

Capability approach and the structured pluralism*

Abordagem da capacidade e o pluralismo estruturado

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Resumo: nosso principal objetivo é apresentar a Abordagem das Capacitações como um caso de Pluralismo Estruturado, como uma estratégia abrangente para analisar fenômenos multidimensionais. A concepção de Pluralismo Estruturado implica um ambiente plural no qual a coexistência de diferentes visões de um mesmo tema possa ser debatida e até mesmo ajudar na compreensão de uma realidade complexa e mutável. A Abordagem das Capacitações é apresentada colocando em evidência sua natureza pluralista e, nesse sentido, Estruturada. Há também uso comum de termos e diversidade metodológica, especialmente quando estudos empíricos relacionados à abordagem são realizados. O pluralismo é intrínseco à Abordagem das Capacitações, até mesmo em um sentido simbólico, quando a palavra "abordagem" é usada em vez de "teoria". Ademais, a Abordagem das Capacitações tem por objetivo não apenas mudar a compreensão da realidade, mas influenciar políticas públicas que possam melhorar as condições de vida das pessoas.

Palavras-chave: Pluralismo. Pluralismo estruturado. Capacitações. Abordagem das capacitações.

Abstract: our main goal is to present the Capability Approach as a case of Structured Pluralism, as a comprehensive strategy to analyze multidimensional phenomena. The concept of Structured Pluralism requires a plural environment where the coexistence of different views of the same subject may be debated and even help each other in the comprehension of a complex and changeable reality. The Capability Approach is presented by putting in evidence its pluralistic essence wherefore Structured. There is a common use of terms and methodological diversity too, especially when empirical studies related to it are pursued. The pluralism is intrinsic in the Capability Approach, even in a symbolical sense when the word "approach" is used instead of "theory". The Capability Approach moreover has that crucial objective of changing the comprehension of reality and influencing the public policies that can improve the conditions of people's life at the end.

Keywords: Pluralism. Structured Pluralism. Capabilities. Capability Approach.

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1. Introduction: motion and emotions in Economics schools

In the early 2000s, at the beginning of Fullbrook's (2008) book about Pluralism in economics, the author reports some students' rebellions about the learning of economics in Harvard, Cambridge, and other centers at the dawn of the current century. The mood against monism in economics was in the air even before those events. They were looking for new viewpoints in contrast to the unrealism and dogmatism presented in most parts of the teaching of that supposed science. That general claim was found to highlight that the economics taught in most parts of the universities over the world could not handle the actual problems of our society and, at the same time, the possibility of contestation and critical reflection was almost denied in most of the schools that follow the mainstream.

According to Sen (2006), in 1992 an advertisement in the American Economic Review has been released by renamed economists like D. McCloskey, Uskali Maki, and George Hodson and signed by many others, including many laureate's ones. In the following year, ICAPE (International Confederation of Associations for Pluralism in Economics) was created. It was clear that a change was needed to amplify the diversity and to diminish the dogmatism inside the economic thought of those times.

Although these movements were not coordinated and did not take place in the same country and at the same time, they have an idea (or ideal) in common that is not usually understood and well-debated: pluralist economics. It reemerged as an important issue discussed by many economists from the end of the eighties until nowadays, mainly those not attached to the mainstream schools. Meanwhile, economics is not isolated from other social sciences and its development over the centuries has been intimately connected with the natural sciences. In this sense, what was the role of the pluralist matter in other sciences?

Kellert *et al.* (2006) argues that, concerning the natural sciences, a single approach cannot be enough to explain the complexity of the phenomena. This understanding of the difficulty of the full comprehension of reality spreads to issues of methodology and philosophy. Fullbrook (2008) as well poses these questions of the pluralism in science quoting the debate of it in physics for one special reason, economics has used that science as a reference for itself during all its formulation as a social science. The author shows how beneficial was the

pluralism to the development of physics and how harmful is the monopoly of neoclassical economics recently.

In this sense, the pluralism for economic issues is undoubtedly relevant and necessary to cope with a complex and changeable reality. However, which pluralism might be considered? This article presents the Structured Pluralism which is the one that fits better in a wider view of pluralism and permits the coexistence of different streams in the economic thought at the same time that a fair dialogue between them can take place.

Moreover, an example of the applicability of this pluralism is shown: The Capability Approach. This framework makes that different schools of thought work together using different methodologies and theories, mainly because there is not a specific theory in itself but concepts, definitions, and goals that must be followed whether a researcher wants to use that approach. The relevance of that framework is going to be demonstrated as a result of the achievements of the pluralism when properly worked.

