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Introduction – Theoretical Foundations and the Book's Roadmap

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Childhood and adolescence are periods in life that are distinct for a variety of reasons. It is during the early years of life that individuals experience the most important cognitive and emotional developments that subsequently shape their identity and world-views. The capabilities of children and adolescents are formed through social interaction and receptiveness within the household and broader environments, and constitute to a large extent the foundation of a human being's development. This means that understanding and assessing children's and adolescents' well-being cannot successfully be pursued by viewing them as miniature adults. Moreover, understanding adults' well-being might not be possible without reference to these early stages in life. As a result, what might appear to be a simple technical question – namely, what is the most appropriate way of assessing children's well-being? – may turn out to be a real challenge. To help address this challenge, this book develops the capability approach (CA) as a conceptual framework for understanding children's well-being.

There are several reasons why researchers and practitioners interested in the capability and human development approach should pay closer attention to children's issues. How can we think about human development without tackling child issues? A quick look at the Human Development Index reveals that two of its dimensions (namely, health and knowledge) are directly affected by what happens to children. Similarly, the realizations of several Millennium Development Goals relate specifically to children. Moreover "development" is a process that in many cases is especially relevant during childhood. What happens to children often leads to path dependency, and in some cases key capability failures may be irreversible in later life (e.g. stunting).

And yet, despite the efforts of some international agencies it seems that attention to children has not achieved the prominence it deserves. Even the most influential alternative development perspective of our generation – the

CA – has not yet adequately engaged with children's issues, although much has been written about education generally from this perspective (e.g. Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). This book aims also to bridge this gap by using the CA (as developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum) to explore its significance and relevance for theory, policy and development practices regarding children.

Thinking about children's development is tantamount to thinking about poverty reduction. This is because:

- children are disproportionately represented among the poor in developed as well as developing countries;
- children often suffer irreversible forms of capability failure in terms of mental, physical, emotional and spiritual development;
- children are often misconceived as small-scale adults, which leads to the neglect of a wider range of development problems and challenges that depend on recognizing that young people have specific needs that evolve over their life cycle;
- children's low human development promotes inter-generational transfers of poverty; and
- children's well-being has a strong influence on many aspects of future development.

Like many other researchers, we think that the agenda of well-being assessment cannot be confined merely to the material aspects of life. Indeed, well-being in general has a multidimensional and immaterial character, and this is especially true in the case of children.

Within this context, the main objective of this book is to illustrate the case for putting children at the centre of the development studies agenda, seeing them as agents in the process of developing their capabilities and well-being. This involves engaging with a range of different fields including childhood studies, education, disability studies, urban planning, participatory methods and research and human rights. When children are acknowledged as subjects of respect and agency in society, a new vision of development can be achieved. Children also have an active role to play in promoting human development.

Although these reasons are more than enough to raise awareness among researchers, practitioners and policy makers, from a research perspective they are accompanied by two lines of academic enquiry that make the topic of children and capabilities a very important research issue.

The first explores the possible uses of the CA to investigate children's issues. Can the CA help us to think about the relevance of the particularities of being a child? Could synergies between the approach and children themselves result in new policies and strategies for improving the lives of millions of children in this world? It seems that there is room for further

theorization of the CA by electing children as one of its objects of attention. In the same way, it appears that fresh light can be thrown on the promotion of public policies for children by using the approach. In this book, we hope to provide some idea of the potential contribution of the CA in various fields – from education, to disability studies, to urban planning via participation – since children as subjects with capabilities have a crucial role in society. Consequently, the CA, seen as a child-centred approach, offers important and constructive critiques of the dominant theories and often complements them in the analysis of children's issues and in establishing related policies.

The second line of enquiry is about how applying the CA to children can encourage a rethinking of the CA, challenging it far more intensely than we initially thought likely. Indeed, although the CA is a normative framework that can be used to evaluate children's issues, children's issues may also challenge the CA framework itself and force us to revise it. This means, for instance, ceasing to regard children as irrational or immature, and instead considering them to be active actors, agents and subjects of capabilities. Most importantly, having to investigate children's development forces us to take a more dynamic attitude to the CA.

