and McGee, 2002). Participation became a buzzword from studies on poor people's perspectives on policy making implemented through development projects.

According to Leal (2007), the radical roots of participatory methods based on Paulo Freire's emancipatory pedagogy did not aim for encouraging development or alleviating poverty, "but the transformation of the cultural, political, and economic structures which reproduce poverty and marginalisation". It has been through the work of Chambers (1997) that participatory methods have taken a more operational form and become subsumed into the mainstream of NGO and international development agency practices. A series of methodological packages have been elaborated, such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA). According to Chambers (1997) "PRA is a growing family of approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor and evaluate" (1997, p.102).

While being developed through different academic streams, the capability approach and participatory methods share much common ground, resembling each other theoretically while also remaining the target of joint criticism.

2.1 The Similarities

Both the capability approach and participatory methods literature share a common critique of the utilitarian and income-led perception of poverty. Chambers (1997) argues that "deprivation as poor people perceive it has many dimensions, including not only lack of income and wealth, but also social inferiority, physical weakness, disability and sickness, vulnerability, physical and social isolation, powerlessness, and humiliation" (Chambers, 1997, p.45). Shaffer (2002) argues that analysis of poverty through participatory approaches contributes to quantitative studies by capturing the complexities and underlying dynamics of poverty. Meanwhile Sen's (1999a) main argument for the expansion of the concept of development has been to break away from the utilitarian and

income-led definition of poverty, thereby capturing the inherent complexity and multidimensionality of poverty. Reflection on the process of the production of knowledge is also presented in both bodies of literature. The Enlightenment epistemology that defends objectivity and the superiority of technocrats is criticised, as both literatures relate to Aristotle's perception of the poor as active members in the process of change. Freire (1997), a much quoted author by capability approach academics as well as practitioners of participatory approaches, argues that people who are the focus of research have a universal right to participate in the knowledge produced by that research. "In this process, people rupture their existing attitudes of silence, accommodation and passivity, and gain confidence and abilities to alter unjust conditions and structures. This is an authentic power for liberation that ultimately destroys a passive awaiting of fate" (Freire, 1997, p.xi).

Both types of literature emphasise the need to contextualise the concept of poverty, thus unfolding the local dynamics embedded in the social reality of each particular case-study. Sen (1999) argues for the fundamental importance of public debate, public scrutiny, and deliberate participation in the process of selecting the dimensions of poverty. Meanwhile, Brock (2002) argues that participatory approaches can capture the "diverse ways of knowing poverty" and "that understanding these better can contribute to improvements both in content and process of poverty reduction policy" (2002, p.2).

2.2 The Limitations

While sharing common theoretical underpinnings, participatory methods and the capability approach have received similar criticisms. Neither body of literature has reached a consensus on the targeted participants of their analysis: are evaluations based on the perspectives of individuals, groups or both? While the capability approach literature has been criticised as being too individualistic (Deneulin, 2005), recent applications of participatory methods have also been criticised by focusing on the 'empowerment' of individuals while moving away from their collective traditions. "As 'empowerment' has become a buzzword in development, as essential objective of projects, its [participatory approach to development] radical, challenging and transformational edge has been lost. The concept of action has become individualized, empowerment depoliticized" (Cleaver, 2001, p.37).

Another critique made of both approaches is that they propose local solutions to global problems, thus not tackling structural inequalities. Gore (2000) refers to the capability approach process as the partial globalisation of development policy, providing local solutions to global problems. Furthermore Sen's writings have been criticised for focusing mostly on the immediate causes of poverty and neglecting its underlying social processes (Patanaiik, 1998). Meanwhile, critiques of participatory methods have argued that their localised and problem solving application captures merely the manifestation of poverty and "ignores the structural and material constraints of globalized capitalism" (Mohan, 2001, p.156). As Cooke and Kothari (2001) highlight, participatory methods' "emphasis on the micro level of intervention can obscure, and indeed sustain, broader macro level inequalities and injustices" (2001, p.14).

Meanwhile both approaches have been criticised as being ahistorical, and not providing a sufficient analysis of the complexities of power and power relations. The criticisms of Gore (2000) on the capability approach argue that the focus on local knowledge overshadows a deeper analysis based in long-term sequences and patterns of economic and social change. Meanwhile, according to Mohan (2001), participatory approaches perceive local knowledge to be undermined by the societal relation of power, which is bifurcated between the holders of power and the subjects of power, the macro/micro, central/marginal, powerful/powerless. Mohan (2001) argues that this dichotomy of participatory approaches limits the understanding of power as a social and political process by encouraging a perception based on materialistic realities. "Thus participatory approaches can unearth who gets what, when and where, but not necessarily the processes by which this happens or the ways in which knowledge produced through participatory techniques is a normalized one that reflects and articulates wider power relations in society" (2001, p.141).

The critiques of participatory methods have analysed the many ways that power relations influence development analysis based on participation. Cooke (2001) uses social psychology to analyse the subtle ways in which groups make decisions to demonstrate the less visible ways that participation is used as an instrument of control and maintenance of the status quo or even further polarisation through the production of consensus. According to Mohan (2001), "the danger from a policy point of view is that the actions based on consensus may in fact further empower the powerful vested interests that manipulated the research in the first place" (2001, p.160). Finally, Mosse (2001) also argues that the main limitation of participatory methods is their potential to be used as a means of restricting and controlling the analysis of development policies: "Far from being continually challenged, prevailing preconceptions are confirmed, options narrowed, information flows into a project restricted, in a system that is increasingly controllable and closed" (Mosse, 2001, p.25).

2.3 Complementarities

Due to the limitations reviewed above, Cornwall (2000) and Cleaver (2001) argue that some recent applications of participatory approaches in the development mainstream fall short of their original intention. Participation is sometimes used merely as a tool for achieving pre-set objectives and not as a process to empower groups and individuals to take leadership, envision their futures, and improve their lives (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2004). Therefore Cleaver (2001) argues that participatory methods need to be complemented by a theory that explores the nature of people's lives and the relations between the multiple dimensions of well-being: "there is a need to conceptualize participatory approaches more broadly, for more complex analyses of the linkages between intervention, participation and empowerment" (2001, p.38). The capability approach contributes to participatory literature by providing this comprehensive and flexible theory focusing on what a good life should comprise while capturing multiple, complex and dynamic aspects of poverty.

While Hickey and Mohan (2004) also argue that "participation must be ideologically explicit and tied to a coherent theory of development" (2004, p.12), they propose radical citizenship as the theoretical framework that can safeguard participation from its potential populist application. Their recommendation also stresses the need to focus on agency and structure, thus revealing relations of power locally and underlying processes reproducing social injustices. The focus on citizenship takes a political perspective in participation to highlight the importance of political rights on the process of development. On one hand this is the strength of this approach, contributing for political change in the thinking and practice of development. On the other hand, it falls short on the proposition of an operational approach to development that can generate practices and policies beyond the political arena.

Therefore, by focusing on quality of life, the capability approach can potentially contribute to the limitation of the radical citizenship perspective in safeguarding participation. The capability approach focuses on agency and, as does the radical citizenship approach, questions the universalistic conceptualisation of development. As in other rights-based approaches, participation is seen as instrumental and intrinsic to the process of development. Participation is a means to the identification of functionings and understanding the processes in the capability space (see Frediani, 2010), and at the same time, it is an aspiration in itself. The success of participation is therefore not merely measured in relation to the efficiency to the implementation of a project or research, but most importantly, to the impact on agency of individuals and groups.

3. Participation within the capability approach literature

The concept of participation has been linked to the concept of capabilities from various angles (UNDP, 2002; Sen, 1999b; Dreze and Sen, 2002; Deneulin, 2009; and Crocker, 2008). To a lesser extent participatory methods have been linked to Amartya Sen's concepts, apart from Alkire (2002) and Crocker (2008). Therefore, there has been limited work on participation as a tool to the implementation of the capability approach for evaluative or planning purposes. This third section of the paper reviews discussion on the following issues related to participation in the capability approach literature that will be relevant to the elaboration of the participatory capabilities framework: participation when researching capabilities; and participation and adaptive preferences.

3.1 Participation and researching capabilities

Crocker (2006, 2008) and Alkire (2002) argue that Sen acknowledges participatory approaches as a principal process by which many evaluative issues may be resolved. As Sen (1999a) states:

"Political and civil rights, especially those related to the guaranteeing of open discussion, debate, criticism, and dissent, are central to the process

of generating informed and considered choices. These processes are crucial to the formation of values and priorities, and we cannot, in general, take preferences as given independently of public discussion, that is, irrespective of whether open interchange and debate are permitted or not" (1999, p.253).

Crocker (2006) develops the links between participation and the capability approach by arguing that the theory of deliberative democracy offers "a principled account of the processes groups employ to decide certain questions and form their values" (2006, p.4). Alkire (2007) proposes five mechanisms to identify capabilities and poverty dimensions and among them the role of participation is acknowledged (see Table 3.1).

Furthermore, Alkire (2002) argues that participatory approaches and Sen's capability approach have four major issues in common: they aim at obtaining outcomes that people value while empowering participants; they perceive the issue of 'who decides' as equally important to 'what is decided'; they recognise that the process might not lead to the best choice, but that discussion is an effective means of separating the 'better' from 'worse' choices; and reasoned deliberation is supported for consideration of advantage and interpersonal comparisons. Alkire (2002) also lists the benefits of applying

Table 3.1. Identifying Capabilities and Dimensions of Poverty. Source: Alkire, 2007, p.7

1- Existing data or convention	based on data or conventions that are taken to be authoritative, such as the Human Development Index
2- Normative Assumptions	based on informed guesses of researchers or transparent and justified use of normative assumptions such as Maslow or Nussbaum's
3- Public 'consensus'	based on a legitimate consensus-building processes and subject to participatory evaluations
4- On-going deliberative participatory processes	based on people's values captured through group discussions and participatory analysis
5- Empirical evidence regarding people's values	based on expert analysis of people's values from empirica

the capability approach through participatory methods: it lowers implementation costs; it generates greater technical success due to access to local information; it supports sustainability as communities continue improvements after the cessation of external funding; it encourages empowerment and self-determination as participants set their own objectives; and it is sensitive to local cultural values because people influence the initiatives in all stages.

3.2 Capability: participation and adaptive preferences

Alkire (2002) argues that Sen does not directly support participatory methods because he would have to incorporate a whole body of literature on the decision making process, therefore moving away from the economic discipline. Nevertheless, Comim and Teschl (2004) have contributed to Sen's capability approach by exploring the psychological aspects of the decision making process. As participatory approaches would involve the use of subjective information, people's ability to choose could be compromised by their adverse situations. Sen (1999a) has identified such a process as adaptive preference. This process would be especially relevant when studying communities under high levels of deprivation. Such argument of adaptive preference could be used to discredit qualitative information and justify the use of merely objective information, thus keeping the capability approach within the field of development economics to develop indicators of agency or quality of life. Nevertheless, Sen (2005) does mention a process to overcome adaptive preference based on the writings of Adam Smith ([1759] 1976) on moral reasoning:

We can never survey our own sentiments and motives, we can never form any judgement concerning them; unless we remove ourselves, as it were, from our own natural situation, and endeavour to view them as at a certain distance from us ([1759] 1976, p.110).

While Sen does not elaborate further on such process, Biggeri et al. (2006) apply a similar argument to overcome the process of adaptive preferences. According to Biggeri et al. (2006), evidence from his research on children shows that when asking them about their personal quality of life, children expanded upon issues that were immediate to their reality. However, when asked about the quality of life of children in general, respondents provided much broader comments, expanding upon all dimensions of quality of life identified by existent conventions on this, but also revealing new ones, such as "love and care".

Meanwhile Comim and Teschl (2004), when exploring different perspectives on adaptation, identify that in the subjective well-being literature the process of adaptation is always taking place, as people are always changing their perception of their own well-being. Comim and Teschl then argue that what constrains people's ability to evaluate their well-being is not the process of adaptation, but resignation. Furthermore, Comim and Teschl (2004) argue that the process of resignation takes place when there is a feeling of passivity, which leads to the sense of 'putting up with fate' and acceptance of the given order. Thus, communities that are under high levels of deprivation but where individuals are actively involved and engaged at the struggle for better living conditions would not be going through a process of resignation.

Furthermore, Clark (2009) recently questioned the existing evidence linking adaptation and lowering of aspirations. According to Clark (2009), people and communities do not systematically adapt to grinding poverty and deprivation. He continues by arguing that further research is still needed to understand processes of adaptation. Moreover, when adaptation occurs, it is normally raising aspirations, reflecting new possibilities. Therefore Clark concludes: "Crucially, raising aspirations to reflect previous achievements or meaningful social comparisons strengthens the case for listening to the poor. This is good news for development studies and those striving to develop a participatory version of the [capability approach]" (2009, p.33).

4. Participatory capabilities: the framework

Sen's writings show that on one hand he identifies public deliberation as a fundamental process to identify and evaluate capabilities, however, it also identifies limitations and challenges that such a process presents. As Alkire (2002) identifies, Sen does not propose a set of procedures or norms by which deliberation should take place to address the limitations articulated. Therefore, the motivation of this section of the article is to build on the work from Crocker (2008) and Alkire (2002) to contribute in building a framework that can facilitate the application and examination of participatory methods through a capability approach perspective.

By applying the capability approach conceptual framework to the examination of participation one would be able to assess individuals' and/or groups' choice, ability and opportunity to achieve a set of participatory goals associated to a certain deliberative exercise. Participatory capability is therefore the freedom of individuals/groups to achieve such dimensions of participation. This article will turn now to further elaboration of this framework for the evaluation of deliberation by: reviewing the background to the framework and past uses of the term; the explanation of its basic elements; and procedural considerations when applying the framework.

