

ESF SCSS EXPLORATORY WORKSHOP

Education and the Capability Approach – Towards a European Perspective for Welfare Service Research

Scientific Report

Münster, **Germany May 3-5, 2007**

Conveyed by
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1. Executive Summary

The European Science Foundation (ESF) Exploratory Workshop on Education and the Capability Approach – Towards a European Perspective for Welfare Service Research was held in *Münster, Germany on 3 - 5 May 2007*. Twenty-two participants from different disciplines (Development Studies, Economics, Education, Geography, Social Work and Sociology) from eleven countries (England, France, Finland, Germany; Italy, Lithuania; The Netherlands; Poland; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland) actively attended the meeting³.

The workshop was more or less managed and delivered as designed and was successful in any respect. All participants agreed that a book will be published – the contributions which are based on the papers of the workshop will be submitted until September 2007. Even more important: collaborative research projects will be conducted in the context of the unit Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities in EU-FP7. In order to do so, other further meetings of this highly innovative and extraordinary productive group will be organised.

Analytically the contributions and discussions of the workshop were based on the capabilities approach (CA) which is considered as a philosophical approach to social justice, a scientific approach to research welfare production on a macro level and well-being on a micro level and eventually as a potentially new practically adoptable fundament for social policy and social service delivery. In the conference the CA served as a heuristic framework for the endeavour to initiate innovative collaborative European research actions investigating the complex relation of education and welfare against the background of major economic, political and cultural transformations within and across European societies. In terms of content the Exploratory Workshop was intersected in five subsections. In a more fundamentally oriented section the basic possibilities and problems in investigating Education and welfare from a perspective of the capabilities approach – and its more conventional alternatives - were discussed. On this basis an outline for a European perspective for welfare Services, education, and welfare was developed. A third section assessed the impacts of migration and class inequalities for growing up in Europe while a fourth section discussed the potentials of a capabilities oriented mode

³ The conference room – and food - was booked for a total 25 persons. This was partly due to short-term changes (including those who ill) and impossibilities to cancel but also two back staff members responsible for organisational issues which were necessary as the meeting did not take place within the university.

of education and welfare services with respect to these problems. A final section discussed the relations of education and employment. These sections were integral part of the overall endeavour of the workshop: to assess the potential of a CA perspective to provide a framework for evaluating individual and social well-being and subsequently issues of social inequality, the efficiency of public policy measures, and the quality of educational and social welfare arrangements.

3. The central task of the ESF Exploratory Workshop “Education and the Capability Approach – Towards a European Perspective for Welfare Service Research” was to set up an interdisciplinary research network that applies the theoretical and empirical potential of the capability approach with respect to the development of a European perspective for welfare service research. Based on intensive discussions (including ‘night shifts’ during the workshop) the group agreed on a project outline. The participants of the workshop will apply for a ‘Large Scale Integrating Project’ in the section “Cooperation” within Theme 8 ‘Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities’ (SSH) of the EU’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). In accordance to the expertise and the thematic discussions of the papers given at the workshop the working title of this project is “Education, well-being and employability - Capability failure and capability growth in the transition from education to labour market”. In July 2007 a project outline will be submitted to the Nationale Kontaktstelle Sozial-, Wirtschafts- und Geisteswissenschaften of the EU office of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research in order to make sure that this thematic issue will be part of the programme discussion for the next FP7 call in 2008. With respect to this theme participants had the task to build national teams – which may involve up to three institutions. The teams already produced outlines of national-specific research priorities but also suggestion for transnational European perspectives and methodologies. These outlines are currently developed further into a collaborative bid for the future FP7 call for the socio-economic sciences and the humanities in 2008.

2. Scientific Content of the Workshop

The contributions in the workshop focussed the relation between education and welfare is a with respect to the younger generation's opportunities to participation, development, and social and individual well-being.