Conceptualizing children as active agents and co-producers of their capabilities enables fresh insights into how capabilities can initially be built and subsequently assessed. One illustration might clarify this concept: when assessing the impact of educational systems on children using the CA, emphasis is given to outcomes; namely, whether children are able to read and write (understood as functionings). This might take us a long way from assessing the impact of these systems in terms of allocated resources to education or subjective perceptions. However, with a new conceptualization of children as individuals in the process of building their capabilities, a fresh perspective is brought into the analysis enabling us to consider the process aspects of human development. Instead of seeing children as irrational or immature, they can be considered as active actors and agents. Furthermore, the path of capabilities development followed by an individual combines elements of freedom with unfreedoms, due to path dependencies. A new horizon for the CA is therefore established when our main focus of analysis is children's capabilities.

Before entering into the book's contents we think that it is appropriate to introduce the concepts and theory related to the CA, as well as to reflect on how this framework may influence the dominant culture of childhood and vice versa.

1.1. The capability approach: a brief introduction

The CA, as developed by Amartya Sen (1985, 1999a, 2005) and Martha Nussbaum (2000) over the past two decades, has provided the intellectual

foundation for a model of development that is both human and sustainable. It has focused on participation, human well-being and freedom as central features of development, combining ethics with economics.[1] This approach has been influenced and is influencing the cutting-edge thinking of development economists, sociologists, educationalists and anthropologists, among others, and has been used in many different fields and arenas of thought.

In general, the merits of the CA are more easily appreciated in theoretical rather than empirical terms. Its value for stimulating new ways of thinking about human development is undeniable, but its operationalization still represents a challenge in domains like health and education (see Comim, Qizilbash and Alkire, 2008) and in particular for assessing children's well-being. For example, concerning education Sen (1992, 1999a for instance) underlines the main role it plays in promoting capabilities. Nussbaum (1997, 2002, 2006) has more substantially developed this facet of the capabilities approach. Others researches have also reflected on these issues (for instance, Brighouse, 2000; Mehrotra and Biggeri, 2002; Saito, 2003; Swift, 2003; Unterhalter and Brighouse, 2003; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). Nonetheless, the possibility of applying the CA to children has not yet been adequately explored.

Sen has written on a wide range of issues with reference to children and often takes children and young adults as a focal point.[2,3] However, there are few occasions where Sen has devoted full attention to children as the main object of analysis. Two of these occasions were in a speech at the Inter-American Development Bank and in an article for the *Indian Journal of Human Development*. In the first, Sen (1999b) discusses the relevance of investing in early childhood for social and economic development, and examines some childhood–adult connections from political, economic and social perspectives; while in the *Indian Journal of Human Development* article Sen (2007) concentrates on the relevance of child rights. Nussbaum, as discussed later, has often gone into issues regarding children as the subject of capabilities and agency, and the role of human obligations towards the most vulnerable (Nussbaum, 2000, 2006). Even before the creation of the Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA) in 2004, several theoretical and empirical papers have systematically explored this potentially rich field of research. Biggeri (2003) used the capability framework to rethink child labour definitions and issues, while Di Tommaso (2003) focused on the well-being of children in India using econometric analysis to measure capabilities. Schischka (2003) examined the impact of educational programmes for indigenous children in Samoa in the Pacific Ocean, while Comim (2009) has attempted to measure the expansion of children's capabilities.[4]

Sen and other *human development* scholars view development as the "expansion of capabilities" or "positive freedoms" (Sen, 1999a). Human beings are thus the ends of economic activity rather than merely means. When individuals are seen only as human capital they serve as means

to achieve economic growth. However, when economic growth is seen as serving the interests of people, they become the ends of development. This is why "the capability approach proposes a change – a serious departure – from concentrating on the *means* of living to the *actual opportunities* of living in itself" (Sen, 2009: 17). Resources are indeed important for promoting the functionings and capabilities of children but only as instrumental means for human flourishing.

The essential idea of the CA is that social arrangements should aim to expand people's capabilities – their freedom to promote or achieve valuable beings and doings. Following Aristotle, the capabilities of a person have been associated with human flourishing, which suggests they can be realized in many different ways (Nussbaum, 2000). This image helps to capture the multidimensional nature of child development.[5]

Capability is defined as "the various combinations of functionings (beings and doings) that the person can achieve. Capability is, thus, a set of vectors of functionings, reflecting the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another . . . to choose from possible livings" (Sen, 1992: 40). Put differently, they are "the substantive freedoms he or she enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value" (Sen, 1999a: 87).[6] *Functionings* are "the various things a person may value doing or being" (Sen, 1999a: 75). "The difference between a functioning and a capability is similar to the difference between an achievement and the freedom to achieve something, or between an outcome and an opportunity. All capabilities together correspond to the overall *freedom* to lead the life that a person has *reason to value*" (Robeyns, 2003: 63).