4.1 Background to the framework

In *Commodities and Capabilities*, Sen (1999c) analyses the use of commodities, arguing that they should be evaluated not merely according to what they *are*, but in terms of what they *do*. Therefore, the example of a bicycle is presented and Sen argues that by owning a bicycle one will not necessarily use it and transform it into an achieved functioning. There will be factors related to the environment, society, and one's personal capacity that will be shaping one's ability and opportunity to use such a commodity. Robeyns (2003) calls such elements "*conversion factors*", which affect the process of realising the things one values. Frediani (2010) articulates how such framework can be used in the field of development planning. On one hand it could be used for the investigation of a certain commodity and its functions to the achievement of dimensions of a

good life, however the same framework has also been applied to the investigation of a specific dimension of well-being, such as housing (Frediani, 2007). In this latter approach, one would first focus on the identification of dimensions of housing in a given context, and then evaluate how commodities (such as ones implemented by a housing programme) would be used for the achievement of identified housing aspirations. In such a case, "housing capabilities" are constituted by the combination of the choice, ability and opportunity of residents to achieve a certain set of prioritised housing aspirations. For example in a newly built housing estate programme where residents were relocated from nearby stilts, one could ask: what have been the different housing choices offered to residents? How are residents appropriating the space in the new estate in relation to the realisation of their housing aspirations? How are different conversion factors influencing the achievement of such aspirations in the new estate?

Using a similar process, the capability approach conceptual framework can be used in the assessment of a less tangible resource, such as one or a set of deliberation exercises. It is in such a context that the term "participatory capabilities" is used in this article. Such term has already been used by Sen (1999a) and expanded by Hodgett (2009) when investigating capabilities in Northern Ireland. Hodgett uses the term of "participatory capabilities" to examine the role of the voluntary sector in policy-making, in a context dominated by violence and distrust. Hodgett unpacks in detail the role of culture in the implementation of a European Union Community Infrastructure programme. This article aims to continue the exploration of such concept, by focusing on the process of applying the capability approach to the analysis of the type of participation implemented by a given programme. While being a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation, the framework also hopes to support the planning and elaboration of participatory initiatives. Thus, participatory capabilities are understood as people's choices, abilities and opportunities to engage in a process of participation that is driven by a goal of deepening democratic practices as well as individual/collective critical awareness. Participation through such perspective is recognised as both a means and an end.

5. Participatory capabilities: the dimensions of participation

As many authors have already argued, one of the major limitations of the application of participatory methods has been that participation has been considered merely an instrument in the acquisition of predetermined objectives. Participation has been often justified as a means to reduce costs of development programmes; once participation became too expensive, it is ruled out from the programme on financial grounds. Sen argues that participation not only has an instrumental value, but it is also intrinsic to a process of development:

“Democracy is a demanding system, and not just a mechanical condition (like majority rule) taken in isolation” (Sen, 1999b, pp. 9-10).

In similar lines, Friedmann (1992) also argues that participation needs to be taken as an end in itself, contributing to a plan of realising human rights, civic rights and human flourishing. Therefore participation is embedded in

a plan of empowerment that needs to go beyond one's back yard, and instead contribute to a process of institutional change. Participation as an end needs to move away from the trap of localism and punctual change by being part of a strategic plan towards a process of democratising democracy, as argued by Santos (2005).

Friedmann (1992), Santos (2005) and other authors from the deliberative democracy literature argue that to be transformative, the process of participation needs to account for a certain set of normative procedural characteristics. If participation is understood as an end in itself, then dimensions of participation would have to be uncovered to distinguish a transformative process of deliberation from one that perpetuates tyrannies. By applying the capability approach to the examination of participation, one is faced with a similar challenge to the application of the capability approach in the examination of quality of life: should such dimensions be identified

Table 5.1. Defining dimensions of participation. Duraiappah et al. (2005: 4)

Dimension	Definition
Inclusion	Inclusion of all people, or representatives of all groups who will be affected by the results of a decision or a process, such as a development project.
Equal Partnership	Equal partnership means recognizing that every person has skill, ability and initiative and has equal right to participate in the process regardless of their status.
Transparency	All participants must help to create a climate conducive to open communication and building dialogue.
Sharing Power	Authority and power must be balanced evenly between all stakeholders to avoid the domination of one party.
Sharing Responsibility	Similarly, all stakeholders have equal responsibility for decisions that are made, and each should have clear responsibilities within each process.
Empowerment	Participants with special skills should be encouraged to take responsibility for tasks within their specialty, but should also encourage others to also be involved to promote mutual learning and empowerment.
Cooperation	Cooperation is very important; sharing everybody's strength reduces everybody's weaknesses.

in the specific context where the participatory exercises are taking place, or should it be based on international consensus on what it should be obtaining?

Duraiappah et al. (2005) propose a useful list of principles of participation which can guide the deliberative process (see Figure 5.1 for definitions). Figure 5.2 illustrates how the capability approach framework could use such dimensions to assess a deliberative process. However, in Duraiappah et al. (2005) there is no discussion on how these principles came about. Meanwhile Crocker (2008) does engage in such discussion by making the links between deliberative democracy and Sen's work to generate a "deliberative ideal of local and participatory development". Crocker identifies that Dreze and Sen (2002) argue that the processes of public reasoning need to be guided by democratic ideals, institutions and practice. While such elements are examining the democratic process as a whole, it is possible to apply them in the context of local and participatory development. This article argues that it is possible to clarify the three elements of deliberation, leaving room for them to be further elaborated and rooted in the specific context where the deliberation process is being implemented.

freedom of expression, accountability and equitable distribution of power. Therefore, democratic ideals are mostly examining relations of **power within** the processes of participation. Crocker (2008) proposes three deliberative principles that should regulate collectively reasoned agreements: reciprocity, publicity and accountability. Reciprocity calls for a process that allows participants to understand and engage critically with each others' point of views. Publicity is related to the transparency of the process, and arguing that every member should be free to engage. Furthermore, such freedom should also be supported by the provision of rich information contributing to rational choices. Accountability reinforces the idea that all participants should be accountable for all, those present in the meeting of deliberation and those that might have elected them.

Alkire (2002) also identifies the importance of revealing the relations of power within the participatory exercise, and argues for an active engagement of the facilitator in addressing such issues with a series of procedural recommendations (i.e. being aware of the location of the meeting and encouraging quieter persons to speak more and dominant persons to speak less).

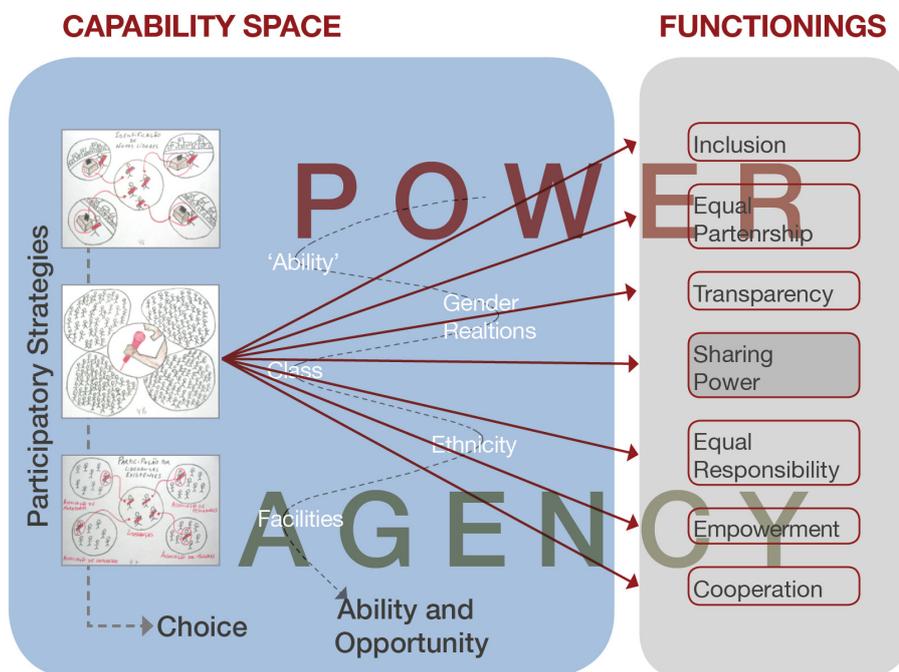
5.1 Democratic ideals

The democratic ideals elaborated by Dreze and Sen (2002) are mostly concerned with internal procedures of a deliberative process. They call for elements such as

5.2 Democratic institutions

As argued by Friedmann (1992) and Santos (2005), Dreze and Sen (2002) also argue the importance of deliberation to be embedded in institutional change.

Figure 5.1. Applying the capability approach to assess participation. Source: Compiled by author



Democratic institutions are related to a longer term project of deepening democracy, and locally based participatory projects need to be linked to such a plan if it is to have sustained and wider impact. If benefits of a certain participatory initiative are to be scaled up, it needs to be working towards institutional change. Therefore, such element of participation is mostly related to deliberation's **power to** mainstream and institutionalise change.

With such objective, Levy (1996) provides a detailed and comprehensive account of the processes involved in mainstreaming change through a framework called "the web of institutionalization". Levy's web is exploring precisely the mechanisms to "institutionalize or sustain change related to new perspectives in the practices of governments and other organisations involved in the development process" (1996, p.1). By clarifying the opportunities and threats for generating sustained change, Levy also aims to clarify the "room for manoeuvre" of agents, individuals and organisations in such processes of change.

This type of institutional analysis would be crucial in contributing to the assessment of the participatory capabilities of individuals and groups engaging in a deliberative process.

5.3 Democratic practice

The third democratic element identified by Dreze and Sen (2002) is related to the practice of deliberation. Through the exercise of participation, citizens would not only benefit from a plan of democratisation, but also by their continuous engagement in creating democratic

opportunities. The practice of democracy is about individuals' and groups' **power with** each other generated by a process of deliberation. As Crocker (2008) argues, such "power with" could lead to the evaluation of freedoms, collective action and the collective construction of common values.

The element of democratic practice brings to light the importance of enhancing, through the participatory exercise, the network among grassroots organisations. Through the expansion of horizontal networks and solidarity among grassroots organisations, experiences can be shared, knowledge transferred and alliances to challenge structural causes of poverty strengthened. Within such project, there is a need to continuously address the elements of diversity within the unity. As Friedmann argues: "the unity of civil society is to be found in its diversity" (1992, p.161). It is exactly in such tension between togetherness and difference within social movements that Escobar (2008) has been making fundamental contributions in the field of development. Escobar (2008) illustrates how the network among different social movements in the Colombian Pacific region has led to the formation of concepts that can explain their commonalities and differences while generating collective intent to challenge structural causes of inequality.

The democratic ideals, institutions and practice as expanded here are proposed as a broader set of principles to elicit specific dimensions of participation applied in deliberation exercises. While not being overly specific, this paper supports the idea that participatory exercises, in order to contribute to a wider plan of expansion of capabilities, need to engage in the three dimensions of power identified: power within, power to, and power with.

6. Participatory capabilities: procedural considerations

This paper will now turn to the examination of some procedural considerations when applying participatory methods through the capability approach. The objective is to identify a certain set of procedures that can facilitate the application of the participatory capabilities framework. This chapter highlights the links between participatory and action learning exercises and how such links can contribute to the investigation of participatory capabilities. Then it will further complement the procedural recommendations with considerations from Alkire (2002) and Crocker (2008) on the relation between values and participation.

6.1 Action learning and participation: an agency oriented approach

Following the Freirian tradition, participation from a capability perspective must focus on the process of sharing understandings and exerting agency. Participation is about questioning the nature of knowledge, facilitating collaborative learning and encouraging action. Therefore, participation is a means to enhance the ability of individuals and groups to constructively act and achieve change. Action learning¹ and participatory action research literature precisely examines how the process of collaborative learning can be transformed into a process of change.

Four basic stages are proposed in McGill and Beaty (1992) to facilitate the process of action learning¹:

1. Experience: a catalyst practical activity is recommended to start the process of *observing* and *reflecting* on a certain topic;
2. Understanding: the catalyst activity encourages people to *learn with* and *from* each other with the objective to *form* and *reform* participants' understanding of reality;
3. Planning: from diagnosing, participants are encouraged to *formulate strategies* to influence the situation examined;
4. Action: *trying out* the plan and starting again the process of action learning becomes the link to generate the spiral learning and action curve which aims to facilitate conscious awareness and enhance individuals' and collective agency.

Fals Borda (1987) also emphasises the importance of reflection as a precursor for effective action by emphasising

the role of re-forming understandings to break from structural conditions of inequalities:

"The elimination of exploitative patterns at the material or infrastructural level of a society does not assure, by itself, that the general system of exploitation has been destroyed...it becomes necessary to eliminate also the relationship governing the production of knowledge, production which tends to give ideological support to injustice, oppression and the destructive forces which characterize the modern world"(Fals Borda, 1987, p.337).

Therefore, Fals Borda (1985) proposes an emancipatory process which includes: *i) collective research*: where data is collected and systematised not only individually but also collectively in forms of meetings or in a group basis. Such process would allow data and findings to be corrected, shared and verified in a group basis; *ii) critical recovery of history*: through exercises to unpack collective memory, the timeline of a certain locality can be recovered with the objective of increasing awareness to the causes of injustices being perpetuated; *iii) valuing and applying folk culture*: through activities rooted in local practices (such as drama, music, sports, storytelling, etc.), multiple values frequently ignored can be expressed and captured to guide the participatory process; and *iv) production and diffusion of new knowledge*: the findings and experiences can then be disseminated by all participants based on their ability and opportunity to do so.