In the contribution of the section the basic possibilities and problems in investigating education and welfare from a perspective of the capabilities approach were presented and discussed. The CA is currently one of the most broadly and fruitfully discussed approaches to social justice. The CA focuses on what people are actually able to do and to be rather than on economic growth or individual human capital accumulation as major quality of life indicator or pay off of educational investments. The contribution made clear that this – also it might have some weaknesses - might be exploited to empirical welfare and educational research both in the more qualitative analytical tradition of interpretative understanding ('verstehen') and in the inference statistically approaches of causal explanation ('erklären'). The relations and historical developments of individual and social well-being as educational and social policy issues were debated theoretically as well as in terms of their measurement in order to evaluate the efficiency of public policy measures, and the quality of educational and social welfare arrangements.

The challenges and the appropriateness to adopt these potentials were discussed in particular against the background of the recent developments of welfare service delivery and the considerable degree of social problems in new EU countries. Also the problem of path dependent assumptions within the CA were elaborated with respect of the situation in these and other EU countries. This debate was enhanced with respect of two major challenges for growing up (well) in Europe: the - most notably cultural - dynamics of migration and primarily structural dimensions of (continuing and partially growing) class inequalities. These dimensions, dealing with problems of socio-economic opportunities as well as with socio-cultural modes of recognition were interpreted and (re-)assessed in terms of the CA. The contributions of the subsequent section adapted to these interpretations. The potentials of the CA to be utilized not only in terms of a framework for theoretical and empirical evaluations but also as a basis for political and professional conceptions were presented and discussed. As a consequence an outline of a capabilities oriented mode of welfare service production was related to (not always much) differing situations in different European countries. The last section discussed the relations of education and

employment. With respect with to the situations of young persons in Europe the innovative potentials of a CA perspective became visible on the level of theoretical and empirical research on educational disadvantage as being embedded in broader social contexts. It became apparent that the particular strengths of a CA based perspective is to analyse, understand and explain differences, inequalities but also potentials for social and individual well-being which are mediated through processes of education and welfare service production. It also became apparent that the CA perspective is a fruitful alternative to more conventional approaches. These approaches also focus on the capacities individuals which are to be carefully assessed. However they tend to be one-sided in their endeavour to make them regain competitiveness and attractiveness in the eyes of potential employers on the labour market while sidestepping the notion of social and - 'considered' - individual well-being. This notion is particularly important for the alternative perspective suggested in terms of the CA. In course of the workshop it became obvious that capabilities perspective may convincingly keep the promise to integrate economical, educational and welfare perspectives for research in order to focus on developing the potential of individuals. Thus a CA perspective suggests a more refined and ambitious version of welfare service production but also of knowledge acquisition, education, and training. A basic argument was that the beneficiaries of welfare and educational institutions should be able to have at their disposal a reservoir of knowledge and competencies that allow them to steer their own development. Thus the ability to use knowledge "vitaly" and as a source of value creation was discussed as a central ability to be promoted through systematic processes of education and welfare production. From this perspective the contributions in the workshop systematically assessed the challenge of an innovative European future of social services to optimise (young) people's potential contributions to a democratic, socially and culturally integrated (and also economically successful) Europe in a way that has also positive impacts on individual social well-being.

3. Assessment of the results of the Workshop

This general perspective developed in the course of the workshop will be documented in a book publication and most notable it is the basis of a further collaborative research which will be conducted by the participants of the workshop. The workshop demonstrated that the CA perspective opens up innovative and more appropriate direction the endeavour to develop a substantial European education and welfare research. ESF Exploratory Workshops should be a platform not only to focus on the important scientific issues but also a platform for all participants to discuss and plan follow-up collaborative work. This was exactly what the Workshop “Education and the Capability Approach – Towards a European Perspective for Welfare Service” intended and successfully managed to be. The discussion and planning of follow-up collaborative research was in special sessions but also in the debate of more or less every single contribution a major focus of both the convenors and the participants of the workshop. Thus the discussions systematically resulted in a collaborative research project with the (working-)title “Education, well-being and employability - Capability failure and capability growth in the transition from education to labour market”. In accordance to the major insights and desiderata which became apparent in the course of workshop the research will focus on assessing and forecasting the impact of knowledge acquisition, training and education on economic growth and in particular on the development of individual capabilities of young adults in the transition from educational and welfare to labour market arrangements. This research project is a genuine and direct outcome of the workshop. Further (application) meetings with the participants of the workshop (and consequently the project) are currently planned.