Therefore, the CA frames the range of experiences and life situations as "possible functionings". If a functioning is an achievement, whereas a capability is the ability to achieve, functionings are, in a sense, more directly related to living conditions, since they are different aspects of one's everyday life. Capabilities, in contrast, are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead (Sen, 1987: 36); in this sense capabilities are both opportunities and capacities of individuals.[7,8]

The process aspect of freedom and empowerment are highly relevant. The concept of agency captures the ability to pursue goals that one values and has reason to value. We consider that the level of agency – as a measure of autonomous action and of empowerment in the context of choice – can vary according to age, especially for some capabilities (e.g. mobility).[9] As the CA is based on people's values (including children's), participation is one of the pillars of the approach.[10] It is important to note, however, that normally children are not consulted and in the meaning of an active actor in society given by the participation of adults. Children would probably define the meaning of being an active actor or citizen differently.[11]

The CA addresses human and social diversity positively. It allows for more flexibility and adaptation to different personal capacities (talent, skills and

personal characteristics) and different cultural and societal contexts and thus "acknowledge[es] that different people, cultures and societies *may* have different values and aspirations" (Clark, 2006: 36). Other approaches often do not reflect the socio-economic realities of children's lives, their relationships with other group members in their communities (Feeny and Boyden, 2004: 18) or their values and priorities (Biggeri et al., 2006). In most social contexts "[t]he idea of them exercising rights autonomously is not only foreign but potentially undermining of family and community and even of child survival, since the child exists only as a part of a whole" (Feeny and Boyden, 2004: 18).[12]

Explicitly, what matters for children's well-being are their functionings and capabilities (Biggeri et al, 2006). Through the CA we are analysing what children are effectively able to do and to be, i.e. how well children are able to function with the goods and services at their disposal. Children may need different resources and policies to be able to enjoy the same basic capabilities and achieved functionings: a child, for instance, has very different nutritional requirements from an adult. As already mentioned, "the focus of the CA is not just on what a person actually ends up of doing, but also on what she is capable of doing, whether or not she chooses to make use of that opportunity" (Sen, 2009: 17).

In order to make this approach more dynamic, in Chapter 2 we present a new reading of capabilities looking at potential capabilities. This allows us to introduce the process of *evolving capabilities* incorporating the opportunity concept, the capacity concept and the agency concept that evolve over time. Although autonomy and agency are relevant in this process they do not mean independency and isolation, but interdependence and reciprocity, i.e. socialization.

Hence the development of each human being is the result of a complex interaction between genetic, household and environmental factors. The range of "possible functionings" for children, their "capability set", may thus be restricted due to their capacity, or be limited by their social and physical environment. Therefore, the ability to convert resources and commodities into capabilities and functionings depends on *conversion factors*. The conversion factors can be internal or societal/environmental. The "internal" conversion factors such as personal characteristics (e.g. physical conditions, sex, skills, talents, intelligence) allow individuals to convert resources and commodities (or their characteristics) into individual functionings. The conversion is also related to social factors (e.g. public policies, institutions, legal rules, traditions, social norms, discriminating practices, gender roles, societal hierarchies, power relations, public goods) and environmental factors (e.g. climate, geographical infrastructure). These factors can be related to the household's characteristics or to society. For instance, in the household, a mother's education typically enhances her children's opportunities for health and education. Indeed, the ability to convert resources and

commodities into capabilities and functionings depends on individual and social conversion factors and typically, even more, on their parents' or caregivers' capabilities. Parents and women as mothers in particular are important in creating the household environment which allows children to flourish. The failure to create such a positive environment is often due not just to the parents' incapacity but to external circumstances which contribute to the perpetuation and upgrading of negative social capital, which often does not allow children to flourish or even survive.

In embracing this approach for children, we affirm that the child is a subject of agency and capabilities and that these need to be analysed through a distinctive "lens" (Biggeri et al., 2006). The main goal is to consider children as capable agents and to promote the active participation of children in society. But how is this approach related to the new sociology of childhood?

1.2. What do we talk about when we talk about childhood?

In recent times, thank to the resonance of historical studies such as that of Ariés (1960), it is widely accepted that childhood as a concept was first elaborated at the beginning of the modern age and then assumed different meanings and directions in the late modern age. According to this point of view, childhood is a historical construction that depends on the way children are treated in society. The theoretical and methodological question of the *history of childhood categories (ibid.)* had the praise of de-naturalizing childhood and bringing back the attention on children and their practices. Childhood thus can only be taken into account if it is considered contextualized in a specific culture and social structure.