Participation as a means is understood here as the overlapping space between *learning* and *action* in locally based initiatives. The procedural considerations outlined above by Fals Borda (1985, 1987) and McGill and Beaty (1992) aim at clarifying how such process can take place in a manner that can address adaptive preference, while supporting democratic ideals, institutions and practices.

6.2 Including values in participatory exercises

Alkire (2002) and Crocker (2008) recognise the importance of facilitating action from participatory exercises. For action to take place, they argue that a collective intent should be reached in a form of an agreement on a concrete set of policies. They also argue that discussions

need to be revealing values. In other words, public reasoning is not only about agreeing on a set of recommendations, but it is about sharing and deconstructing people's motivations and values related to the topic discussed.

Through participatory exercises values can be examined in many ways. Alkire (2002) suggests a mechanism where facilitators do not prescribe, but also do not start the deliberation process with a clean slate. Alkire (2002) proposes a list of dimensions that can serve as stimulus for discussions, eliciting reflection on the "basic reasons for acting": life/health/security; knowledge; work/play; beauty/environment; self-integration/inner peace; religion; empowerment. Such dimensions are seen as the primary colours of values, as further values could emerge out of different combinations of these "basic reasons for acting".

Importantly, Crocker (2008) argues that while revealing values, collective intent does not need to be based on these values, but on policies. People might agree on a

specific policy recommendation, but they might have different reasons to value them. "The aim is to agree on, or fashion together, not beliefs about the world or convictions about ultimate values but a plan or policy (end plus means) about which all (or most) can agree and on which all can act in order to realize it" (2008, pp.321-322).

This article recommends a procedure based on Alkire (2002) and Crocker's (2008) reflections, by arguing that the process of participation needs a preliminary stage on the discussion of values, afterwards proceeding towards the elaboration of specific collective intent in relation to concrete actions/policies. The stage of unpacking values would be crucial to generate the collaborative learning process, and re-framing the diagnosis of established problematic. By explicitly addressing values, the link between the specific and the structural can be explored. Finally, such collective discussion can also facilitate the resolution of conflicts, as understanding about the nature of disagreements can be a starting point in finding spaces of agreement.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. Such procedural considerations are also existent in other participatory literature, such as action planning, participatory action learning, and participatory research methods.

7. Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction of this article, the notion and practice of participation is at the crux of development debates. The exploration of the linkages between the capability approach and participatory methods raises and addresses important debates on collective action, diversity and agency, as well as mechanisms to institutionalise change. This article elaborates on the concept of participatory capabilities, as a process to contribute to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of participatory exercises. The objective of the paper is to contribute to the discussions on the procedures to implement the concepts of capability approach through deliberative mechanisms.

Participation, if understood not merely as a means, but also as an end in itself, will need to be addressed in relation to a certain set of principles, in other words, dimensions of participation. In this sense, deliberation exercises can be planned and evaluated according to individuals' and groups' choice, ability and opportunity to pursue such dimensions of participation. This article argues that from Dreze and Sen (2002) it is possible to draw three elements from which the dimensions of participation can be elicited: democratic ideals, institutions and practices. This article also recommends some procedural considerations:

1. participation needs to be applied in the context of collaborative learning;
2. focused on the generation of collective intent and action;

3. which follows an explicit discussion on values and underlying motivations.

This application incorporates an analysis of power relations to the capability approach and application of participatory methods to stress the importance of revealing the underlying processes of exclusion. Therefore, development practitioners, when applying such approaches, are led to use participatory methods to contribute to the understanding of local but also structural patterns impacting policies and projects.

The approach based on a set of participatory dimensions ensures that the various stakeholders are engaging with participatory methods reflexively, linking local patterns as causes but also manifestations of wider processes of inequalities. In this sense, the capability approach hopes to provide a framework that safeguards participation through a multidimensional concept of development, adapting to local contexts, unfolding power relations, addressing local patterns and challenging structural processes.

The application of the participatory capabilities framework in processes of research or policy and planning opens up new sources of information as well as contributing toward collective action, strengthening social networks and encouraging individual and collective agency. If one's freedom is also shaped by one's awareness of what is possible to do and achieve, the application of the capability approach through participatory approaches is about truly understanding and practicing *development as freedom*.

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Pelopincho & Capability
Space: developing
people and homes in
a Paraguayan slum

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1. Introduction

Participation of community members in development projects has the potential to reinforce structural inequalities (Cooke and Kothari, 2001) or to transform communities by empowering people (Hickey and Mohan, 2004). The capability approach's emphasis on empowerment through expanding capabilities can be applied to evaluate development projects that seek a degree of community participation. This paper uses the concept of 'capability space' developed by Frediani and Boano

(2012) to determine the transformation potential of a participatory housing project in Paraguay. First, some background is given of the project's context and the programme's perspective on urban upgrading and community development. Then, the concept of capability space is introduced and the project's participatory structure and outcomes are analysed, finding that the extent of empowerment through participation in the project varied in different stages of the upgrading process.

2. Context and background

Paraguay has a fragmented history of democratic citizen participation, due in large part to its recent past of dictatorship and social repression, which came to an end in 1989 with the overthrow of President Stroessner's regime. Since then, Paraguay's political system has been marked by corruption, prebendalism, clientelism, and inefficiency. A UNDP report (2003) points towards Paraguay's low election turn out and its rank as the Latin American country with the lowest satisfaction rate with democracy, as a reflection on citizens' disenchantment with the current political system. Yet, with a few exceptions, this has not been offset by a rise in citizen-led initiatives with political agendas. The level of mistrust between different groups of people is high (Rubio and Marin, 2000) and only 15% of Paraguayans actively take part in organisations of all kinds, although participation in religious organisations is the most common (UNDP, 2003).

Paraguay has experienced increasing levels of poverty and inequality, as well as a fast rate of urbanisation, especially in the capital city, Asunción. Many of those who migrate are youths from rural areas who informally settle on marginal lands around the city, especially on flood plains. Rubio and Marin (2000) point out that these newcomers are from varied backgrounds, and many have little experience in city living, making it all the more difficult for them to organise collectively to secure basic elements of well-being. Often *caudillos*, or local strongmen, take advantage of the low status and insecurity of residents in informal settlements to establish local power structures that act as a further barrier to escaping poverty for many residents (Rubio and Marin, 2000). Nevertheless, neighbourhood commis-

sions are active in some areas of Asunción and have achieved collective goals such as repairing streets, and thus engaging in a relationship of co-production with city government in order to provide needed services (Mitlin, 2008), as well as more politically-charged initiatives such as defending access to local public spaces (Hansen, 2009). The neighbourhood commissions are included in Asunción's municipal framework (Rubio and Marin, 2000), providing a formally recognised way for urban citizens to participate in local politics, although this tool is not used as widely as it could be.

Pelopincho is a neighbourhood in downtown Asunción, Paraguay, located in one of the city's most notorious slums on the edge of the Paraguay river. In 1999 a fire destroyed the entire neighbourhood, 400 houses made of cardboard, tin, and wood, leaving the 1,700 residents with nothing but the clothes on their backs and the few items they were able to rescue (UNDP, 2003). A religious organisation, Obras Sociales Salesianas (OSS), took the opportunity to organise the rebuilding of the neighbourhood with stronger materials and using the process of *"ayuda mutua"* or mutual help, that it had developed over several years of work in previous housing projects with low-income communities. The logic behind *ayuda mutua* was that through the process of building the houses themselves in teams, the residents would gain the community organisation skills to address the endemic poverty in their neighbourhood. OSS's programme thus challenged ingrained perceptions of what were reasonable expectations for slum dwellers and provided a framework for communities to conceive and construct a better future through democratic and participatory processes.

3. *Ayuda mutua* mechanism

In traditional *ayuda mutua* projects led by the OSS, families were selected based on their perceived willingness to work hard to build their houses and to cooperate with their neighbours do the same. The project managers note that while many families are interested in the idea of a brand new, solidly-built home, many are also not willing to go the lengths to build it themselves or get involved in the participatory process, or believe that the scheme is not feasible, or even a trick. In Pelopincho, there was not such a rigorous selection of participants as in other *ayuda mutua* projects, as virtually everyone whose house had burned was entitled to participate. From the point of view of one manager, this level of inclusion made the Pelopincho project unique and more worthwhile (Salomon, 2013).

The *ayuda mutua* programme creates teams of residents to build a block of houses where they will eventually live, ensuring that virtually everyone contributes sweat labour and that all houses receive the same quality of work. A technical team, directed by an engineer, designs and oversees the construction process, disseminating information to residents via an elected leader from each group. Other outside professionals and social workers help make sure that problems that arise between community members are solved fairly and everyone contributes their expected quota of work. One of their major roles is to help the residents establish a democratic assembly and subsequently a neighbourhood commission that gradually takes on more responsibility in identifying issues in the community, such as recreation, health, and education, and finding solutions to them (Rubio and Marin, 2000).

As the *ayuda mutua* theory goes, residents need to practice democratic and participatory community management processes in order to become convinced of the benefits and to build up an internal system to carry on once the project managers are no longer there. OSS provides a framework for the community to build up self-management skills, not giving them free rein straight from the beginning. The technical team sets deadlines for the phases of construction, for example, but individuals within the community have certain responsibilities and leadership roles. The neighbours also form groups to tackle community needs including health, education, and spirituality and in this way learn leadership and organisational skills. OSS recognises that it takes time for communities to learn how to self-govern in a participatory way and to believe in this system, especially in Paraguay, where the local urban culture itself can be a barrier to participatory governance (Rubio and Mario, 2000). The project managers note that in the initial stages of *ayuda mutua* projects, relations in the assembly and neighbourhood commission are fragile and that previous power structures are hard to break. However, as the neighbours experience a more democratic exchange of ideas during the assemblies and see real results as the project advances, their confidence in themselves and in the participatory way of doing things takes root (ibid). The idea is that by the time the homes are completed, community members have moulded a new local culture for themselves, one in which they rely on each other, accept different opinions, and are proactive.

4. Expanding the capability space

The *ayuda mutua* philosophy shares some key underlying concepts with the capability approach. It emphasises a multi-dimensional understanding of poverty and well-being (including meeting material needs, entertaining aspirations for the future, feeling part of a community) and promotes agency through engagement in a democratic system. It also appears to recognise the multiple ‘functionings’ of a home as not just a shelter, but as a collection of valued capabilities for the user (Frediani, 2008). The extent to which *ayuda mutua* contributes to expanding the freedoms of well-being and agency will be revealed throughout the rest of this analysis.

A well-known debate within the capability approach theory hinges on the validity of certain values guiding a capability-sensitive or participatory project. Some critical thinkers take issue with super-imposing values that haven't been deliberated upon by the community in a participatory project (Cooke & Kothari, 2001), yet sometimes it is impossible to use participatory methods to get valid results (Alkire, 2007) because of the distortions of power that exist in some settings. Nussbaum (*ibid*) defends a list of basic ‘universal’ capabilities that everyone, regardless of cultural or personal values, needs in order to lead a valued life, and this perspective appears more salient in OSS's work. It does not seem that the slum dwellers were consulted or asked to draw up a list of things they valued for a home and community prior to starting the project. Instead, the OSS invoked ‘universal’ values based on Christian faith and their previous work with marginalised communities (Rubin and Marin, 2000). Paraguay is almost entirely Christian, and project values such as solidarity and compassion may have enjoyed an automatic buy-in from the Pelopincho community; nevertheless, other values based in, for example, Pelopincho's position of marginality may have remained buried for the lack of a deliberative process to identify project values from the beginning. OSS recognised that barriers such as *caudillismo*, mistrust, and fatalistic mindsets in the settlements it worked with could inhibit fair participation. Nevertheless, this falls short of Alkire's ideal of a community's ability to “critically examine or challenge [the values] on an on-going basis and to have them changed if they fall short” (Alkire, 2007, p.3).

The OSS managers link the construction of homes with the development of community and individual capacities, giving the project a spatial dimension that transcends the physical production of houses. This is the

most interesting aspect of the Pelopincho project in terms of evaluating it with a capability approach lens. According to Frediani and Boano, the capability approach provides the space to connect the design of a product to the processes that made it (Frediani and Boano, 2012, p.204) through the concept of ‘capability space’ for participatory design. The rest of this paper analyses the *ayuda mutua* system with regards to ‘capability space’ to assess the extent to which participation in the Pelopincho project contributed to increased capabilities for the residents.

In the concept of capability space, Frediani and Boano (2012) suggest process freedom and product freedom as two manifestations of how people can pursue their values within participatory design projects. Process freedom is concerned with peoples' ability to shape the rules of engagement while product freedom addresses their ability to determine the design outcome. Frediani and Boano identify choice, ability, and opportunity as indicators of process and product freedom at increasing scales of socio-political structure.

Regarding process **choice**, in the normal *ayuda mutua* system, it seems that participants had little choice in *how* to participate, although by choosing to join to the programme or not, they could choose *whether* to participate. However, in Pelopincho, those who wanted the benefits of rebuilding their homes had to participate in the way the project was designed. The aforementioned unique inclusiveness of the project – everyone who lived there at the time of the fire could participate – seems to have been counterbalanced by the fact that since many residents were destitute before the fire and lost the little they had, the choice whether to participate may not have been a real choice after all. In the construction, everybody had a strict sweat quota controlled by timecards, and those who did not work were not allowed to continue in the project (Cabrera, 2013). Participants decided whether they worked morning, afternoon, or night shifts, but the construction phases had deadlines that were determined by the management (*ibid*). The teams of families could choose their representatives to meet with the technical team, but the system of consultation and direction-giving was not decided upon with the residents, but by the project managers ahead of time. The neighbours helped organise and participated in a census to determine who had lived in Pelopincho prior to the fire (Salomon, 2013) but it is not clear how and by whom decisions were made

based on the results. Nevertheless, from the project's own stated methodology, there was never any intention to make the initial stages of the project have much choice to them anyway; these stages were viewed as building blocks to get to a state of participation and community self-management.