This paper has three sections besides the introduction and the final remarks. In the first section, some important remarks about pluralism in general are debated. The second section explores the Structured Pluralism defined by Sheila Dow as a more workable definition of pluralism. In section three, the Capability Approach is explained and demonstrated as a case of Structured Pluralism as well.

2. Searching for Pluralism

Fernandez (2011) synthesizes the relevance and the necessity of pluralism when argues about the role of the methodology on it. Multiples methodologies must co-exist and it is related to democratic principles of having different voices and different points of view about the same subject, as it takes place in politics, for example. Moreover, there is a pragmatic necessity on pluralism too in order to avoid the monism of one single voice, especially considering that the monistic view might be wrong and the diversity of thought might contribute to amplify the comprehension of economical phenomena.

Bianchi (1992) presents some comments made by Neville Keynes when the study of economics encountered an important dispute between two schools, at the begging of the XX century: English classical economics and the German historical school. According to Bianchi (1992, p. 136) “the controversy between these two

currents of thought reigned an old object of dispute: the pendency between deduction and induction as a source of scientific knowledge”. She argues that the English economist advocates that both methodologies should be maintained because both have their merits and failures and even combined, as did by Adam Smith in his work. It is difficult to show that one of the founders of the field of knowledge called Economics had a pluralistic approach. Nevertheless, the disputes among the schools of thought in the sense that exists today did not take place, then it was certainly easier to combine different methodologies.

This debate of the pluralism on economics is part of a complex matter about the philosophy of the sciences that might not be discussed deeply in this article. Nevertheless, an overview of it is necessary to clarify its relations. Caldwell (1991), contributes to the discussion presenting the main approaches of science defined by Philosophy to explain which definition of science fits better to economics according to Mark Blaug, a prominent methodologist in economics. The main theories of the philosophy of science go through Karl Popper's Falsificationism, Thomas Kuhn's Paradigms, and Imre Lakatos's Scientific Research Programs.

For Caldwell (1991, p. 96), “Popper offers some prescriptions for a proper scientific procedure. The most important of these is that scientists should test theories – the more severely the better – in an attempt to refute them”. This theory was vulgarly called Falsificationism, despite other nuances of his theory, as explained by Hands (2001), in his thirteen theses, remembers that the Popperian Tradition is not that simple as it seems. Meanwhile, some blind spots were identified in his theory because they could not give answers to the complexity of the relations of scientific research over History.

In the sixties, an alternative view to Popper's Falsificationism was presented by Thomas Kuhn who contributed to the debate proposing an approach more related to sociology to define the science. Nevertheless, Kuhn's explanations had its limitations too, mainly because it was too wide and not effective to evaluate what is a science or not, or which should be considered good science and bad science. In other words, Kuhn's definition missed a normative sense. Caldwell (1991, p. 97) quotes that “Mark Blaug faced a dilemma. Popper's normative philosophy of science was too strict, but Kuhn's relativism was too lax.”

Imre Lakatos, in his turn, presented the Methodology of the Scientific Research Program (MSRP) which could cope with the fragilities of both views, proposing a prescriptive content, it means, explicit criteria of what should do the scientists as well as considering a broader conception of the research program of the scientific community in sociological and ceremonial senses. Lakatos' framework fits on Blaug's view of economics, however, Caldwell (1991) makes important considerations that must be taken into account for economics reinforcing that the universal criteria coming from MSRP are as well too strict whether applied to that social science.

Caldwell (1991) proposes an alternative view as a middle ground between relativism and the universal criteria, his Critical Pluralism which is mostly defined by acceptable methodological differences - up to a limit of common criteria - and a grace period when new methodologies should not be criticized. Meanwhile that definition of pluralism is hardly applied in the controversial community of economists.

Fernandez (2011) remarks that most parts of the ideas that are discussed nowadays in mainstream economics – like bounded rationality, radical uncertainty, and institutions – were initially formulated by heterodox economists and were too criticized when they emerged. Paradoxically, those ideas were incorporated by economics and are at the frontier of the mainstream research programs. In those cases, the dominant research program attacked mercilessly the new ideas and new research programs as soon as they appear, showing that the pluralism is unusual at the core of that social science. Another issue is the difficulty to establish a common criteria applied to every different methodology. Caldwell's metaphor of the teacher that might consider the diversity of students – like methodologies - is not properly comparable. Who should define that criteria and how it should be established? Therefore, Caldwell's definition of pluralism is too difficult to be fully applied in Economics.