Over the years there have been different descriptions that have modified the way of thinking of, and interacting with, childhood. Particular interests, traditions and ideologies can be found in each of these descriptions, which together provide different contemporary approaches to the study of the child. Considering the plurality of these approaches is a first step to reflecting on the question, what are we talking about when we speak of "childhood"?

A first distinction that can help us is the one that is classical in recent childhood sociology between "children's life" and "images of childhood" (James et al., 1998). If by "children's life" it is normally meant their social reality, their living and being active in a specific age and in a specific place, "images of childhood" by contrast is typically meant to convey the ideas and the representations that an age, social group or an individual has of children (which can have extremely important consequences for "real" children).

Everyone talks about children but finds themselves some distance from the reality they are talking about; in no way can they fully capture that reality. This hermeneutic circumstance, which is obvious, seems to be forgotten easily, in particular when it concerns children (Richter, 1987). We can thus

try to distinguish between *children's culture* and *childhood's culture* (James et al., 1998), where the former represents the totality of the communications in which children are actively involved. Thus it is not a formalized and encoded culture, but a culture that affirms itself in the moment it expresses itself. Childhood's culture can be defined as all considerations, scientific or otherwise, that relate to children. It's the children that, with their considerations, give life to a children's culture; it's the adults that, with their conjectures, give birth to a childhood's culture (Iervese, 2006). The latter is different from the former by virtue of the presumption of representing more or less objectively children's reality.

Traditionally the dominant culture of childhood – especially in Western societies – gives particular relevance to two different approaches: (1) a *developmental* individualistic perspective, based on primary cognitive expectations concerning children's learning and (2) an *evolutionary* collectivist perspective based on primary relevance of attachment and affective dimension in children's socialization. Cognitive developmental individualism and affective evolutionary collectivism are mixed in a formula that explains children's social and personal lives: a child must be nurtured through an affective relationship and stimulated through a cognitive training; the mixture of these two social processes is considered successful for her or his socialization. The other side of this social representation is that an affective deprivation and a cognitive under-stimulation can be fatal for children's socialization, causing pain and deviance.

The dominant childhood's culture in recent years adopted a psycho-evolutionist paradigm that considered children as not yet complete (and to be completed) individuals, thus with a limited capacity for social action. Whether the child was considered as an object to be formed in view of a development, or as a source of instincts and internal drives, there was no consideration of its social participation and no idea that its meaning was historically and culturally build.

Classical sociology, both in the structural–functionalist version (represented by Talcott Parsons) and the symbolic interactionism account, focused itself on socialization processes that see the child as a naturalized object (a predefined structure subsequently determined in social interaction), instead of the main character of social processes (Parsons and Bales, 1955). In this approach we can see a connection between the sciences that deal with children and the general childhood's culture.

Following the theory of the social representation (Moscovici, 1984), the conception of childhood in the twentieth century can be interpreted according to the transformation of scientific theories (educational psychology of Freud and Piaget) in the dominating common sense in society. In particular, the naturalistic theory of psychometric development became the paradigm in the social treatment of children.

However, the mainstream culture of childhood has recently placed particular emphasis on children's self-realization (Prout, 2000) and on children's

agency (James et al., 1998; Hallett and Prout, 2003). These new cultural presuppositions lead to the promotion of children's active participation, i.e. children's self-expression (Baraldi, 2008) and children's self-determination (Murray and Hallett, 2000). Promoting children's active participation means socializing children towards an "understanding of their own competencies" (Matthews, 2003: 274); that is, to a sense of responsibility and skills in planning, designing, monitoring and managing social contexts. This new narrative introduces a fundamental ambivalence in society: children are considered as either "being" or "becoming", either active or passive, either competent or non-competent. In interaction, the primacy of children's agency and self-realization is alternative to or mixed with the primacy of their instrumental usage to realize social aims (Prout, 2000).

Inside this cultural framework, promotion of children's social participation is very innovative. In fact, it is the third option with respect to the two sides of the traditional distinction between affective and cognitive dimensions. Above all, promotion of children's social participation avoids any reference to developmental and evolutionary perspectives, as it renounces to a temporal appreciation of childhood, which explains it in the light of either a common past (evolution) or an individual future (development), observing it in its actual existence, in its relationship with its social context. In this sense, this could be considered a genuine "capabilities perspective" (Sen, 1992). But what is the childhood's culture that can be evicted by the approach oriented by *capabilities*? What are the possible horizons?