In terms of **ability** in the process, or how the beneficiaries were able to generate collective action initiatives and engage in the process of deliberation, the results are also mixed. During the project, neighbours had elected twelve heads of household to serve on the neighbourhood commission (Cabrera, 2013) and formed smaller groups to tackle identified problems. These bodies continue, and, as the technical manager described it, constitute a “gymnasium of participation and community spirit which the people use to confront other urgent problems such as security and early education” (UNDP, 2003). As was intended by the creators of the *ayuda mutua* system, the ability of the people to form collective actions grew into fruition. It is not clear, however, whether everyone in the community has this ability, or whether some residents call all the shots. To really understand how much ability of determining processes, both during and after the project, people in Pelopincho have acquired, there needs more information on the politics of the neighbourhood commission and how the community deals with conflict and divergent opinions.

The **opportunity** in the design process refers to the greater societal factors that would influence the scope of the residents' collective actions and the roles they can play in producing change. Pelopincho residents were coached along as they became organised as a neighbourhood commission and its subgroups (Salomon, 2013), and the idea was that as these organisations matured, residents would have increased confidence in their change-making abilities, metamorphosing from informants in the process to leading actors (Rubio and Marin, 2000). However, the scope of the neighbourhood commission is likely to be limited in nature, since neighbourhood commissions all across Asunción are part of the same municipal system that regulates and audits them (ibid). An interview with a former president of the neighbourhood commission revealed that currently, one of its main initiatives is to get everyone to pay their electricity bills (Cabrera, 2013). This is not to say that the Pelopincho commission could not evolve into a more powerful force among several more politically engaged neighbourhood commissions in Asunción, but, in the OSS project in Pelopincho, it appears that the end goal was to empower residents to bring about tangible benefits within the community without necessarily engaging in meaningful citizen participation at the city-wide level.

In terms of product **choice** in Pelopincho, the design and layout of the buildings were decided by the technical team and the users did not have the chance to influence them

(Salomon, 2013). As with process choice, the project management made the majority of early decisions, and as the project progressed the participants were given more say. The residents decided that the community needed a kindergarten and a health centre (UNDP, 2003), and these were built, but it is unlikely that the residents deliberated upon different design possibilities. From the available information and judging from the way the houses were designed, the same engineers probably designed these community buildings without much input from the residents.

The residents' **ability** to appropriate the new design interventions is more fertile ground for participation. This refers to how the residents use the buildings to meet their needs and how they maintain or improve them. A visit to Pelopincho revealed that many residents have customised their homes, adding balconies, extra wings, and opening shops on the ground floor, and redecorating them with colours and plants (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2). One young mother spoke about her desire to encase her back patio, where the kitchen is located, and to build another bedroom on top, but, having inherited the home from her mother, she is not sure her relatives will let her keep the house. Although the land is owned by the municipality (Salomon, 2013), secure house tenure is an issue that affects residents' ability to appropriate the product. Other indicators of ability could include, for example, how residents regulate expanding buildings to incorporate other uses or family members, or how they negotiate neighbourhood services such as waste disposal. Frediani and Boano (2012) point out that the capability space concept puts a lot of value in the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of the built environment once produced. The residents' ability to shape the product even after it has been built determines how they view it and interact with it as a finished, but changing, product. At the inauguration, Pelopincho residents professed that the new houses were a “dream come true” and that they represented a huge improvement in Pelopincho's dignity (UNDP, 2003). Yet in the years that followed, there is opposing evidence as to whether this remained the case, as discussed later in this section, and this may have to do with the residents' ability to appropriate the new space.

Product **opportunity** in the capability space framework refers to the economic and social environment that affects citizens' ability to obtain or achieve the built environment elements they value. For Pelopincho, is Asunción's environment conducive to slum-dwellers' achieving their housing aspirations? That question goes beyond the scope of this essay, but in short, the answer appears to be ‘no’. Nevertheless, OSS did exist, and the necessary local government authorities were on board for this (and other *ayuda mutua* projects) to be realised¹. This should not be interpreted as an enabling context, however – if OSS had not been there, the residents would have probably been on their own. An indicator of whether the Pelopincho project

Figure 4.1. Houses are appropriated by users (foreground is original house). Source: author



Figure 4.2. Two homes converted to a store (white). Source: author



Figure 4.3. Trash on streets. Source: author



was able to improve product opportunity would be if the Pelopincho residents, and others following their example, could use their new skills to challenge the government to provide better housing possibilities for the rest of the urban poor, or whether their improved housing situation could become instrumental to achieving further capabilities. The Pelopincho project is unique in Asuncion's housing landscape because it was financed and supported by the municipality (through political approval and lending the land) as well as the Spanish crown (which financed the construction costs). This had a huge impact on the Pelopincho community's freedom to attain solidly built homes and a greater degree of tenure security, but does not translate to greater freedoms for other similarly disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Asuncion. Nevertheless, the Pelopincho project could set a precedent for a more socially-inclusive housing policy, but this would likely depend on advocacy and coalition-building by those who have already benefitted from the project, as well as from supporters at higher levels of municipal influence.

The analysis of process and product freedom points to a growing set of capabilities that the project helped bring about through a participatory process. Pelopincho residents learned and were coached in how to manage a democratic assembly and how to prioritise and organise community projects that could improve their standard of living. This experience, in addition to the psychological resources of belonging to and trusting in a community that can achieve things, enhances their capability to engage more meaningfully in wider urban processes, whether or not this becomes a functioning. Over the course of the project several barriers, such as mistrust, lack of confidence, and certainly lack of material resources, which had previously restricted residents' 'capability space', were reduced and their freedoms and capability for agency were increased.

However, rebuilding and community organising has not eradicated Pelopincho's problems. A quick look in Paraguay's leading newspapers reveals that there are still fires, drug trafficking, assaults, and gang activity in Pelopincho (ABC Color 2009; 2012a; 2012b; 2012c). This information suggests that Pelopincho's community management system is not producing tangible solutions to community issues to the extent that was envisioned at the start of the project, and that there were further barriers that were not addressed in the way the project was conceived and carried out. Nevertheless, during a visit to the neighbourhood, several residents claimed that they acknowledged the dangers still present, but liked their neighbourhood and they felt organised and united with each other.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Asunción's mayor at the time of the fire and throughout the project was a rare opposition (Liberal) leader. There was significant

pushback and dragging of feet from the national government, which was controlled by the incumbent Colorado party (Salomon, 2012).

5. Conclusion

The concept of 'capability space' is useful for assessing Pelopincho and similar projects because it frames improvements in residents' agency and well-being across the spatial and temporal scales of choice, ability, and opportunity to achieve valued outcomes in their built environment. By analysing people's capabilities and the barriers they face in developing capabilities on each of these levels, it is possible to come to a more nuanced understanding of the political and social context which conditions how people go about pursuing the 'good life'. While the Pelopincho project seems to have succeeded according to its own definition of participatory design, there is still scope to enhance meaningful participation and increase capabilities in projects like Pelopincho if a capability space lens is used to design and evaluate the endeavour. The project certainly improved some aspects of well-being through tangible improvements in housing, community infrastructure, and some social services, and it improved capabilities to undertake collective action on a neighbourhood level. Yet it did not conceive of participation as transformation (Hickey & Mohan, 2005) and thus did not address the underlying forces which produced a precarious slum like Pelopincho in the first place and which continue to obstruct poor and marginalised people in Asuncion from expanding their set of capabilities.

This essay contributes to the growing body of literature that demonstrates how the capability approach can be operationalised in development contexts. In particular, the Pelopincho case study shows how participatory projects can be evaluated on a wide range of capabilities and for product- and process-related outcomes. Additionally, the case study brings up a pertinent issue related to the capability approach's emphasis on agency. Can limiting a person or group's agency at one point serve to increase their agency and capabilities later on? This strategy was adopted by OSS, limiting the choices participants had in the project's initial stages in order to have them practice a particular form of community organisation that would become a tool for collective action in the future. This concern is similar to the one of adaptive preferences, where very low expectations for life can limit one's aspirations and desired functionings. This point should be further investigated in more comprehensive participatory design evaluations that apply the capability approach.

This essay is limited in its analytical scope by the relatively few sources documenting the Pelopincho project and by the many years which passed until the time of writing. However, by unpacking Pelopincho's capability space, this essay challenges future participatory housing projects to strive for housing solutions that take into account the wide range of capabilities that can be enhanced through participatory design.

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DPU WORKING PAPERS
SPECIAL ISSUE

From tyranny to capability?
Exploring the potential of
the capability approach
in participatory designed
processes

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1. Frame for analysis

“The idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you” (Arnstein, 1969, p.216).

This aphorism helps to open a wide reflection on the role of participation, its potential and threats. It refers not only to the positive impact that participation might have, but also to its possible counter effects. The metaphor points to a superficial cleansing of the conscience, an intervention that does not eradicate the problem altogether, in the way spinach might sporadically be eaten to cleanse the body of an unhealthy lifestyle. It means that participatory processes might be used, because of their ‘goodness,’ in a manipulative way. By proclaiming participation, I legitimise my intervention. The risk is that it becomes an antidote for societal ailments such as inequalities and oppression, but does not cure them. In community development and upgrading schemes, participatory mechanisms often risk reinforcing power unbalances and the status quo, facilitating what Cooke and Kothari define as “tyranny,” an “illegitimate and/or unjust exercise of power” (2001, p.4).

Their research attempts to move away from traditional interdisciplinary critiques of participatory approaches that focus on methodological improvements and take the overall benefit of participation for granted. Rather, Cooke and Kothari question and contest the legitimacy of participatory approaches’ origins, role, and accepted methods. The foundation of this school of thought is based on the recognition of the Foucauldian manifestation of power that is reinforced and challenged through participation. For theorists of this perspective, it is fundamental to avoid the ‘tyranny of technique’ and define a framework for participation that is critical to power and political structures and open to social change (Clever, 2001), and that rediscovers and reinterprets its lost radical meaning (Mohan, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2005).

This paper starts by investigating what Cooke and Kothari define as the “tyranny of decision making and control” where the risk is that in participatory processes “facilitators override existing legitimate decision-making process” (2001, p.8). Among the different ways in which participation might be conceived, the research here focuses on the bases of participatory processes that are ‘designed’ and ‘owned’ by external agents in developing programmes and initiatives. In the paper the term ‘external agent’ refers not only to individual facilitators

and practitioners but to all those stakeholders, such as public or private institutions at various scales, which, with different levels of interest, might lead or influence the participation of a specific group of people (that simplistically is usually referred to as ‘the community’) in a defined project or initiative.

Here the meaning of ‘design’ goes beyond the creation of a final output, focussing rather on the bivalent act of shaping the process of participatory initiatives: ‘process of design’ and the ‘design of the process.’ In other words, design is about the dynamics that move the wires behind the stage: who is the participatory process designed by, what is it designed for, and how? Is it just a process to reach a predefined goal or can it have transformative effects with empowerment for the people involved?

The capability approach has often been seen as an avenue to achieve social transformation and peoples’ empowerment. From this basis, several authors from different perspectives have tried to link participation and design to the capability approach. According to Frediani (n.d.), the capability approach has the potential, despite some challenges, to safeguard participation from the criticisms of the ‘tyranny’ theorists. This paper aims to investigate, through the lens of the capability approach, how and if participatory design-ed processes might address long-term changes and community engagement, ushering in transformation rather than enhancing embedded political and power structures. The paper will verify whether the theory of the capability approach addresses the issues raised by the tyranny prospectus and whether applications of the capability approach confirm the benefits claimed by its theory.

Chapter 2 highlights how the capability approach theory might have a transformative capacity when linked to participation. The first part analyses the work of theorists that have found links between participation and capabilities imbedded in theories of democracy. The second part explores how the concept of design has been developed within the capability approach, and how this might strengthen the participatory processes. Having laid this theoretical foundation, Chapter 3 identifies the gaps in the capability approach that need to be addressed in order to achieve its redeeming potential for participation. These gaps are conveyed through two interconnected key lenses of analysis: 1) the role of pol-

icy and institutions, and 2) the position of practitioners. The intent is to reflect on the position of these external agents that have the power of starting, implementing and influencing participatory interventions – essentially to inquire into the root of a 'designed' participatory 'design' process, in this way unpacking the question posed by Cooke and Kothari (2001) of whether participation can be redeemed or has to be abandoned.

This analysis is further supported through case studies that highlight the position and gaps in the capability approach theory and its application in participatory

processes. It emerges in conclusion that the capability approach does not guarantee the eradication of tyranny from participation, despite its benefits in improving the process of participation. Moreover, the conclusion highlights the risk of enhancing mistrust of participation, especially if the radically transformative potential of the capability approach is not fully conveyed through its application.

Ultimately, it is suggested for further research that the 'tyrannical' criticisms of participation might identify core elements for strengthening the capability approach.

2. Theoretical introductions: Why the capability approach in design and participation?

The following chapter highlights why, according to various authors, the capability approach can strengthen participatory design processes and vice versa. The review targets two key elements of analysis: democracy theories and the meaning of participation in the capability approach literature; and the role of design in participatory processes and the capability approach. This investigation lays the groundwork for the analysis, in the subsequent chapter, around the implications of the ‘tyrannical’ threat in participation.

