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**Title:**

**Social justice as a normative foundation for an integrative  
developmental strategy.**

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**Summary of the thesis:**

The thesis focuses on investigating what should be regarded as foundations of justice for human development policy making by contextualizing how Rawls's primary goods and Sen's capabilities would contribute as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require under a goal oriented approach to social justice which intends to address durable poverty in society. In contextualizing and evaluating how primary goods and capabilities would contribute as informational basis for social justice, the research considers sociopolitical phenomenon of inequality trap to contextualize normative foundations for an inclusive approach to development. The ultimate goal is to evaluate and contextualize the normative foundations for justice in human development policy making under a goal oriented approach to justice aiming to address durable poverty and promote inclusive development. The methodological approach to justice bridges normative evaluation and empirical concerns to contextualize the nature and the content of policies which would advance justice in non-ideal conditions under a goal oriented approach to social justice.

## Chap.1. Introduction

The quest over the informational basis for judging what the promotion of social justice in non-ideal conditions would require has raised scholarly attention in contemporary domains of political and social inquiry particularly in the areas of theories of distributive justice and in normative economics. Since the publication of Sen's Tanner lecture entitled "Equality of What" (1980) in which he presented capabilities –individuals' real freedom to do and to be what they have a reason to value– as an alternative index of social justice to Rawls's primary social goods –basic liberties, opportunities, income, wealth and the social basis of self-respect–, philosophical debate over what should be regarded as the appropriate indexing approach for promoting distributive justice has remained unsettled. Sen has offered an internal critic to Rawls' use and interpretation of primary social goods as an index of justice for failing to take into account individuals' diversity by privileging an approach to justice which offers standardized package of social goods for everyone concerned. In Sen's view, people differ in various dimensions and conditions of their lives. Individuals' diversity, argues Sen, make people's needs to vary extensively. He thus argues that any approach for advancing social justice should take into account individuals' diversity and should also consider the real freedom people have to transform resources into valuable functionings<sup>1</sup>. He then defends capabilities as

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<sup>1</sup> Functionings are according to Sen "the beings and the doings" of people, specified as achieved statuses of individuals' existence which arise from people' actualization of their capabilities. Functionings include some individualized statuses such as being well-educated, being well-nourished, being-well housed, etc. For more information about Sen's elaboration on functionings, see Sen, *Commodities and Capabilities*, North-Holland, Amsterdam, 1985a.

the most relevant index of judging individuals' socioeconomic advantages and an informational basis for judging what the advance of social justice to improve people's lives in real life scenarios would require.

In Rawls's approach to justice, however, primary social goods are interpreted as the essential goods that people would want no matter what else their individualized interests and needs might be<sup>2</sup>. Primary goods are for Rawls the *distribuenda* in his approach to justice. Primary social goods under Rawls's approach to social justice are considered as the informational basis for judging what the promotion of social justice in society would require. While various other indexes of distributive justice have been developed and defended, each of them emphasizing some particular aspects of distributive justice, such as 'resources' for Ronald Dworkin and 'opportunities for welfare' for Joshua Cohen, Rawls's primary social goods and Sen's capabilities have remained the most influential indexes of distributive justice defended in different domains of political and social inquiry particularly in distributive justice theories and normative economics. Yet, in both domains, scholarly positions over what should ultimately be regarded as informational basis for judging what the promotion of social justice would require has not been resolved. For various reasons –which I will elaborate later–, Sen proposes a total paradigm shift from the use of Rawls's primary social goods as index of justice to his own capabilities as the only appropriate reference index of justice which would portray in relevant way what the promotion of social justice in non-ideal conditions may need to take into consideration. Nonetheless, given the unresolved

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<sup>2</sup> See Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971. p. 62



contentions in the use and interpretation of the two indexes of social justice, Sen's claimed paradigm shift from the use of primary goods to his own capabilities as index of justice requires much more elaborated scrutiny before one can make a judgment over its relevance.