In general, the distinction between childhood's culture and children's culture has become increasingly important from the moment in which the perspective that children are individuals who can reproduce both the adult culture and "incorporate" social norms, but also produce meanings and autonomous, unique and specific practices, has been developed. This perspective turns the idea of the incapability of children on its head: it is no longer claimed, for example, that the necessary condition to be admitted to participate is the demonstration of an adequate degree of development and of appraisal. It confirms instead the strict connection between participation, differentiated competencies and personal autonomy. Participation is the autonomy's expression and the individual expresses itself in autonomous ways by participating. Autonomy has sense only *in* social participation.

In this framework, the attention given to the control and valorization of the capabilities brings one, as far as children are concerned, to address not only the childhood's culture but in particular to make visible and active the children's culture by promoting their social participation.

Social participation may be observed as "visible action" in a public social space, produced in communication processes. Adapting a social system theory (Luhmann, 1984, 2002), communication can be defined as the coordination between action and understanding, creating information in a social dimension (Iervese and Rossi, 2009). Action is a component of communication, as it can exist only through understanding: one's action

without others' understanding is deprived of social existence. Participation in communication may mean both understanding and action, but it is *visible* only as action. In fact, only action demonstrates participation, as understanding is not visible to others (understanding must be shown or demonstrated through action). Consequently, although individuals participate in communication by both acting and understanding, the idea of participation specifically implies that they are *active*.

Participation through action is common in communication processes. The term *social* participation, as it is generally used, implies something more than mere action: it implies that action is "public", that it is visible in the whole society (or community), as well as in particular interactive systems (like families or classes). In other words, "social" means (potentially) "visible for everybody", not only for a few "specialized" persons or roles (like parents, teachers, experts).

Social participation is a *visible action in public (societal) contexts*. For this reason, social participation is a clear manifestation of citizenship, intended as inclusion in a society, with full rights and opportunities.

Promotion is conceived as creation of environmental (social) conditions for an autonomous choice of participation. Promotion too is produced through communication. It is the creation of external (social) opportunities for a (social or individual) autonomous enhancement. The necessary conditions of promotion are (a) complete respect for autonomous choices and (b) renunciation of attempts to change choice perspectives from outside. Promotion of children's social participation is the creation of opportunities for children's active and visible action in society. Promotion tries to empower children's autonomous participation in social practices.

The study of children's capabilities cannot disregard the promotion of their active participation in the different social contexts. This for at least three reasons: (1) the competencies, resources and capabilities of a subject, in particular of children, are tied to the possibility of being acted, understood and being recognized as significant. In other terms, capabilities are strictly dependent on the forms (social and individual) and by the possibilities (environment) of *agency*; (2) the different forms of participation and the environmental conditions that enable its expression need to be valorized and sustained to enable them to reproduce over time: there are no "natural" *capabilities* (understood as opportunities) but only those socially built; and (3) different cultures and many social contexts that denote, and in which capabilities are built, can be considered only if they become visible along with the practices and the orientations that inspire them.

If these three points are not considered, there is the risk of tying the CA to a conventional and distant childhood's culture, incapable of taking into account cultural differences, different forms of expression and the social, political and environmental conditions that concern children. The attention given to a childhood's culture that takes seriously into account

children's culture raises an important methodological problem, not only for those who do research, but also for those who conceive interventions and policies. Studying and working on childhood is neither easy nor trivial, as children do not have the opportunity to describe themselves on an equal footing with experts or have free spaces to describe themselves.

For this reason, those interested in children have to address the problem of which methods and techniques should be used to *give voice* to a childhood that is not able to speak for itself, by creating new instruments or trying to modify instruments already used in other scientific contexts. It follows that childhood researchers and policy makers should focus their attention on the ways children are involved and considered.

The central question, *what are we talking about when we are talking about childhood*? now becomes, *how do we talk about childhood and in which way do we relate ourselves to children*? This book attempts to address this question and provide insights into issues not usually considered by adults. Thus, from a capability perspective we need not only to ask whether children have the ability to be well educated, healthy, adequately housed and clothed and well integrated into the community, but also about the process of freedom itself.

1.3. The book's roadmap

We have seen that although some of the main problems addressed by human development policies are directly related to the promotion of children's capabilities, in the CA little attention is usually paid to the specific characteristics that result from being a child.[13] Therefore, if Sen's CA has attracted considerable attention, primarily in development and welfare economics, it remains under-theorized in relation to children as well as under-explored in terms of the practical applications and methodological developments that are vital for the approach. As a new approach for investigating child issues, there are inevitably several theoretical and empirical questions to consider before the CA can become operational. How can we understand the relevance of the capability space and framework in assessing policies aimed at children's well-being? Can the relevance of a capability change with the age of human beings? What is the role of agency associated with the age and maturity of the child? Can children define their capabilities? What are the relevance conversion factors? Is adaptation in terms of preferences or values explained by age? These and other questions are naturally tackled in different parts of this book.