2.1. People's participation: Democracy theories in the capabilities approach

In the capability approach framework, every human being is recognised as a fundamental agent for the achievement of his or her own envisioned functioning and well-being. Understanding the different ideas of democracy in the capability approach is important for the analysis of the legitimacy, potential, and effectiveness of participatory mechanisms and people’s role in decision-making processes. Indeed, democracy theories are at the root of every participatory process, hence, a first step is to explore which type of democracy has been linked to the capability approach discourse by various theorists, with what effectiveness and why.

Crocker (2003; 2006) finds the concept of deliberative democracy as the natural extension of Sen’s idea of public discussion and democratic decision-making as the congenital process to investigate, materialise and implement the capability approach. Crocker underlines the transformative potential of a deeper democratic system that supports cooperation and confrontation among group members, distinguishing this from traditions that “merely aggregate preferences” (2006, p.329).

The deliberative democracy theory, according to Habermas (1962), is based on the recognition of equal status among all participants, who share the same representative weight and freedom of speech in an equal and impartial arena. In democratic deliberation there is public negotiation over a social choice, whereby the agreed outcome, if not completely satisfactory to all participants, is created through building consensus on a level playing field. However, deliberative democracy’s assumption of equitable consensus-building is problematic.

In fact, the theory contains a diallel in that a state of equal footing for negotiations is both a goal and the necessary starting point of equitable consensus-building. Indeed, it seems unlikely that in contexts of inequality, an equal arena for deliberation can be reached. Acknowledging this point, Crocker (2003; 2006) raises the questions of who, how and to what extent people, groups and leaders should be involved in or elected to spearhead legitimate processes of deliberation. The same issues arise with the capability approach in relation to who is responsible and able to identify capabilities, functionings, and strategies for the future. Despite these considerations, Crocker sees an answer in targeting inequality and focuses on ‘egalitarian distribution’ and ‘deliberation’ to strengthen ‘democratic freedom’ and open the possibilities for a deliberative democracy (2006, p.332).

Unequal arenas of deliberation often arise from the imbedded social norms and realities that alienate certain people or groups (Clever, 2001). An additional limitation in participatory processes is that projects that challenge the status quo are often carried out on a small scale, and are therefore limited in their scope of stakeholders and interests. These barriers might leave possible root causes of the problems and structural constraints unsolved, limiting long-term sustainability.

Frediani and Boano (2012) suggest framing the capability approach in radical democracy theory, which seems more capable of addressing issues of power relations and marginality. Drawing from Miessen (2010), Mouffe (2000), and Ranciere (2010), they sustain that the “praxis of participation based on the underlying motivation of consensus has been criticized as a mechanism to shadow conflict and perpetuate existing inequalities” (Frediani and Boano, 2012, p.16). As an alternative to Crocker’s idea of “deliberative participation” (2003), they support participation based on “coalition through dissensus”, defined as “participatory design ... based on the ideal of deepening bonds of solidarity through the recognition of social complexities and diversity” (Frediani and Boano, 2012, p.16). Accordingly, ‘conflictual participation’ opens up opportunities to challenge the status quo, power relations, and constraints for people’s freedom and functioning. For Frediani and Boano, people’s involvement should start from the cases of marginality that not only have to be recognised in participatory processes but also interpreted as a strength and seen as a platform for solidarity and opportunities.

From the deliberative democracy perspective, radical democracy theory might have a tyrannical counter-effect due to the fact that a “small number of dissenters can block a decision to make changes” (Crocker, 2006, p.340). Conversely, in agreement with Ranciere (2010), Miessen maintains that “democratic consensus can be envisaged only as a ‘conflictual consensus’. Democratic debate is not a deliberation aimed at reaching ‘the one’ rational solution to be accepted by all, but a confrontation among adversaries” (Miessen, 2010, p.95). However, further reflection is needed to resolve how issues can be definitely resolved in a radical democracy in a way that gives a voice to every party and addresses issues of legitimacy in a participatory way.

Given this debate on the consensus and dissensus bringing about truer democracy, the main question concerns the legitimacy of the various actors and agents that put in place and shape a defined participatory design-ed process. This emerges as a major concern in the research conducted in this paper and is explored in Chapter 3 through the two lenses of analysis, the role of institutions and policy and the position of practitioners.

The theories of deliberative and radical democracy share the idea of confrontation and disagreement as a way of expanding knowledge and enriching discussion amongst differing interests, albeit ones originating from common points and principles. The core difference between the theories lies in their approach towards the platform of discussion and the way in which confrontation is handled. In the radical theory, the arena is politicised and there is the need for an outsider, an external or alien agent, a ‘dilettante’ with ‘curiosity’ and without constructed knowledge, who is able to generate conflictual engagement, collaboration and provocation, even while running the risk of mistakes and frictions (Miessen, 2010). On the other hand, deliberative theorists call for an impartial and ‘expert’ deliberator, capable, virtuous and impartial, that is able to alleviate and resolve differences on an impartial platform (Crocker, 2003; 2006).

The role of the practitioner, ‘expert’, or ‘dilettante’, in facilitating or sparking transformative participatory processes is explored further in Chapter 3, where the capability approach is used to reflect on how the actions of the practitioner can be institutionalised. According to Cornwall, a participatory process can be considered ‘transformative’ when people become ‘agents’ “to build political capabilities, critical consciousness and confidence; to [be able to] demand rights; to enhance accountability” (2003, p.1327). Hence, the position of the external agent that shapes the degree of the participants’ involvement is the crucial point. In preparation for that discussion, the next section turns to design as conceptualised in relation to the capability approach, and the threats and potential of external agents intervening in and designing participatory processes.

2.2. The concept of design in the capabilities approach

Within the capability approach discourse, there has been significant attention on the role of design in enhancing capabilities. The word ‘design’ in this sense refers to both the design of processes, and the process of designing, in addition to, where appropriate, the design of physical interventions. The capability approach has been applied to reinterpreting the design sphere, as a way to enhance its potential to facilitate just spatial production and outcomes (Nichols and Dong, 2012; Dong, 2008; Frediani, 2007; 2010; Frediani and Boano, 2012; Oosterlaken, 2008; 2012). The capability approach also incorporates notions of design as a means to enable people to achieve a wider range of capabilities and functionings, allowing them to “live the lives that they have reason to value” (Sen, 1999, quoted in Oosterlaken, 2008). The ideas discussed in this section hinge upon the meaning of design in the capability approach theory and the challenge of mitigating the conversion factors that prevent people from converting resources to functionings, which restrict people’s capabilities to design things and processes that they believe will lead to “the good life.”

Nichols and Dong argue that design is “not only about form-giving, spatial layouts, or solving a problem” but rather “a projection of possibilities, of the creation of a world that does not yet exist” (2012, p.191). Drawing from Nussbaum’s list of central capabilities, in particular, the capabilities of “senses, imagination, and thought,” “control over one’s (material) environment,” and “practical reasoning,” they sustain that design is also a central capability because it implies “visualizing and realizing a valued material world as central capabilities” (Nichols and Dong, 2012, p.194). For Nichols and Dong, the “capability to design” is built on a “multidimensional set of capabilities that makes design possible, ... all the activities associated with devising artefacts that achieve goals,” or the “capability set for design” (ibid, p.195). The set is grouped into six categories (Figure 2.1) and could be taken as points to direct policy interventions that aim to make the capability to design a reality for all citizens (Dong, 2008, p.82).

Frediani takes a different approach to design in his concept of ‘capability space’ (2007; 2010). Positioning himself opposite Nichols and Dong (2012) in the debate over the endorsement of a list of central capabilities, he contends that starting from a set of capabilities to design risks generalisation and de-contextualisation. Instead, his concept of “capability space” focuses on people’s choice, ability, and opportunity to transform resources (tangible or intangible) into achieved functionings (2010, p.178), addressing conversion factors on individual, local, and structural levels. The recognition of these factors helps to unpack the barriers that prevent people and communities from achieving the goals they value. In a case study in Salvador

de Bahia, Brazil, Frediani (2007) identifies how the design of a slum upgrading project affected capabilities (which were identified by residents as being most valued in their context) to live with dignity. This example shows how it is possible to operationalise the capability approach by identifying specific, locally-defined capabilities that together form the capability to achieve a particular design functioning (in this case, dignified homes).

Despite their differences, the authors agree that design through the capability approach has a socially empowering potential beyond the physical production of outcomes. Nichols and Dong (2012) explain that the capability to design has 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental' value. Not only does it give people the opportunity to envisage and realise a valued material world, but it has the instrumental value of "providing fundamental amenities" which determine whether people can achieve a wide range of material functionings (such as shelter, nourishment, community, etc.) (Nichols and Dong, 2012, p.201).

Meanwhile, Frediani and Boano (2012) use their concept of 'capability space' (building upon Frediani's work [2010]) to discuss how participatory design mechanisms can produce unique spatial outcomes that have the power to alter the status quo, challenging power relations and co-opted design structures, thereby addressing root causes of inequalities.

Oosterlaken's (2008; 2012) starting point for linking the capability approach with design is through the artefact. She sees 'inclusive design' as a space whereby designers can address ideas of justice and development through their designed artefacts, and 'universal design' as promoting flexibility and diversity of uses in order to unlock a wide range of functionings. Oosterlaken (2012) puts forth the concept of 'capability-sensitive design,' which focuses attention to the impacts a specific design product might have in terms of its appropriateness for users and enhancement of their capabilities. She sustains that while some artefacts may particularly benefit a particular group of people, they need not be unjust for others. The capability approach is helpful in identifying the 'justness' of designed products and scrutinising the implications between the "person, the artefact/resource, and the environment" (2012, p.242). The capability approach can thus guide practitioners, particularly engineers, through a reflective process for the materialisation of just artefacts that help people achieve functionings and freedom. The capability approach allows the scope for practitioners to consider the consequent political and ethical implications of their design proposals, instead of focusing on numerical distribution of resources.

While the contributions from the authors discussed in this section advocate diverse approaches to incorporating design notions to enhance the applicability of

Figure 2.1. Capability set for design. Source: Dong (2008, p.83)

CAPABILITY	DESCRIPTION
INFORMATION	Have transparent access to all technical, financial, community, and political information relevant to a design work. Be in contact with communities and experts who have faced similar design problems as sources of ideas and solutions.
KNOWLEDGE	Have sufficient numeric, mathematical, and scientific training to engage in a conceptual and technical understanding of the design work. Knowledge of technical design methodologies. Have knowledge of making and interpreting relevant technical standards and codes.
ABSTRACTION	Develop aptitude for analysis and contextualization of design work at multiple levels of abstraction, from low-level functional, behavioral, and structural aspects to higher-order aspects such as systems integration, lifecycle maintenance and operations, and disposal.
EVALUATION	Be able to engage in a critical evaluation of the implications of the design work on matters such as the welfare of the community, the health of the environment, and economic viability. The welfare of the community includes individual concerns such as cognitive and physical ergonomics and universal design.
PARTICIPATION	Be part of, and collaborate with, others in the design process; from early project definition stages, through to conceptual design, concept testing, prototype development, prototype testing, prototype review, full-scale implementation, and final project delivery and validation. The formation of a shared understanding of all aspects of design work is paramount.
AUTHORITY	Have the power and right to enact a design work rather than token "paper studies." Have the authority to commission reports and information. Have the authority to select and set criteria and requirements for design work.

the capability approach, they share a common aim of addressing conversion factors that inhibit capabilities through design. From this discussion, we can conclude that design from the capability approach perspective is a promising direction for unpacking the equivalent of conversion factors in participatory processes in order to root out the sources of tyranny.

In Chapter 2, it has been highlighted that the transformative capacity in the capability approach can emerge when it is complemented with democracy theories and design processes. Furthermore, through the frames of design and democracy, the capability approach arguably has the potential to challenge the ‘tyrannical’ threats to participatory processes. There are diverse opinions on

how design can increase people’s agency, both in terms of production of material things and public mobilisation. Regardless of the different directions (public policy or public mobilisation, deliberative or radical democracy, consensus or dissensus), the capability approach contributes to the development of applicability and builds a guide for revealing people's values and aspirations.

Nonetheless, poignant criticisms made by ‘tyrannical’ theorists in regard to legitimacy, accountability and representation in the process still need to be addressed. In order to fully explore its transformative potential, the role of institutions and policy, and the position of practitioners in the capability approach and participatory design are explored in the following section.

Figure 2.2. Dissensus design. Source: Frediani and Boano (2012, pp.17-18)

DISSENSUS DESIGN	OPTIONS
Design as ANTI DESIGN (refusal)	Stemming from inappropriate design implementation, this implies not to assumingly engage in an object driven design response of 'build' and to avoid being complicit of dominant systems (economic, political, professional). This calls for abandon-ing craftsmanship and imaginative skills, forcing an individual or group to consider and prioritize the dynamics and processes of collective claims
Design as RESEARCH (evidence/dissensus)	Without completely abandoning creativity, imagination and craftsmanship skills, this entails making the invisible visible by employing a 'designerly' way of thinking, communicating, and reflecting that articulates and explores windows of opportunity for catalyst intervention and collectively derived design proposals within situations of uncertainty, instability and uniqueness
Design as CRITIQUE (demonstration and precedence)	Amongst debates of re-defining the urban this calls for the critical deployment of imagination and craftsmanship skills in order to question and understand complexities of contested situations. This reflective positioning offers options of speculating, mobilizing, and demonstrating the potential of informed spatial alternatives that contribute to inclusive transformation.
Design as RESISTANCE	In a direct response to reducing unjust domination, there exists a condition of possibility in which design becomes a convicted emancipator using craftsmanship and imagination to pro-mote opposition through feasible alternatives. Collectively questioning the spatial production not as objective provision, but a strategic arena for accommodating the convergence of policy, aspirations, struggles and the future.

