

The role of the Capability approach in measuring 'good work'

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Summary

presentation

- identifies gap in CA clear framework for conceptualization of work and WB missing
- identifies requirements for a conceptual framework
 - ① decide on 'space of interest'
 - ② specify normative framework to identify important functionings
 - ③ job characteristics: intrinsically and instrumentally relevant
 - ④ role of the capability set (broad vs narrow)
 - ⑤ operationalization of cap set and conversion factors

Very interesting and relevant topic!

1. Capability applications and conceptualization

What to expect from a conceptualization?

Objective and context of any capability application are critical!

- ① monitor JQ among all residents of a country
- ② measure 'employment deprivation' within an MPI
- ③ measure WB of children working in 'worst forms of child labor'
- ④ ...

A particular capability applications may

- ignore specific complications for their empirical irrelevance
- benefit from some decisions clearly following from context

The (high-level) conceptualization of the work and well-being nexus

- should encompass any such exercise
- would leave the capability approach under-specified.
 - ▶ dimensions and concept of advantage remain to be selected

2. 'Space of interest'

candidates:

- 1 well-being of an individual
- 2 jobs ('quality of work on offer in UK', "measuring 'good work'")
- 3 ...

Comments

- do we really have to decide?
- 'unit of identification'?
- implications of the concept of advantage (eg achievements vs shortfall)
- choice may have various implications, eg
 - ▶ deprivation or achievement through secondary jobs may be ignored
 - ▶ capture phenomenon of multiple jobs?
 - ▶ how far can the goodness of a job be assessed independent of the individual?
 - ▶ conversely, an approach aiming at the WB of an individual has to account for these complications, too.

3. Capability set and work

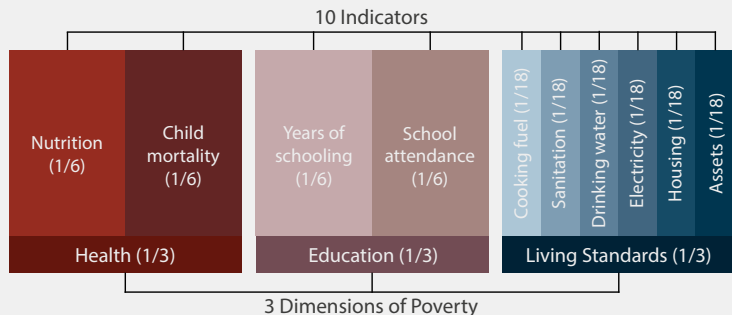
“unemployment as a reduced choice set of labour activities”

- describe and analyze unemployment, but this is not the only aspect where the capability set matters.
- ① say all jobs sb. can do (i) come with substantial deprivation in their health and (ii) substantial achievements in self-respect; the functioning vector comprising both high level of self-respect and good health is not in the capability set. - each dimension matters for capability set
- ② deprivation of capability set may even matter if individual achieves high functioning outcomes in most or all dimensions considered relevant (“healthy slave”)

4. Characteristic providing activity vs dimension of WB

- Considering work conceptually as a characteristic-providing activity is well-compatible with a dimension of 'work' or 'employment' in measurement exercises (eg poverty or JQ).

Example: Global MPI (Source: OPHI)



- So why this 'detour' of work as characteristic-providing activity?

5. Indicators and deprivation

- ① identify critical shortfall in functioning (e.g., occupational disease)
 - ▶ direct measurement of deprivation
 - ▶ assumption: un-deprived not in capability set
- ② bad JC (e.g. high exposure to specific chemicals or heat)
 - ▶ indirect deprivation measurement (JC-based)
 - ▶ assumption or evidence: JC usually results in deprivation of one or more functionings
- ③ absence of good JC (e.g. significant scope for decision making)
 - ▶ assumption or evidence: given level translates into sufficiently high functioning outcome (e.g., self-respect)

complications:

- second jobs, voluntary work
- individual specific conversion factors