Inquiries over the informational basis for judging what the promotion of social justice in non-ideal conditions would require have increasingly raised interests in contemporary political theorizing owing to the current innovative trends in human development policy studies which came to regard social justice as an essential ingredient for innovative developmental paradigm which seeks to increase collective well-being on basis of social justice<sup>3</sup>. This developmental paradigm which takes social justice as a normative basis for human development approach aiming to increase people's well-being has enjoyed a lot of international support particularly in the UN's set of Millennium Developmental goals (MDG)<sup>4</sup> which emphasized that appropriate strategies for promoting human development must include some aspects of equality and fairness among its central goals. Moreover, all the current debate over the post 2015 agenda as manifested in the 2013 Rio Summit, the 2014 Beyond 2015 meeting of CSO's in South Africa and the UN's High Level Panel on post-2015 Development Agenda, there is an important emphasis on social justice dimension of development<sup>5</sup>. If then social justice is regarded as an important dimension or even a normative foundation for human

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<sup>3</sup> See Kristnakumar, J. and Nogales, R. Public policies for wellbeing and justice. A theoretical discussion based on capability and opportunities. *International journal of Wellbeing*. Vol.5 No.3, 2015. pp. 44-62.

<sup>4</sup> See Kabeer, N. *Can the MDG's provide a pathway for social justice? The challenge of interesting inequality*. UNDP, New York, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> This observation is also made by Jaya Krisnakurmar and Ricardo Nogales in this article "Public Policies for Wellbeing with justice: A theoretical discussion based on capabilities and opportunities" in *International Journal of Wellbeing*, No.5 (3), 2015. pp. 44-62.

development policies making, one may then wonder what the promotion justice in non-ideal conditions of society would require and what would be the informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice in real life scenarios would involve. Primary social goods and capabilities as competing indexes in contemporary theories of distributive justice are key candidate as informational basis for evaluating and judging what the promotion of justice would require. They may also help to set normative guides for development policy making which would substantiate the development paradigm which would seek to increase the well-being of people via human development policy making and implementing by putting emphasis on the social justice dimension of development.

Nevertheless, primary social goods approach and capabilities approach as indexes of social justice involve many unresolved contentions associated with their use and interpretation particularly in the area of policy making. Chief among those contentions is what each of the two indexes proposes as the starting point for promoting social justice and also the content of policies which would aim to increase people's wellbeing via the promotion of social justice. For instance, under the capability approach to justice, concerns for distributive justice are firstly about individuals' social states and conditions for individuals' well-being. Hence, under the capability approach, individualized life conditions are the central basis for evaluating and judging concerns of social justice. This implies that the promotion of social justice under the normative guidance of the capability approach has to take into account individuals' diversity and other forms of individuals' difference associated with people's social conditions.

Under Rawls's primary goods approach, however, the promotion of justice puts much emphasis on the nature of social

institutions under which people live and the distributive scheme of primary social goods which would be just. For Rawls, the primary subject of justice are the fundamental arrangements of major social institutions which make the socio-political context in which people's associations and transactions take place<sup>6</sup>. Rawlsian primary goods approach to social justice propose a relevant institutional perspective for advancing social justice which can offer a relevant normative account for evaluating the social conditions under which people live.

For Rawls, the basic structure of the society or constitutional arrangements should be reasonably just so to offer the best social conditions and distributive scheme of social goods. The allocation of primary social goods should be performed under the guidance of two central normative principles, namely, the principle of equal liberties and the difference principle. The principle of equal liberty says that "each person has right to a fully adequate scheme of basic equal liberty which is compatible with a similar scheme of liberty for all"; and the second principle or the difference principle regulates how economic and social inequalities are to be regulated. It clarifies that economic and social opportunities must be attached to offices and positions open to all under fair equality of opportunities; and social and economic inequality can only be allowed when they are to benefit the least advantaged<sup>7</sup>. It is under the difference principle, which reserves a special treatment of the least advantaged, that the Rawlsian primary goods approach suggests a special treatment to those who would end up as disadvantaged after a standardized allocation of

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<sup>6</sup> A similar interpretation of Rawls's approach to justice was developed by Jaya Krishnakumar and Ricardo Nogales in this article "Public Policies for Well-being with justice: A theoretical discussion based on capabilities and opportunities" in *International Journal of Wellbeing*, No.5 (3), 2015. pp. 44-62.