3. Analytical lenses

“The capability perspective is not a set of mechanical formulae, but a framework for informational analysis, critical scrutiny and reflected judgments”
(Sen 1999, quoted in Alkire, 2004, p.154).

Sen’s formulation of the capability approach was deliberately left ‘incomplete’ by not specifying which capabilities are paramount, or how to define or select capabilities to pursue. This incompleteness makes it applicable to every context, yet adapted for none, and as such it contains procedural limitations for applying it in practice. Various theorists (Nussbaum, 2000; Clark, 2005; Alkire, 2004; Robeyns, 2005; Sen, 2005) have reflected and tried, sometimes contradictorily, to overcome the lack of procedural and evaluation methods by attempting to define people’s aspirations and values in general and in specific contexts, and devising methods to measure the effects of development projects by applying the capability approach.

As a theoretical framework, in a certain sense the capability approach needs to be processed, systemised, thought out and planned by an agent, with a high level of consciousness, at the genesis of the participatory process. In this way, the capability approach can have the power to identify and unpack the constraints and barriers to people attaining the freedom for various functionings. However, the role and legitimacy of external agents and experts, who can help direct the capability approach to transform participatory processes, are rarely questioned in international debate. Indeed, the ‘tyranny of participation’ argument points not to the

procedural application of participative methods, but rather to the roots of the legitimacy of the powers that put it into place.

In this paper the intent is not to explore the applicative methodology of the capability approach in a participatory process, but the dynamics by which and for whom this process is designed using the capability approach. The outcome of that reflection, if it exists, is crucial to comprehend the transformative or exploitative potential of applying the capability approach in participatory processes. The two key lenses for analysis, the institutionalisation of the capability approach and the role of institutions and position of practitioners, help to test the theoretical background of the capability approach and participation, crosschecking their exploitative tendencies in practice.

3.1 The role of policy and institutions

One of the main concerns of the ‘tyranny’ viewpoint on participation is over the role of institutions. In this analysis institutions are conceived, amongst differing meanings, as the organisations and public structures influencing policies that affect communities’ domain and their development. Indeed, institutions define and shape the degree of people’s involvement in development of processes, and are capable of exploitative participative mechanisms. According to Cornwall’s classification of modes of participation (see Figure 3.1), it is clear how institutions might

Figure 3.1. Modes of participation. Cornwall (2003, p.1327)

Mode of participation	Associated with ...	Why invite/involve?	Participants viewed as ...
Functional	Beneficiary participation	To enlist people in projects or processes, so as to secure compliance, minimize dissent, lend legitimacy	Objects
Instrumental	Community participation	To make projects or interventions run more efficiently, by enlisting contributions, delegating responsibilities	Instruments
Consultative	Stakeholder participation	To get in tune with public views and values, to garner good ideas, to defuse opposition, to enhance responsiveness	Actors
Transformative	Citizen participation	To build political capabilities, critical consciousness and confidence; to enable to demand rights; to enhance accountability	Agents

regard participants as objects or instruments in the process in order to minimise dissent or increase efficiency in pursuing their agenda. This section aims to show how the capability approach highlights the influence of institutions on issues of power, vulnerability, and context, in participatory processes.

According to Hickey and Mohan (2003; 2005), political capability and accountability increase when participation re-acquires its radical foundation, repositioning the meaning of citizenship. Consequently, participation should be able to contest power relations, involve and interact with broader political structures enabling people to be part of society and to influence and shape it (Cornwall, 2004; Gaventa, 2004). It is useful to question how institutions and policy may support structural change and the widening of political and other capabilities, or restrict participants to the narrow space of being “users and choosers” rather than “makers and shapers” (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001; Gaventa, 2002). Whether the capability approach can prompt such institutional responses is the subject of the following analysis.

The capability approach has been widely interpreted as needing to be institutionalised in order to constitute a practical guide for policies. The main attempt was promulgated by Nussbaum, who formulates a list of central human capabilities that has the specific goal of constituting a guide for political and institutional interventions (Alkire, 2004; Clark, 2006). Although the list addresses universal values and has remained substantially unchanged since its first formulation, it remains open to contributions for improvement and adaptations for different contexts¹ (Clark, 2006). There is, however, a structural disconnect in the attempt to combine universal values with local perspectives, as Clark shows in a study carried out in South Africa, where the capabilities identified locally were incongruent with what had been formulated theoretically by Nussbaum. Additionally, despite her specific focus on institutions, Nussbaum has never addressed the question on who has the responsibility and legitimacy to apply the list and how (Alkire, 2004).

In support of the list, Deneulin (2010) sustains the importance of identifying and entrusting reasonable capabilities in order to constitute a ‘telos’ for policy, while at the same time recognising different understandings of “the good life”. This claim recognises that some people might be prevented from making individual choices to identify capabilities for “the good life” due to unjust “structures of inequalities and discrimination” (Deneulin, 2010, p.32). However, some contradictions emerge on how this framework might be put into practice. For instance, an example of this ‘telos’ is seen in the Millennium Development Goals developed by the United Nations in the 1990s. While the MDGs could be said to establish universal values and capabilities, they are conceived with

the same instrumental and numerical parameters that the capability approach seeks to contest. For example, gender equality is equated to the ratio of girls to boys attending school and the ratio of literate females and males (Deneulin, 2010, p.34). Furthermore, statistics to measure success which are taken at national or regional levels, such as the amount of national expenditure allocated to primary health care and education, do not take into account the status quo and specific beneficiaries of the expenditure; this is a contradiction to the capability approach’s focus on individual freedoms and conversion factors determining an individual’s capabilities and well-being. Trani et al (2011) assert that such policy programmes are not able to address individual needs, especially for the most vulnerable.

Further critiques point out how the establishment of a universal list underrates participatory approaches and people’s freedoms; instead, any list of capabilities should, according to Sen, be based on ‘social discussion’ and ‘public reasoning’ (Clark, 2006). From this basis, Crocker (2003; 2006) claims that participation should be institutionalised as part of policy agendas in order to formalise and protect people’s agency. Nevertheless, Crocker’s claim brings us back to deliberation through consensus, which, as highlighted in section 2.1, raises concerns about power imbalances in participation.

Perhaps more problematically, Dong (2008) treats participation as a procedural tool for policy implementation when he suggests that policy interventions might expand people’s capability to design by endorsing participation as part of the capability set for design (see Figure 3.1). In its application, participatory processes become an “operational condition [that] transforms capabilities into functionings and are likely to be related to a specific design project” (2008, p.85), losing intrinsic value in the process. Indeed, the lack of assessment on how citizens should be involved, by focusing on guideline proposals for policy-makers and professionals, leaves problems of power relations unsolved (Frediani and Bonano, 2012). The same critique made for Nussbaum’s list can be made of Dong’s work in terms of procedural and methodological lacking, identification of responsibilities, and contextual considerations.

Dong (2008) recognises that there exist socio-spatial barriers to achieving the necessary ‘pre-conditions’ for achieving the capability to design; these pre-conditions, such as ‘openness to knowledge’ and ‘stimulation of people’s imagination and skills’, have universal value and exist separately from any particular design process. To achieve these general pre-conditions, however, Dong remains vague. For instance, when he talks of the multimedia and interactive museum provision as an example for stimulating design imagination and creativity, he does not question the fact that in some contexts some people, especially the most vulnerable, would have difficulty

accessing these services, and that these interventions might only be used by people who already possess the necessary knowledge, interests or capacity.

Whether through using the capability approach to define institutions' plans of action or by making participation a requisite for mainstreaming capabilities, the risk is that instead of being used as a real transformative approach, the capability approach might be used as a way of renaming traditional participatory processes that have limited empowering capacities. Indeed, there is a danger of using the label 'capability approach' as a way to justify and legitimise participation that does not contest the status quo, and that serves to implement governments', NGOs' and outsiders' pre-determined plans for communities.

An example of Sen's writings being adopted in name but not in principle by an institution comes from the World Bank. The Bank sees Sen's definition of development as freedom as a possible framework for conceptualising and tackling poverty through poverty alleviation initiatives. Although its strategy focuses on people-oriented freedom, it does not have a fully comprehensive application of the capability approach (Frediani, 2007). Frediani sustains that there is an incongruence between the 'language of the policy' adopted by the World Bank and the 'content' of its methodologies. Indeed, while the policy language claims to handle people's freedom and multidimensionality of poverty, vulnerability, and well-being, the content reinterprets the same failure of the previous approaches based on market orientation, private sectors and NGOs. Frediani demonstrates this theory through analysing a participatory upgrading project in a squatter area called Ribeira Azul, in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, financed by the World Bank in 2003. Through a participatory process, residents of Ribeira Azul identified five freedoms that were then used to evaluate the impact of the Bank's upgrading project, which ultimately failed to fulfil residents' needs and aspirations.

In this case, the World Bank's endorsement of Sen's writings did not prevent design failure of the participatory process, in terms of both designing the process of participation in the upgrading project and the final achievements. Frediani argues that weak consideration of the local context and culture, which should have been at the core of its use of Sen's thinking on development, foiled the World Bank's intentions to support a participatory design process. The fixed and rigid design solutions implemented during the project show how the participatory and multidimensional discourse was undertaken merely to legitimise the project and mask power structures, limiting the residents' decision-making abilities. The communities' involvement has also failed to meet more responsive and comprehensive design solutions for the neighbourhood upgrading. This is evidenced by the fact that on some occasions the housing designs were modified and readjusted by the residents accord-

ing to their needs after the project's end. Furthermore, this example shows the potential danger in using the capability approach to enhance certain capabilities in predefined upgrading programmes. It may happen, for instance, that some capabilities might be selected by the decision-makers or financiers; in other words, that "...voices in visible places are but echoes of what the power holders who shaped those places want to hear" (Gaventa, 2006, p.29).

The Ribeira Azul case study suggests that the capability approach requires clear frame for policy that can steer institutional strategies. Deneulin et al argue, "[The capability approach is too] 'thin' to offer guidelines for actions which could transform the unjust structures that impede many people from exercising the capabilities they have reason to choose and value. [...]Because of the fragility and fallibility of the exercise of human freedom, policy decisions which are purely based on the exercise of freedom in the political community need to be thickened by procedures of decision-making which make less fragile the processes by which the conditions for a good human life are secured" (2010, p.9). Participatory approaches could fill the requirement for other methodological contributions in order to 'thicken' the capability approach.

The vagueness regarding institutional applicability of the capability approach allows it to remain open to manipulation and misrepresentation. However, it is certainly true that even though participatory design methods might be clearly defined within the capability approach framework, they cannot entirely guarantee transformation and social justice. Indeed, it seems quite unlikely that 'unjust structures' might use the capability approach if their status is threatened. In situations of 'unjust structures' the capability approach needs to be the liaison between the underprivileged and public society in general. Drèze and Sen express this potential highlighting the importance of "self-assertion ... of the underprivileged through political organization", and "solidarity with the underprivileged on the part of other members of the society, whose interest and commitments are broadly linked, and who are often better placed to advance the cause of the disadvantaged by virtue of their own privileges (e.g. formal education, access to the media, economic resources, political connections)" (Alkire, 2010, p.54). The individual will that emerges through the capability approach can shape collectivity and solidarity in order to fashion a power able to contest the unjust structures. This power might arise from collaboration which might either be manifested through dissensus that contests the status quo (Frediani and Boano, 2012), or through a "Trojan horse" tactic whereby members of the unjust power structure push for policy changes from the inside which aim to help level the playing field (Alkire, 2010). These concepts push for an active role for the external agent or practitioner, which is the subject of the following section.

3.2 The position of the practitioner

This section addresses the legitimacy of the practitioner in a central role in participatory processes, and his or her potential to enhance freedom and capabilities for people involved. From the 'tyranny' arguments, the main critique is that the debate on the role of the practitioner has remained imbedded in technocratic issues instead of questioning the source of the practitioner's legitimacy in the first place (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Cleaver, 2001). Similarly, in the capability approach discourse there is a substantial lack of definition of the practitioner's role. Debate has focused predominantly on the technical and methodological procedures for experts in order to support the identification of capabilities¹ (Alkire, 2004; 2007) and the evaluation of impacts of projects. Therefore, the approach seems too weak to safeguard participatory design from 'tyranny' critiques since it does not comprehensively evaluate why the practitioner does what he or she does. Several authors from the 'tyranny' school of thought criticise the presumed neutral role of practitioners, heavily influenced by Chambers' idea of an impartial facilitator who acknowledges debate and takes notes at public discussions and meetings (Cleaver, 2001; Mohan, 2001; Mosse, 2001). Indeed, for them this approach is populist and naïve, and runs the risk of influencing and leading the decision-making process in a deceptive way. As discussed in Chapter 2, these theorists claim that the practitioner should take on the 'politicised' role of an outsider that is able to generate frictions, deprivations, and build coalitions through dissensus (Miessen, 2010; Mouffe, 2000; Ranciere, 2010).

From within the capability approach discourse, Alkire (2010) has done the most work on expanding the theory of the practitioner's role beyond the technocracy in order to address issues related to power relations and unjust structures. Like Drèze and Sen, she promotes the idea of the 'committed powerbrokers' that can strengthen the power of self-assertion by those without power, and solidarity among people within the power structure with those outside. These 'partially decisive powerbrokers' should become 'committed activists' to work as 'Trojan horses' and stimulate change from within the system. However, there are challenges in working for change as an 'insider' in the power system, including barriers to action, difficulties of alliance and conflicting interests. Moreover, "when injustice is institutionalised, the danger is that the individuals who maintain these unjust structures will become blinded to the wrongdoing of their own actions" (Deneulin et al, 2010, p.7).