Having said that, our collective efforts started in 2004 with the foundation of a thematic group to explore "Children's Capabilities" at a meeting held at the annual conference of the Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA).[14] It was a small but important occasion. New issues and challenges were identified and a sense of interdependence between different research agendas was created. The need for a book delving theoretically

and practically into children's issues from a Capability Perspective was established.

The perspectives put forward here represent a serious interdisciplinary effort drawing on disciplines such as anthropology, economics, development economics, development studies, education, disability and gender studies, philosophy, sociology and urban planning.

The other 15 chapters included in this book explore children's issues from diverse theoretical, contextual and empirical perspectives, and look at children's functioning and capabilities related to issues and aspects of their lives such as child labour, education, participation, disabilities, poverty and freedom, situating them in daily life contexts, addressing the role of their environment, their relationships with peers, their role in society gender divide and measurement issues (among other things). The case studies reported represent international diversity, tackling issues in countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Italy, Peru, Uganda and UK.

In this pioneering book we highlight the fact that the CA can provide significant theoretical underpinnings for the conceptualization and measurement of child well-being, human development and poverty, and for policy and practices regarding children in matters concerning them as both individuals and a group in society. It is important to note that the theoretical and practical marriage proposed by this book goes beyond the most obvious synergies. Rather, it claims that its policy implications can make a difference to the way that we think about human development and children's well-being. Thus, part of the book explores issues related to children's well-being and the other focuses on institutions for promoting children's well-being.

For simplicity the book is divided into four parts. The first part, which includes Chapters 1–3, builds on the theoretical foundations of the CA in relation to children's agency, well-being and well-becoming with reference to selecting domains for analysis. The second part of the book, which spans Chapters 4–10, is concerned with making the CA operational and consists of several case studies that develop methods and procedures for understanding children's agency, well-being and deprivation. Many of these chapters are concerned with measurement issues. The third part of the book, which incorporates Chapters 11–14, focuses on the policy implications of developing the CA for children and is supported by several novel case studies. The final part of the book summarizes the main conclusions.

In Chapter 2, the three editors present a general framework for understanding children's well-being based on the CA. Some of the main issues concerning children are raised, and a guide to interpreting the chapters of the book is provided. The aim of this chapter is to consider how the CA can fruitfully be used as a theoretical foundation for understanding children as subjects and agents of human development. This means considering children not simply as the recipients of positive freedoms, but as active social

actors and agents within their communities with their own priorities, strategies, aspirations and potentials. In order to capture the development of children's capabilities, the concept of agency is examined and the concept evolving capabilities is introduced.

In Chapter 3, Mario Biggeri and Santosh Mehrotra define child poverty as the deprivation of basic capabilities and achieved functionings. If social or economic arrangements aim to promote capabilities, rather than income or resources, which capabilities should they promote? Indeed, the question of how to choose the most relevant domains (chosen for or by the children) is key to understanding child poverty, which is the authors' main argument. The authors explore briefly two procedures for selecting relevant dimensions, and use an open list of relevant capabilities to explore and compare the different methods used by the researchers; five methods that are generally used to choose and select domains are considered. The chapter is supplemented with two appendices: the first reviews the domains of child poverty and well-being based on various different approaches, while the second provides a concrete example of multidimensional child poverty. Making the CA operational, however, does not merely entail identifying and measuring "missing" dimensions of well-being. It involves a fundamental change in research design that begins with collecting information and continues with data elaboration methods (as described in Chapter 11).

In Chapter 4, Mario Biggeri and Renato Libanora propose tools and procedures for implementing the CA with respect to children's development. The first procedure considered addresses the problem of how to conceptualize and value children's capabilities, while the second is an evaluation tool. The tools and procedures proposed in this chapter follow on from the assumption that the selection of capabilities should be the outcome of a democratic process rooted in public scrutiny and open debate and, most importantly, that this is not exclusively the domain of adults but should be based on children's participation instead. An appendix describes the detailed questionnaire-based tools and methods used to aggregate ordinal and subjective data.