3. The Structured Pluralism of Dow

Dow (2004, p. 281)'s view of pluralism is “The argument for methodological pluralism (...) is in general held with uncertainty, then there is no basis for identifying one best way of building knowledge.”. Thus, she argues that reality is an open system whose changes are constants and continuous and this is

an epistemological crucial argument for the plurality of methodologies. As she explains further in her article: “Variety is seen as producing a more robust basis for knowledge than any single, conclusive methodology” (Dow, 2004, p. 281).

Furthermore, that author highlights as well the definitions of the school of thought to exemplify a practical consequence of the monist disputes. The differences between schools of thought are initially considered by their different methodological frameworks. In another moment, this view changed for considering the theoretical differences by themselves. Finally, the difference is mostly backed up by ideology.

Moreover, Dow (2004) appeals to many issues discussed by Thomas Kuhn and his approach of philosophy science, despite its difficulty to fit that view in the social science and the tendency to the monism of that author. The existence of different paradigms could take place in science and the incommensurability between those paradigms led to the occurrence of problems of communication between them. In other words, the consequence of that system of incommensurable theories and different hypotheses between paradigms leads to a deaf debate where everybody talks and nobody is understood.

A possible solution for that matter according to Dow (2004, p. 287) is the Structured Pluralism, presented as “a range of methodological approaches to economics which, like the range of social structures”, should be built with some common ground of understanding, by language and some shared meaning of terms by different schools of thought. Using those procedures, a real debate between them might take place. The language and the tenets within each school of thought might be clearly exposed to clarify their main differences and to better comprehend what they are, in a more substantial sense than exposed by Caldwell (1991) in his Critical Pluralism.

The Structured Pluralism might be seen as a step further in the debate about pluralism, especially compared to other methodological pluralisms. It has an ontological approach, considering that the plurality searched by Dow (2004) is given by the principles of each theory and the communication between them. Thus, that contact and exchange between different schools of thought are permitted by language, shared meanings and efforts to define a common ground of understanding rather than a minimum criteria of methodologies. Indeed, the

methodologies might be the subject of debate and considered at a certain point, however they are not at heart of it.

Meanwhile, is that possible to have a real dialogue between different schools of thought aiming to reach a scientific common target in the real world? In the debates of magazines, TV shows, or those debates available on the internet, economists exchange of different ideas mostly seems more a fight of roman gladiators in an arena where all resources available to win the opponent are used to impose the beliefs of one part against the others. Fallacies, empty rhetoric, and common sense are usually applied to overcome the other economist, whatever it costs in terms of logic or empirical evidence. Even within the economic departments, a properly pluralist dialogue is hard to happen. In a few moments and specific initiatives, a profitable discussion occurs.

It is not just a matter of theoretical dialogue within the social science or philosophy of science. The tendency to monism in economics has a high opportunity cost because it impacts directly the life of people. It affects directly the welfare of society and it is worth having a plural approach that considers the complexity the reality and its constant changes.

That is the reason why this article highlights one of these situations where the Structured Pluralism is exercised, at least in the theoretical sense: The Capability Approach. It is a case where the consequences of using Structured Pluralism are available, sharing a particular content and aiming the same target, which is not even possible at most of the debates or other actions together among different schools of thought. The next section is going to explore how it is done.

4. What is the Capability Approach and Why it is an Example of Structured Pluralism?

The Capability Approach is a framework developed with the contribution of many theorists, firstly by the economist and philosopher Amartya Sen and by the philosopher Martha Nussbaum. Both authors have been engaged in developing that approach since the eighties, focusing on the insufficiency of the notion of economic development prevailing in mainstream economics and the public policies, mostly related to metrics like income, consumption, and so on. It is important to highlight that they do not dismiss those metrics of development, but rather they are concerned to amplify them, considering individual aspects of the

development, proposing new tools to comprehend that dynamic and, finally bringing philosophical support for that framework (Robeyns, 2005).

The article that can be considered the starting point of the development of the Capability Approach is the “Equality of What?” by Amartya Sen, published in 1979. In this text, Sen is dialoguing mainly with the philosopher John Rawls who published the book “A Theory of Justice” released in 1971 which had a great repercussion for economics, law, and philosophy. The article of Sen presents three types of equality: i) utilitarian equality; ii) total utility equality; and (iii) Rawlsian equality, highlighting that those three notions of equality had serious limitations at the same time that he presents a proposal of “Basic Capability Equality” (Sen, 1979).