4. Final Programme

Thursday, 03.05.07

2.00- pm Welcome
Karin Böllert
Research Director of the Faculty of Education and Social
Sciences and Senator of the University of Münster

2.15pm – 2.45pm Introduction
Hans-Uwe Otto/Holger Ziegler

THE CAPABILITY APPROACH FOR INVESTIGATING EDUCATION AND WELFARE

2.45pm – 3.30pm Capabilities as a conceptual basis for a more deliberative
approach to improving young people's well-being
John Cameron

3.30pm – 4.00pm Coffee-Break

4.00pm - 4.45pm Investigating education from a capability perspective
Sabine Andresen

4.45pm – 5.30pm Measuring capabilities - Theoretical and methodological
considerations
Enrica Chiappero Martinetti

5.30pm - 6.15pm European challenges for welfare
service research
Walter Lorenz

6.15pm Dinner

From 7pm Discussion on the possibilities of a CA based collaborative
welfare research in the EU

Friday, 04.05.07

DEVELOPING A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE FOR WELFARE SERVICE

- 9.30am – 10.15am The discourse on welfare and education in Lithuania
Giedrė Kvieskienė
- 10.15am – 11.10am Welfare and growing up in a transforming society – The case of Poland
Jerzy Krzyszkowski
- 11.00am – 11.30am *Coffee-Break*
- 11.30am – 1pm Researching within the 7th Framework of the EU.
Collaborative projects: Humanities, economics and social sciences
- 1.00pm – 2.00pm *Lunch*

CAPABILITIES, MIGRATION, CLASS AND GROWING UP

- 2.00pm – 2.45pm Class, Inequality and Growing Up
Björn Halleröd
- 2.45pm – 3.30pm Doing ethnicity and growing up
Isabell Diehm
- 3.30pm – 4.00pm *Coffee-Break*
- 4.00pm – 4.45pm Class, agency and capability
Matthias Grundmann

WELFARE SERVICES, CAPABILITIES AND YOUTH IN EUROPE

- 4.45pm – 5.30pm Young urban poor – capability deprivation and social work
Matthias Drilling
- 5.30pm – 6.15pm Welfare services and the capability approach
Mark Schrödter
- 6.15pm - 7.00pm Outlines of a capability based cooperative research and training site
Nina Oelkers
- 7.15pm *Dinner*

Saturday, 05.05.07

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND THE CAPABILITY APPROACH

9.30am – 10.15am	Disability and Disadvantage in Education - A View from a Capability Perspective <i>Lorella Terzi</i>
10.15am – 11.00am	Education, Ethics and Democratic Citizenship in Europe <i>Alejandra Boni</i>
11.00am – 11.30am	<i>Coffee-Break</i>
11.30am – 12.15pm	Just Education, Well-Being and the Quality of Life <i>Melanie Walker</i>
12.15pm – 1.00pm	Social Policy, Employability and Capabilities <i>Jean-Michel Bonvin</i>
1.00pm – 2.00pm	Perspectives for further networking <i>Hans-Uwe Otto / Holger Ziegler</i>

From 2 pm Lunch

End of the Workshop

5. Final List of Participants

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6. Statistical Information on the Participants

Age	Male	Female
Less than 35 yrs	2	1
35-55 yrs	7	7
Over 55 yrs	3	2
Country		
England		3
Germany	4 (2 Participants/ 2 convenors)	3
Italy	1	1
Lithuania		1
France	1	
Finland		1
The Netherlands	2	
Poland	1	
Spain		1
Sweden	1	
Switzerland	2	