In Chapter 5, Rudolf Anich, Mario Biggeri, Renato Libanora and Stefano Mariani analyse capability deprivation amongst street children in Kampala, Uganda. The methodology augments the *ad hoc* survey presented in Chapter 4 with some qualitative participatory methods (photo essays, thematic drawings, life histories (peer interviews), mapping and focus group analyses). The data were collected from three groups of children: street children, ex-street children (i.e. "rehabilitated" children) living in institutions and a control group of children who had no "street experience". Policy implications are drawn from current policies and research findings.

In Chapter 6, Anne Kellock and Rebecca Lawthom invited children aged 8–10 to explore their own perspectives on emotional well-being using photography as a vehicle for expression (the children were attending British

primary school classes). Photography was selected as a research tool as it is a rich visual medium for communicating ideas, and can be used to communicate thoughts and feelings creatively. Using the CA, they explore the things these children think they need to achieve functionings, whether commodities are important for this purpose and how their capabilities are applied in the process of assessment.

In Chapter 7, Marisa Horna Padrón and Jérôme Ballet explore child agency and identity formation. This chapter argues that children are endowed with a capacity for agency, including situations where they seemingly appear like mere victims, and examines the capacity for agency of children in a transitional situation on the streets of Peru. Their study has identified children and adolescents who perform various activities on the streets or in the midst of the traffic, and explores the impact of these on their capabilities.

In Chapter 8, Badreddine Serrokh investigates the still largely unexplored but prominent topic of micro-finance and street children. Could solutions be sought for the future of street children based on working arrangements? Serrokh analyses whether the provision of financial services is an appropriate tool for addressing their needs. Based on a participatory research in Bangladesh, the chapter highlights the necessity of a holistic programme in which financial services are provided along with vocational training and social services for street children. Moreover, he argues that savings and credit products need to be designed and delivered in a very specific manner in order to enhance the benefits for forgotten children.

In Chapter 9, Laura Camfield and Yisak Tafere analyse the differences between Ethiopian children in relation to their caregivers with regard to their understanding of what constitutes a good life, and what is needed to achieve it. They also consider whether the CA can bridge the gap between a shared local understanding of what constitutes a good life and universal prescriptions of international bodies, such as those of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), about what is "good for children". The authors use qualitative data from group interviews and activities with a subsample of children (between 11 and 13 years of age), caregivers and community informants participating in Young Lives, an innovative long-term international research project. The chapter concludes by contrasting discrepancies between the way children and adults understand what is "good for children", and exploring the extent to which they can be usefully understood within Nussbaum's meta-framework of central capabilities.

In Chapter 10, Tindara Addabbo and Maria Laura Di Tommaso look at the possibilities of using structural equation modelling to measure the capabilities of Italian children (6–13 years old) by matching two data sets (ISTAT and Bank of Italy). The chapter focuses particularly on capabilities in two areas – "Senses, Imagination and Thought" (such as their attitude towards education, attending art classes and other extra-curricular classes, such as computing and languages) and "Leisure and Play Activities" (such

as how often children play in the playground, the games they play, their participation in sports classes). They use descriptive statistics, an ordered probit model and a structural equation model to investigate the relationships between these various indicators, the latent construct for capabilities and a set of covariates. In this way they undertake measurement using the CA.

In Chapter 11, Jean-Francois Trani, Parul Bakhshi and Mario Biggeri present an analytical and policy framework and policy implications based on the CA, which includes several concrete recommendations for research design and data collection and a case study regarding children with disabilities. In the first part of the chapter they review the main approaches to disability; in particular, they consider the individual model, the social model and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) framework through the lens of the CA before developing a framework as a guide for policy, data design and data collection. In order to understand the potential of the research framework, the authors report on an example based on data from an *ad hoc* survey carried out in Afghanistan by Handicap International. This survey is one of the first to attempt to apply the CA to disabled children.

In Chapter 12, Jérôme Ballet, Augendra Bhukuth and Katia Radja critically investigate the *education for all programme* focused on the situation of street children. Within this context, the CA can throw light on how to handle the access of street children to formal education. Any serious attempt to take the intrinsic value of education into account implies defining the quality of education in a way that is not restricted to its material and functional aspects. Quality too often remains centred on the positional and instrumental values of education. These findings have a number of policy implications, which are spelt out in turn.

In Chapter 13, Mario Biggeri, Augendra Bhukuth and Jérôme Ballet re-examine the definitions of child labour and child work through a critical use of the CA. The usual definitions are not usually centred on children, but tend to mimic adults' definitions, and downplay the gender issues. A new definition of children's activities based on the CA is proposed. This conceptual framework reveals shortcomings of the standard definitions and may reduce misconceived policy implications.