From the participatory design sphere, Hamdi sees the role of the participatory design practitioner as a 'placemaker', following the guidelines of "PEAS" – "Providing, Enabling, the capacity to be Adaptive, the capacity to Sustain" (2010, p.141). It should be noted that in PEAS, the idea of provision goes against the mainstream notion

of the practitioner as the provider of definitive or perfect answers and focussing attention to things rather than to people, or as someone pushed by "a moral superiority among providers" that is the mirror of 'charity' actions (ibid, pp.145-146). Conversely, he sees the 'placemaker' as a catalyst capable of enabling people and communities to "provide for themselves", "creating opportunities in order to build livelihoods, reduce vulnerability and sustain development" (ibid, p.147). Like Miessen (2010), Hamdi acknowledges the importance of dissensus and disagreements; nevertheless, a substantial difference is the fact that he sees a possible avenue for achievable solutions in consensus building (1999).

Like the capability approach, this participatory design strategy known as Action Planning (Hamdi and Goethert, 1997), despite a more 'problem-solving' orientation, takes a people-centred focus on well-being, rather than a focus on material goods and economic goals. Along the same lines as Frediani's capability space (2007), Hamdi (2010) sees cultural identity and existing resources as starting points for strategically enhancing people's capabilities in order to address people's needs and constraints. He highlights the importance of addressing the issues of invisibility and minority groups within communities, the legitimacy of practitioners and external agents, the co-opted views and perspectives that participants might have to power relations, subordination, vulnerability and scepticism. The acknowledgment of diversity and vulnerability and the focus on local capacity and knowledge are entry points that can lead participatory design initiatives to the line of the capability approach and reframe the position of the 'expert' outsider.

Nonetheless these contributions are still fragmented and disconnected from each other, incipient and hesitant in fully defining and safeguarding the root of the practitioner's role, which still remains shaded by the 'tyrannical' critique. It seems likely that the issues loomed by the 'tyranny' theorists might help to redefine the role of the practitioner within the capability approach discourse. While the capability approach has been used for evaluative projects, its radical potential has been underdeveloped. Currently, the lack of formulation of roles and responsibilities for the practitioner exposes the capability approach to the tyrannical side of participation. The position and power of the practitioner amidst stakeholders of a participatory project might condition how the capability approach is implemented, thus losing its transformative capacity.

Alkire has an interesting example through her work with three micro-scale projects (loans for goat-rearing; adult literacy and community development; rose cultivation) financed by the international NGO OXFAM in three Pakistani villages. She assessed the impacts of the projects in terms of capabilities, implementing and conceptualising ways in which valuable capabilities can be identified,

measured and prioritised, combining participatory initiatives to support cost-benefit analysis and other social impact assessments (Alkire, 2004). Despite her important and well-developed theoretical methodology to apply the capability approach and to value capabilities¹, some concerns and gaps can be identified when she implemented the concepts in the field. Although this example refers to evaluative research for the OXFAM's projects, it is useful to show how the position of the researcher - practitioner that applied the capability approach might have influenced the findings and the effectiveness of the capability approach.

Firstly, it has been acknowledged that in the application of the methodology there was a lack of consideration for the multidimensionality of poverty and functioning identified conceptually (Clark, 2006). Secondly, the decision to focus on small projects with a homogeneous reality constituted by small and selected groups of participants left issues related to participation and conflicts untouched (Crocker, 2003). Possible conflicting interests that could have been raised from the involvement of more complex and heterogeneous realities might have contested the 'success' and the implementation of the projects or would have compromised the usability of the methods¹. There is, in this way, the risk that some differences might be misinterpreted or hidden: "Just as dividing communities along externally-defined axes of difference can obscure the intersections between these and other differences, it may take for granted forms of commonality that fail to match with people's own concerns, connections and agendas. This raises questions about the salience of a focus on particular axes of difference, such as gender, rather than on dimensions and positions of powerlessness" (Cornwall, 2003, p.1334). Another risk is the underestimation of social group dynamics, what Cooke (2001) calls 'social psychology', that might "lead members to shape group processes unintentionally, which in turn ultimately lead to 'bad' or 'wrong' decisions" (Cooke, 2001, p.116).

Thirdly, the involvement of the communities throughout the capability approach process was only for the evaluation of past projects, losing focus on future plans and decision-making. Therefore, the assessments produced by the facilitators, who also had language difficulties, were primarily for the NGO to decide whether to finance future projects or not (Crocker, 2003). Additionally, even in the evaluative purpose of the research, the position of the NGOs has not been assessed or questioned, only the effects of its activities. Although Alkire acknowledges the participation of the residents, in particular in the rose project where they decided which type of activity to conduct, most of activities implemented were already predetermined by OXFAM before the beginning of the projects (Alkire, 2004). Referring to Figure 3.1, it can be argued that participation might have had a "functional" factor, considering participants as "objects" of the inter-

vention, used "to enlist people in projects or processes, so as to secure compliance, minimise dissent, lend legitimacy" (Cornwall, 2003, p.1327).

Despite a deep methodological theorisation of the approach, the context and position in which the facilitator and external agent position themselves might create failures in its implementation, leaving unsolved questions of power, primary interests, scaling-up and decision-making. If the process, as is the case, remains on the scale of small projects, the transformative opportunities for communities involved are denied (Hickey and Mohan, 2005). It is true that the capability approach has been used to evaluate the result of past activities with the intent to guide future NGOs' financial strategies, nonetheless, the limitations highlighted emphasise the risk of misinterpretation and impediment in a practical process that limits people's agency, especially in complex and heterogeneous contexts.

The participatory process has been underestimated, affecting as a consequence the richness of the capability approach, which on the other hand did not safeguard the participation. Furthermore, in the research conducted with the capability approach, the methodologies adopted by OXFAM were not questioned by the researcher included the insightfulness of the participatory processes. Hence, even referring to further NGO's interventions, the capability approach became a way to legitimise outsider interventions rather than enhance people's agency. "... The patronising attitudes that 'they' need to be empowered according to our agenda" is a quote that could summarise the process (Mohan, 200, p.164).

The examples so far indicate that the role of the practitioner often risks being manipulative and counterproductive to the very essence of the capability approach. If practitioners remain sensitive to the specificities needed in the design process, and keep democratic participation central, they can perhaps contribute towards enabling the use of the capability approach to help make the communities the main drivers of the process. Ultimately, a further query about the position of the practitioner needs to be posed: can people's voices and their legitimacy always be taken for granted?

Cleaver clearly questions this:

"How then, do we deal with situations where 'local culture' is oppressive to certain people, where appeals to 'traditions' run contrary to the modernizing impulses of development projects? Why do we see little debate about these tensions in the development literature? Is it for fear of criticizing local practices and being seen as the professionals so roundly condemned in Chamber's works? Are we not in danger of swinging from one untenable position (we know best) to an equally untenable and damaging one (they know best)?" (2001, p.47)

For instance, how can we recognise if someone is deciding not to participate, thereby activating his freedom to decide, and leaving decisional responsibility to someone else, or if there is a lack of ability to participate such as shame or social relations? Yet, if the case is the former, how can we determine if the choices and participation are coerced?

How can 'false consciousness' and 'adaptive factors' be recognised? Where does a practitioner position himself with respect to cultural hierarchies or power relations or co-optative social group dynamics (Cooke, 2001)? Cornwall (2003), exploring specific gender issues, points out the tricky position of an outsider, in particular from a different background and culture, who might interpret, for instance, local women's desires and will as subordination imbedded in local constraints. In this case should they be considered a well-being freedom and act for their achievement? Or should they be recognised as achievements conditioned by an "invisible power"² (Gaventa, 2006, p.29) and "misrecognition"³ (Eyben et al, 2006, p.5) of the people involved? And if the answer is the first, how can the choices be safeguarded from the accusation of 'Western appropriation' of "the cultural realm over the material" in name of 'sustainability' (Mohan, 2001, p.159)? "One might ask, then, whether the women had the 'capability' to be empowered or whether their functioning of empowerment was realised without their choice. As this is a debated issue, especially in women's activities that have a further agenda of 'conscientisation' or empowerment, it bears some reflection as to how the criteria of 'free choice' or 'informed consent' apply" (Alkire, 2004, p.295).

The capability approach helps to identify and recognise these risks that in traditional participatory mechanisms

might remain hidden or imbedded in the practices. Sen identifies an achieving 'basic judgment' through removing 'factual assumption' about what those freedoms look like (Alkire, 2004, pp.133-136). For example, if 'health freedom' is what is sought after in a community, the 'factual assumption' that this entails a new hospital may prove contrary to real needs if the lack of health freedom is due to various barriers to access. External agents, which are not imbedded in the social reality, might help to unpack these 'factual assumptions.' Alkire sustains, supporting Sen, that it is not always possible to completely uncover 'basic judgments'; however, the 'reflective process' used to approximate those basic valued freedoms is a useful exercise that can help dispel biases and misinterpretations of how to enable those freedoms. The capability approach has, thus, the potential to guide the reflective approach to local knowledge, perhaps protecting it from misinterpretation or exploitation. This avenue would be a 'hybrid' between the contribution of outsiders and insiders (Mohan, 2001; Rydin, 2007).

Certainly the capability approach, in Frediani's words, "contributes to participatory literature by providing this comprehensive and flexible theory focusing on what a good life should comprise while capturing multiple, complex and dynamic aspects of poverty" (n.d). It represents an essential frame that may guide external agents to more comprehensive and 'just' procedures, a 'criteria' to stabilise what is 'appropriate' (Nichols and Dong, 2012; Oosterlaken, 2012); nonetheless, how they are designed and for whom, as seen above, might remain for the sake of stakeholders, in their subjectivity and powerful position that can surely have a certain form of co-option or critique.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

¹ In a general summary, Alkire argues that the creation of an absolute list, as proposed by Nussbaum, has several problems; however, there is a need to define some guiding principles in order to recognise and evaluate achievable freedoms. Alkire suggests identifying "capabilities to meet basic human needs" (2004, p.163), with the goal to expand these basic capabilities to meet basic needs, not meet the basic needs per se. Basic capabilities are identified according to the relativity of context and time and the competence of people involved, and should be, consequently, applicable in micro interventions. Alkire identifies five possible ways to apply the approach in research, which can be combined with each other: "Existing data or convention"; "Normative Assumptions"; "Public consensus"; "On-going deliberative participatory processes"; "Empirical evidence regarding people's values" (2007, p.7).

² "Invisible power: shaping meaning and what is acceptable. Probably the most insidious of the three dimensions of power,

invisible power shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation. Significant problems and issues are not only kept from the decision-making table, but also from the minds and consciousness of the different players involved, even those directly affected by the problem. By influencing how individuals think about their place in the world, this level of power shapes people's beliefs, sense of self and acceptance of the status quo – even their own superiority or inferiority. Processes of socialization, culture and ideology perpetuate exclusion and inequality by defining what is normal, acceptable and safe." (Gaventa, 2006, p.29).

³ "Misrecognition" is a notion defined by Navarro and explained by Eyben et al.: "mystification by which the powerful use their symbolic capital to prevent individuals from recognizing that their subordination is culturally constructed rather than 'natural'" (Eyben, et al., 2006, p.5).

4. Closing the frame

Referring back to the metaphor at the start of Chapter 1, reflecting on the ‘goodness’ of participation, the impression emerging is that the capability approach, considered as a frame for participation, might constitute a coercive legitimisation of the already deceitful participatory mechanism that does not challenge its orthodoxy. As shown in the two lenses for analysis in the Chapter 3, the promising benefits highlighted in Chapter 2 could just remain in theory. Indeed, it seems not fully able to safeguard participation from ‘tyrannical’ systemic tendencies. Looking at the experience of the World Bank in Brazil and of OXFAM in Pakistan, a dangerous risk emerges that the capability approach might not assist participation and design solutions to address social transformation, or worse that it could be used in a manner that leaves unchallenged unbalanced and coerced decision-making processes. Factors such as gaps in the approach, the challenges of theoretical application, and its openness to interpretation (which might, however, also be one of its strengths) do not necessarily protect interventions from unjust procedures carried out by external agents. The lack of definitions of responsibilities and representativeness leaves the exclusionary mechanism and processes of domination untouched, especially for the most vulnerable and invisible. Participatory processes need to find the transformative and radical meaning that follow Freire’s social justice and radical political ideas (1973). Power structures are gradient, Foucauldian, transversal throughout all society, hence structurally imbedded in social practice that impedes the legitimisation or recognition of people’s choices, co-opting them, thus hijacking the essence of the approach.

Nonetheless, what could be suggested is that all these risks shown above might be considered as a productive starting point that may help to develop the approach, starting from the positive base that has emerged in the research. Indeed, some directions highlighted have

the potential to support the participatory process in its transformative challenge where other methods have failed, despite the difficulties shown in its institutionalisation and systematisation. The capability approach seems to shape participatory process in a more comprehensive direction, particularly during the process of implementation in the investigation of people’s desires and in the reflective process of the various stakeholders. From here, then, the awareness built by the ‘tyranny’ school of thought, rather than reducing the use of the capability approach, might help it develop and expand its transformative capacity.

Eventually, it may be useful not only for participatory design processes but also for its application in the diverse realities that face development and policy. Hence, the lack of theory that emerged in the link between participatory design and the capability approach in the sphere of application can be developed starting from this awareness, from which further research might be conducted. What the title of this paper “From tyranny to capability?” initially sought to question was whether the capability approach can effectively safeguard participation from tyranny. In conclusion, the title might be reinterpreted the other way around as a starting question for new avenues of research: from tyranny can the capability approach be taken to new levels? In this way a framework for participation will perhaps be constituted, or vice versa. The entry point is that both schools of thought can and need to benefit from each other. The capability approach has mostly been used for evaluative procedures; future experiences in design and planning processes may contribute to the development of its theory and be tested on the ground. There is hope that the capability approach, in this way, might have the potential to align with democratic and inclusive participatory design processes to lead just and transformative interventions.