This memorable article achieved many goals at once. Firstly, Sen brought an interdisciplinary debate when he decided to choose equality as an issue, which is intimately connected with many areas of knowledge like economics, philosophy, and politics, for example. Secondly, choosing it, he highlighted the excess of the simplicity of tenets of neoclassical economics, school of thought which he is egress. However, those questions were not new to him. Sen (1977) has already criticized the utilitarian principles of the rationality of neoclassical economics in his article "Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory". It is the *modus operandi* of many auspicious economists to say the truth. Thirdly, Sen (1979) argued that the Rawlsian's theory of justice had limitations, detailing its implications, even with his explicit admiration for that view. Fourthly, the author proposed an audacious draft of a framework that could encompass his critics of those matters: the seeds of the Capability Approach were sown.

In short, he got to advance by these two flanks at the same time, the moral philosophy of Rawls and the utilitarian principles of the neoclassical economics aiming to bring his contribution of the controversial theme of equality, rescuing an old tradition presented in the forgotten texts of Stuart Mill as showed by Alkire *et al* (2008) and Nussbaum (2011, p. 53). Stuart Mill is one of the fathers of the utilitarian view and himself was in favor of a more plural utility, which means qualitative distinctions within the utility not as those that became the most commonly used in economics.

It is difficult to avoid the comparison of what Amartya Sen did with his Capability Approach with what Keynes (1936) proposed in the first pages of the

General Theory. Both economists criticized the core of the neoclassical economics of their times (and which both were egress) proposing something different in the place of principles that they disagreed and, from there, they tried to build their approach or theories. Another matter that a comparison possible is both economists were worried about the political impact of their ideas, as explained by Caldwell (1991) when he mentions Keynes. Both authors had normative intentions in the formulation of the General Theory and the Capability Approach to mitigating or some the matters that they considered the most important issues of their time. (Alkire; Qizilbash; Comim, 2008; Alkire, 2008)

Nevertheless, there are some differences too, not just related to the historical moment in which they lived and wrote that. The Capability approach is naturally more interdisciplinary and pluralistic than the General Theory. It seems to be obvious but the semantic difference between the words approach and theory changes what might be waited of them. Sen's (1979) article was having a dialogue not just within the economics, but especially with the philosophy as well. On the other hand, it is difficult to affirm that Keynes' (1936) article is so connected with the philosophy directly, even because Sen's subject was equality in a broad definition. There is no doubt that whatever concern related to criticizing hardcore economics has philosophical implications, however, Keynes is mostly debating his issues with other economists like Marshall, Smith, Ricardo. His focus is not to have a plural or interdisciplinary approach like Sen.

At the same time, it is important to restate that Amartya Sen does not disregard the income or other usual metrics of development, but he was looking for a new approach that considered income as part of it but not necessarily the most important or the only factor of analysis. Moreover, he was aware of the process inherent in the capability, agency, and freedom of the whole process. To understand better these terms, the explanation of the Capability Approach and its concepts is going to be detailed deeper in this section.

From the dawn of the approach created by Amartya Sen and the following decades, especially with the contributions of the philosopher Martha Nussbaum, those ideas were being refined and got to influence important reports over the world. Its formulation has influenced the Human Development Report of the United Nations in the Millennium Development Goals or even helped with the popularization of the concept of human capital, broadly used outside of the

academic circles. (Alkire; Qizilbash; Comim, 2008; Alkire, 2008). In that sense, it is necessary to define what is understood by the Capability Approach and its contents in order to comprehend its intrinsic relation to Pluralism.

The Capability Approach is a broad normative framework for evaluation and assessment of individual well-being and social arrangements, the design of policies, and proposals about social change in society. It is used in a wide range of fields, most prominently in the development studies, welfare economics, social policy, and political philosophy. It can be used to evaluate several aspects of people's well-being, such as inequality, poverty, the well-being of the individual or the average well-being of the members of a group (Robeyns, 2005, p. 94)

The same author tries to make some important remarks about it for better explaining:

Note that the capability approach is not a theory that can explain poverty, inequality, or well-being; instead, it rather provides a tool and a framework within which to conceptualize and evaluate these phenomena. Applying the capability approach to issues of policy and social change will therefore often require the addition of explanatory theories (Robeyns, 2005, p. 94).