In Chapter 14, JungA Uhm, Ferdinand Lewis and Tridib Banerjee present a theoretical exploration of children's environmental capabilities by incorporating Kevin Lynch's ideas about the structure of a "good city" into the current discourse on Amartya Sen's Capability Theory. Using Lynch's performance dimensions as a normative framework, the chapter discusses how the design of the built environment could be better informed by current thinking on the CA, especially as it pertains to children and their development. The position adopted is likely to have a profound impact on the well-being of children and on childhood development. This chapter proposes

that a capability-based evaluation of the built environment can offer policy makers, urban planners and designers a new conception of the "child-friendly environment", and a normative vision of how urban planning can impose, or remove, children's lack of freedom.

In Chapter 15, Flavio Comim elaborates on some of the core issues discussed in this book with special reference to emotions and parental caring during childhood. He also considers how key conclusions can be translated into practice.

The book concludes with Chapter 16, a brief set of final remarks identifying issues for future research and summarizes key policy lessons.

We hope that our readers will find this book illuminating and will subsequently build upon our attempt to develop the CA to explore children's issues, both conceptually and for policy purposes, by viewing children as real social actors endowed with the full range of human capabilities.

Notes

1. For a bibliography please see: http://www.capabilityapproach.com/index.php. See also Hawthorn (1987), Nussbaum and Sen (1993), Nussbaum and Glover (1995), Alkire (2002), Clark (2002, 2006), Saith (2007), Comim, Alkire and Qizilbash (2008), Deneulin (2009) and Chiappero-Martinetti (2009).
2. Sen regrets that India failed to reflect on the plight of the children while undertaking developmental activities: "The country has undoubtedly progressed in all spheres . . . but the same has not been reflected in the welfare of children and their rights . . . the schemes and programmes have more or less remained the same for the past one decade", he said delivering the keynote address in a seminar on child rights (New Delhi, 19 December 2006, PTI).
3. See also Sen (1998) on the role of infant mortality rates as an indicator of human development and of the success and failure of economic policies.
4. The first panel on children was held at the 2005 HDCA in Paris. The HDCA thematic group on "Children's Capabilities" was created at the same conference (see http://capabilityapproach.org).
5. Unfortunately, today – as at the time of Lycurgus in Sparta, Aristotle in Athens or at the time of Cicerone – we cannot say that the idea of "flourishing" is "deserved" for all children. This injustice is clearly visible in conflict areas, in extremely poor areas and often for children with disabilities.
6. HDCA_Briefing_Concepts.pdf at http://www.capabilityapproach.com/index.php. See also Comim et al. (2008).
7. This leads to the equal opportunity view (see Roemer, 1998) but from a multidimensional perspective. The freedom to be healthy, educated, well-nourished and integrated is intrinsically valuable regardless of whether the human being uses these capabilities as an instrument for other goals or not.
8. "There is no difference as far as the space is concerned between focusing on functionings or on capabilities. A functioning combination is a point in such a space, whereas capability is a set of such points" (Sen, 1992: 50).
9. "In this perspective, people are viewed to be active, creative, and able to act on behalf of their aspirations. Agency is related to other approaches that stress self-determination, authentic self-direction, autonomy and so on. The concern

for agency means that participation, public debate, democratic practice, and empowerment are to be fostered alongside well-being" HDCA_Briefing_Concepts.

10. "The single most important function of the capability approach is to make *explicit* some *implicit* assumptions in the Basic Needs Approach about the value of choice and participation (and the disvalue of coercion)" (Alkire 2002: 170).
11. For instance, in rural South Asia a child is part of a community if he/she contributes to the community with his/her time; but this does not allow him/her to become empowered or to participate in community decisions. Western societies recognize active citizens in the people that produce (in particular from the Industrial Revolution onward), but as children are not allowed to work they are not full citizens. This is clearly a contradiction. Furthermore, not being productive economically does not necessarily imply inactivity.
12. The reason Sen supports ethical individualism is that if the smallest fundamental unit of moral concern is any group – such as the family or the community – then analyses will overlook any existing or potential inequalities within these units (Deneulin, 2009). For instance, in some developing countries scrutinizing the well-being of individuals reveals the relative under-nutrition, or subordination, of female children.
13. A few exceptions can be found in the education field – see Walker and Unterhalter (2007) and Chapter 2 in this book.
14. Further information is available on the HDCA website, http://www.capabilityapproach.com/

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