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SPECIAL ISSUE

**Social identities,
collective capabilities,
planning and design:
Some closing thoughts**

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Social identities, collective capabilities, planning and design: Some closing thoughts

The introduction to this series, by Alexandre Apsan Frediani and Julia Hansen, identified some common threads across the different papers presented in the volume. Among these common threads were debates about: the linkages between individuals and collectives, and how these are framed, or not framed, by various manifestations of the Capability Approach (CA), and; the emerging efforts to move beyond using the CA as an evaluative framework to also using it as a means of informing processes of planning and design.

In this piece I would like to consider how both of these issues speak to an overarching area of interest in the work of the DPU, namely how issues of equality and social justice are bound up with the construction and expression of social identities. This is a long-standing space of concern of the DPU, and one with which we have a substantial history of engagement, through avenues such as the DPU's Gender Policy and Planning Programme (which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2014), the group of research activities coordinated through the DPU's *Diversity, Social Complexity and Planned Intervention* cluster, and the DPU's work on cosmopolitan development and divided cities which builds on the work of Michael Safier.

Clearly, these concerns with social identity and diversity resonate with the CA framework, as identity and social relations influence many of the areas that the CA promotes focusing on in lieu of income as the legitimate objectives and measures of development, such as, the choices open to people, the aspirations that they have, and the autonomy that they have to act on these (Muñoz Castillo & Gasper, 2012, p. 95). Furthermore, issues around social identities are also a distinctive element of the landscape of each person's 'capability space' (Frediani, 2010). Accordingly, the relationships between social identities and capabilities have been addressed widely in the capability literature, with a prominent focus on identity issues such as gender (Robeyns, 2002), disability (Dubois & Trani, 2009) or age (Biggeri, Ballet, & Comim, 2011).

In addition to these established linkages between the CA and social diversity issues, however, it also seems that the two themes running across the papers in this series, highlighted above, (around the collective nature of capabilities, and around efforts to use the capability approach as a frame to guide planning and design) re-

quire confronting a set of discussions which arise from the increasingly complex and nuanced ways in which issues of diversity, social justice and development have been approached in recent years.

Three concepts are prominent in current discussions around social diversity and development, namely *intersectionality*, *agency and hegemony*, and each of these contributes, in different ways, to the complexity of current approaches to understanding the linkages between social identities, societal power relations and individual aspirations and freedoms.

Firstly, the concept of intersectionality refers to the recognition that our experiences of social identity (and of marginalisation and inequality built around particular identities) are constructed around multiple, overlapping and mutually reinforcing elements such as race, gender and age, rather than being experienced on the basis of what Sen has termed a 'singular affiliation' built around one element of identity (Sen, 2006). Intersectionality is currently a central feature of discussions around social identity, and also in discussions about collective action around identity based rights and identity politics, but it is by no means a new conceptual approach. The specific term 'intersectionality' was coined by Crenshaw in the early 1990s in work analysing the failure of legal systems to engage with the specific needs and experiences of discrimination faced by black women in the USA (Crenshaw, 1993). The understanding of the overlapping and interlocking nature of social identities has been around longer than this, and was in fact always central to the DPU gender policy and planning methodology from its inception in the 1980s. Nonetheless, while not new, a focus on intersectionality does currently appear to be in the ascendancy, perhaps because it chimes with a wider concern in common with post-structural theory, of the limitations of structural analysis of social identities both in their failure to interrogate the fractures in the supposed collective experience of inequality by groups such as 'women' (Rowbotham, Segal, & Wainwright, 1979), and their failure to reveal how the representation of a 'social group' can make the experiences of those with multiple subordinated identities invisible (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008).

Secondly, most current approaches to social identities, and the power relations built around them, cri-

tique structural analyses which have often represented subaltern groups of women and men largely as passive objects of structural power relations (Halford & Leonard, 2000). In contrast, post-structural interpretations of development processes emphasise the agency that people can enact as both objects and subjects of power through, for example, acts of resistance (Scott, 1985) or through the appropriation and transformation of social discourses (Butler, 1993). Clearly this renewed focus on agency resonates with the CA, which has an explicit, and central, focus on the choices that women and men are able to make and to the subjective values that determine what they aspire to achieve. This kind of focus on individual agency and aspirations problematises analyses of social identity and inequality which represent inequalities as broad axes of hierarchy between binaries of subordinate and dominant interest, such as women/ men, or black/ white, and highlights that such dichotomies are simplistic by revealing that experience of identity and power relations are context specific, relational, and contested by the personal agency and claims of individual people, rather than members of social categories.

Thirdly, while, as discussed above, current approaches to social identity emphasise that women and men can enact agency, whether or not they are in subaltern social positions, it is also recognised that this agency can be, and frequently is, obscured by hegemonic value systems which limit their life choices and aspirations, thereby re-introducing the importance of structure vis a vis agency, albeit in a different, and more amorphous, guise. One example of the prominence of this concern is the vast contemporary literature on hegemonic masculinity (Cornwall et al, 2011, Connell, 2011). Analysis of such hegemonic discourses is of critical political importance in avoiding an over-emphasis on autonomous agency in ways which can lead to discourses of blame or responsibility for social groups whose apparent choices may in fact be responses to social constraints. For example, the analysis of hegemonic masculinity in the field of health highlights that lifestyle behaviours which are common among men (including alcohol and drug use, limited health seeking behaviour, and exposure to violence) and which lead to significantly reduced Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) in comparison to women, may actually be the result of societal norms around masculinity, and associated social pressures, and gendered responses by health institutions, rather than individual 'reckless choices' (Hawkes & Buse, 2013). A concern with the limitation of people's agency by hegemonic social norms and structures is also evident in much of the discussion around the CA and, indeed, Sen's use of the concept of 'adaptive preference' highlights how hegemonic social norms can preclude an awareness of inequality, and inhibit protest, and is evidence of the importance that he accords to the impact of social relations on individuals' agency and value formation (Sen, 2002).

These more nuanced approaches to social identity, which put issues of intersectionality, agency and hegemony at centre stage, have made a critical contribution to the analysis of social relations, and revealed some of the ways in which previous approaches to theorising social identity have oversimplified the analysis of identity/-ies. However, while their *analytical* contribution is undeniable, at the same time they reveal a number of challenges for social and political *action*. This brings us back to the two themes highlighted across the papers in this series identified above, i.e. (1) how the CA can/ should engage with collectives as well as individuals and (2) how to use the CA as a basis for intervention, through planning or design.

In terms of the need to recognise collectives as a relevant category of analysis for the CA, the papers in this series by Brayford, Nunes, and Wongtschowski highlight a number of arguments that have been made to support this case, including those around the collective dimensions of capabilities (Stewart, 2005) and the pursuit of capabilities through collective agency (Ibrahim, 2006). In this vein for example, Ibrahim argues that "in contrast to individual agency where a person pursues 'individually' his/her own perception of the good, through acts of collective agency the individual can pursue this perception of the good collectively by joining or participating in a group with similar goals" (2006, p.405)

This is an important step forward for the CA in moving away from the methodological individualism that it has been accused of, as highlighted in both the paper by Brayford and the introduction to this volume. However, at the same time, the discussions mentioned above around intersectionality and agency highlight the problems of demarcating or reifying collectives based around singular social identities as 'social groups'. This means, by association, that it is problematic, and often politically misleading, to speak of identity based interests (such as 'women's interests'). So, what does this mean for strategic action to mobilise around the collective dimensions of capabilities?

One approach could be that the collective focus of the CA, rather than focusing on identity based social *groups*, could instead be used to examine and determine strategies to challenge collective unfreedoms, highlighting identity based institutions and norms which limit individuals' freedoms by forming the *inequality regimes* which underpin social practices such as patriarchy, racism or homophobia.

However, while engaging with social norms, discourses and institutions is an important strategy, and one which has already been advocated by adherents of the CA, it leaves a gap in terms of political engagement with such identity based inequalities and in terms of the political construction of social identities themselves. "One of the

dangers with recognising the difficulties involved in affirming common – class, gender, sexual or other – identities as a basis for solidarity ... is falling back onto a liberal account of the subject, with a reticence towards any sort of construction of collective identity” (Trott, 2014, p.225). This is, in part, because focusing on identity discourses and institutions in abstraction from the people who inhabit, drive and challenge them creates problems in terms of understanding agency and in particular, the collective nature of agency. In this vein, Phillips, in her work on the *politics of presence*, has highlighted the importance of the collective presence of people from underrepresented social categories in political forums in order for their identity related interests to be reflected in politics and policy (Phillips, 1994). Sen similarly advocates for the importance of collective action and democratic value formation (such as feminist or class based movements) to question the oppressive identity norms that lead to unfreedoms such as adaptive preference (Sen, 2002).

Politically speaking, therefore, the collective action that is necessary to respond to identity based regimes of inequality must be undertaken by groups mobilising around identity based interests. This appears to leave us stuck, given the previously discussed problems of reifying identity based social groups and collective identity based interests, and obscuring questions of intersectionality and of the agency of individuals.

This leads us to the second issue discussed in the introduction to this volume, around how to use the CA to inform and structure processes of planning and design. If there is no such thing as a neat ‘group interest’ because there are no coherent social groups that correspond clearly to social categories around gender, age, race or ethnicity, then who are the collectives that should form a basis for collective action around identity based questions of justice? Without such collectives to mobilise around questions of identity, we lack a vehicle for the ‘presence’ of subaltern identities in the planning process and have to rely instead on the expertise of the planner, or politician, with her/ his own social position, to act on behalf of others’ experiences of questions of race, gender, or the multitude of other social relations which both influence and are affected by the planning process.

There are, therefore, a couple of associated implications for using the CA as a basis for developing methodology to inform planning and design. These are, firstly, the need to focus on collective values, rather than collective interests as the basis of planning discussions and secondly, the need to explicitly recognise that planning does not simply give voice to values – it also produces and transforms values.

In relation to the first point, both planning and design are vehicles for determining whose voices, interests and beliefs inform the structure and scope of specific

development interventions. And, as the CA emphasises personal values and the autonomous agency to express and pursue these values, how planning is conducted is clearly of close concern to advocates of the CA. One implication, therefore, is thinking about how people’s interests and beliefs are given voice in planning and design, and how the CA can support this methodologically.

Given the discussion above, if we accept that identities, and identity based inequalities, are social and collective in nature, this would imply moving beyond efforts to bring individuals’ interests into the planning process, to focusing on collective aspirations. This brings us back to the debate about whether the CA is based on a methodological individualism, and the precise relevance of social relations for the understanding of capabilities; for example, Evan’s contention that some capabilities are collective in nature (Evans, 2002) and Sen’s response that they are in fact socially determined individual capabilities (Sen, 2002). One problem here is that the aggregation of the individual interests of members of a social category, is often not the same as the collective interests of that social category as a whole. For example, if we look at class as a social category, and think about interventions in relations to property rights or tenure, we can see precisely such a contradiction. While individuals and individual households among the urban poor are likely to have an interest in the formalisation of their housing asset ownership in informal settlements, the *collective* impact of this as a planning strategy (rather than, for example, promoting non market provision of housing or collective housing ownership) is to contribute to the further commodification of housing, and the increasing long term disenfranchisement of ‘the urban poor’ as a collective social category.

Given, further, that questions of intersectionality, agency and hegemony mean that identity based *interests* are probably a chimera, it may therefore be more appropriate to approach identity issues in planning and design by using methodologies which attempt to understand and collective aspirations as based around shared, or collective, *values*, rather than collective interests.

This kind of approach already has a precedent in feminist responses to the challenge that intersectionality presents to mobilisation around ‘women’s interests’. This has led to approaches which advocate ‘transversal politics’ as a part of which “...feminists and other community activists should not see themselves as representatives of their constituencies (unless they were democratically elected and are accountable for their actions). Rather they should see themselves as their advocates, working to promote their cause” (Yuval-Davis, 1999, p.95). The kind of political formations

required by transversal politics, therefore, rather than comprising distinct *interest groups* with representatives who are able to advocate for these shared interests, requires the formation of *epistemological communities* built around shared values, which may encompass a diversity of specific interests.

Secondly, however, if planning and design should focus on collective values, given the complex relationship between social identities, hegemonic value formation, and the 'capacity to aspire' (Appadurai, 2004), it is crucial to address the reality that collective values are not static, and nor are they always conducive to freedom. Sen's CA has an overarching focus on giving people the freedom to achieve things that they have *reason to value* (Sen, 1999). Sen therefore gives priority to democratic processes to reveal the collective priorities that most people have reason to value. However, this raises the question of what kind of democracy is to be pursued, and what role collectives should play in these democratic processes. The importance of collectives stems not only from the instrumental role they can play promoting the abilities of individuals to pursue valued objectives but from the part they have in shaping indi-

viduals' very "perception of the good" (Ibrahim, 2006, p.404). This would imply that a vital role of epistemological communities is not only to promote or lobby for the values linked to social identities and groupings, but also to question, debate and contribute to the formation of these values.

In conclusion, therefore, the issues that the introduction to this volume highlighted (how to use the CA to understand collective social relations, and how to use the CA as a basis for planning and design) reveal a number of challenges which are points of reflection for the work of the DPU and our partners on issues related both to social identity and diversity, and to our work on planning. On the one hand, how can we develop operational tools with which to reveal, debate, and advocate for collective *values*, and on the other hand, if, through our work engaging with communities in planning and design we are also contributing to collective value formation around social identity issues, how can we determine, and demonstrate, that our contribution feeds into the formation of collective values that are socially just, and not 'imposed' through hierarchical power relations?

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