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Other authors reinforce that view of the Capability Approach like Alkire (2008, p. 27) when she says that “the capability approach as a work in progress, develop various applications of it, critically examine which insights various techniques embody, and/or debate whether and how these analyses demonstrably differ from alternative approaches.” In the same direction, Martha Nussbaum (2011, p.17) argues that “the notion of capabilities as a comparative measure rather than as a basis for normative political theory”. She goes further in the sense of affirming that the reports of the United Nations “they simply aim to package comparative information in such a way as to reorient the development and policy

debate, rather than to advance a systematic economic or political theory.”
Nussbaum (2011, p. 17)

It means that the Capability Approach does not have a theory in itself but it is an open framework that uses other theories to reach its objectives as an approach. Furthermore, in the most recent development of that approach, pluralism is admitted within it.

In sum, there is much pluralism within the capability approach. Someone who considers herself a capabilitarian or capability thinker does not need to endorse all capability theories (...). It is presumably coherent to be a Marxist capabilitarian, and it is presumably also coherent to be a libertarian capabilitarian, but it is not coherent to endorse the views taken by those two positions since they are incompatible (Robeyns, 2017, p. 80).

Moreover, this author makes a remarkable effort to standardize the main concepts, tenets, and meanings of that framework. That is the reason why the Structured Pluralism is identified in it according to the definitions of Dow (2004). Robeyns (2017) works on a common ground of understanding provided by language and the possibility of having many different methodological and theoretical approaches as well.

The modular view of the Capability Approach is far from being a consensus and this debate is too recent to for being the final word, however, it provides a clear definition of how it might be understood, applied, and handled for those who want to be a capabilitarian. At the same time, the modular view shows how it is difficult to apply Structured Pluralism. The modules proposed by Robeyns (2017) are as follows:

The modular view of the capability approach according Robenys (2017)

The A-module: the non-optional core

A1: Functionings and capabilities as core concepts

A2: Functionings and capabilities are value-neutral categories

A3: Conversion factors

A4: The distinction between means and ends

A5: Functionings and/or capabilities form the evaluative space

A6: Other dimensions of ultimate value

- A7: Value pluralism
- A8: Valuing each person as an end

The B-modules: non-optional modules with optional content

- B1: The purpose of the capability theory
- B2: The selection of dimensions
- B3: An account of human diversity
- B4: An account of agency
- B5: An account of structural constraints
- B6: The choice between functionings, capabilities, or both
- B7: Meta-theoretical commitments

The C-modules: contingent modules

- C1: Additional ontological and explanatory theories
- C2: Weighing dimensions
- C3: Methods for empirical analysis
- C4: Additional normative principles and concerns

Robeyns (2017) affirms that module A has compulsory definitions that must be followed to be considered the tenets of that approach. Furthermore, she explains some key-concepts like functioning and capabilities as the most important one of that framework, related to the modules A1 and A2. Therefore, the distinction between these two main definitions needs to be clearly explained. The concept of capabilities involves opportunities and freedom in obtaining and achieving the functioning, it means the capabilities is the possibility of achieving what one wants, while functioning is precisely what the individual pursues. Robeyns gives some examples of our routine aiming to clarify that distinction. One of them is about a trip. When someone can travel somewhere he/she wants, it means, has all the conditions necessary to pursue that, this is a capability. The functioning is when this trip is done.

The distinction of means and ends (A4), the conversion factor (module A3), the value pluralism (A7), and so on, are other concepts that will be presented in this article for a better comprehension of the Capability Approach. The module

related to the conversion factors and the capabilities and functioning as a form of informational space has to do with how an individual can convert resources into functioning. The author uses the example of using a bicycle that, depending on the conversion factor, can be used as a means of transportation and leisure. In the case of insufficiency of these factors, such as lack of physical condition of the individual or lack of condition of the pathway, the functioning cannot be achieved.

Regarding the concept of the informational space of the approach, Robeyns (2017) argues that the capabilities of an individual and their functioning allow for evaluation, comparison between individuals, or allow decision-making about which functionings an individual should look for. In other words, the definition of people's capacities and functioning implies the formation of an informational space that can have a normative and pragmatic purpose at various levels.

The specific module of value pluralism highlights that the Capability Approach by itself needs other values, principles, and theoretical support of other knowledge to fulfill its multidimensional nature. It is not merely the name of pluralism applied to a module of the approach that makes it related to the Structured Pluralism. In that case, the utilization of those concepts of capabilities and functionings is empty without other values and is not expressed in the own approach. Therefore, this module is crucial to the comprehension of that approach and it is an important exercise of Structured Pluralism at the same time.

In sum, module A is the core of the approach and at the same time allows that different theory to interact inside of it. The modules B and C are theoretical refinements of that approach that do not need to be followed as already explained in this section, but are desirable. Robeyns (2017) gives all along with her book many examples of a common routine and the applicability of those concepts and modules aiming for a better comprehension of each module or each concept. That effort is a sample of how difficult is to apply Structured Pluralism. The abstraction and the caution in using many terms related to that approach are the consequences of a properly Structured Pluralism.

Insofar that the approach has developed, there is no doubt about broad coverage of the approach, its ethical implications, its pluralistic nature, and its contribution in terms of the notion of development. However, the more complex are the notions, the more difficult is to cope with that complexity and richness of content. Thus, how should it be measured? Which metrics should be used or

created to verify some matters presented by the approach? The main critics aimed the approach goes exactly in that direction.

Comim's (2008) argument, in his turn, highlights that the process of measurement is the translation of abstract terms into units that can be used in a normative sense. At the same time, the specification of that measurement must be defined as its dimensions as well, to solve concrete problems. This debate makes reflects what is behind the necessity of measurement. The author argues that the measurement of the Capability Approach must consider three different levels: i) a conceptual level; an empirical level and examples of the applicability of those measurements on the approach. Inside of these three parts, there is a detailed description of the procedures and tenets involved in empirical research of capabilities and functionings.

Although the core of the Capability Approach was mostly formulated in blind spots of neoclassical economics, many of these instruments were usually applied by that school of thought in some theoretical and empirical studies of the Capability Approach, like ANOVA, Probit, and MANOVA. At other times, the instruments applied are more connected to other areas like Anthropology, Psychology. Thus, it is associated with another matter of Structured Pluralism: different methodologies permeating the same approach. The possibility of combining different methodologies is the heart of it.

Comim (2008) is explicit on it when he explains the practical issues of measuring capabilities. He emphasizes the need for clear principles to guide the process of choosing data, creating indicators, and so on. Those principles will support the methodology chosen by the researcher among all the possible methodologies that could be chosen. The research must be conscious of the choices he might and the target he has.

From the definitions of the Capability Approach and the operationalization, it is possible to verify that the pluralism is intrinsic in its formulation and is even a principle clearly defined. Furthermore, the Structured Pluralism of Dow (2008) is applied in the sense of language and terms shared and common among researchers and at the methodological level while allows the diversity of instruments depending on the empirical study proposed.

It is important to remember that the pluralism that occurs in that framework are theoretical guidelines that might eventually not be followed by those who use

that approach in a practical sense. The behavior of those who follow that approach may be analogous as somebody who follows dogmatically a specific school of thought. Meanwhile, even whether it eventually happens, it is worth to.

5. Final Remarks

This paper has the goal of presenting the Capability Approach as a case where the Structured Pluralism is applied. In this sense, some concepts of pluralism were presented. At the same time, the importance of it was as well highlighted to show how it can contribute to science. The Structured Pluralism of Sheila Dow (2004) has been chosen as a concept with a more suitable definition.

Secondly, the Capability Approach was demonstrated as an example of Structured Pluralism. Aiming to show the relationship between those two, the framework needed to be detailed at a certain level. The Modular View of Robeyns (2017) was used to present that relation mainly because it is strongly systematized. Given the complexity of its definitions, a deeper discussion involving all the modules presented by the author was not possible. Just some main tenets of it were explored as well as some practical examples.

The crucial issues of the approach which permits considering it as a case of Structured Pluralism were shown, as the common use of terms and the methodological diversity that takes place when empirical studies related to it are pursued. By all means, the pluralism is intrinsic in it, even in a symbolical sense when the word "approach" is used instead of "theory".

The Capability Approach is a remarkable example of Structured Pluralism in its effort of allowing different theories to work together. The complexity of this effort derives from a reality that changes constantly as an open system. Thus, to be stuck in one theoretical framework became dangerous. The monism can easily become dogmatism and there is nothing worse than it when we talk about the contribution of the social sciences to improve the life of people. The Capability Approach undoubtedly has that crucial objective of changing the comprehension of reality and to influence the public policies that can improve the conditions of people at the end.

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