<sup>7</sup> See John Rawls. *Justice as fairness: A restatement*. E. Kelly (Ed). Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007. Pp. 42-3.

primary social goods. In other words, primary social goods approach and the capabilities approach sensibly differ not only on their starting points for advancing social justice, but they suggest different scope and normative guidance for advancing distributive justice and promoting human development. These differences, which are central to the use and interpretation of two indexes of distributive justice, raise some fundamental questions particularly whether Rawls's primary social goods approach and Sen's capabilities approach would lead to similar judgments of what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions would require whenever one considers each of the two indexes as informational basis for judging the nature and content of justice enhancing policies which would aim to promote distributive justice, inclusive development and collective well-being in society.

It may be important to clarify why it is so important to focus on both primary social goods and capabilities instead of relying on one index of justice as informational basis for judging what the promotion of social justice would require. Rawls's primary social goods are usually interpreted as resources broadly understood<sup>8</sup>. Primary goods focused approach to justice takes a strong institutional approach to the promotion of social justice. The establishment of reasonably just social institutions is regarded as the normative foundation for distributive justice. Yet, in order to build capabilities – real opportunity for people to be and to do what they have a reason to value–, social conditions and the context of justice are important parameters for improving people's lives. Rawlsian primary social goods approach to justice is a promising normative account for

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<sup>8</sup> See Robeyns, Ingrid and Harry Brighouse "Introduction: Social primary goods and capabilities as metrics of justice" in *Measuring Justice: Primary goods and capabilities*. Brighouse, Harry and Ingrid Robeyns, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp. 1-15.

political institutions building and the adjustment of social conditions for people in society. Moreover, building capabilities for people to promote collective well-being and distributive justice would require strong institutional input and other social adjustments. Rawls's primary goods focused approach to justice and its institutional focus has a potential to offer a relevant normative guide which would supplement in relevant way Sen's capability approach to justice.

In other words, Sen's capabilities approach to justice may be supplemented by Rawlsian primary social goods approach whenever we seek to build a justice based strategy which would improve individuals' life conditions in society and promote collective well-being with justice as a strategy for human development. The fundamental hypothesis behind the use of both indexes of justice is therefore that Sen's capability approach to justice still needs Rawlsian primary social goods approach in designing justice enhancing policy aiming to advance justice in non-ideal conditions. Hence, the evaluation of how primary goods and capabilities can jointly or independently contribute to building a justice based strategy for addressing concrete sociopolitical concerns in society may need to re-examine the compatibility and the incompatibility theses on the use and interpretation of primary social goods and capabilities, and some of central critics put forward by the capability theorists and supporters of the Rawlsian primary social goods approach on the use and interpretation of the two indexes of social justice. The compatibility thesis is based on a normative assumption that primary social goods and capabilities are complementary indexes of justice and can jointly contribute in conceptualizing and evaluating justice enhancing policies and guiding their implementation in society. Incompatibility thesis is grounded on the normative assumption that primary social

goods and capabilities differ in their contents and what they suggest as normative foundations for justice; hence, the two indexes can lead to different judgments about what the promotion of social justice would require. Therefore, there is need to re-examine these contentions and make a relevant judgment on how the two indexes of justice can contribute in policy making strategies with an aim to solve concrete sociopolitical concerns in society.

Contemporary analysis on the use and interpretation Rawls's primary social goods and Sen's capabilities as indexes of justice has mainly used three strategies. The first strategy has been to defend abstract foundations for theory-building by using either primary goods or capabilities. This strategy led scholars to defend either primary goods focused approach or capabilities focused approach to justice. The second strategy mainly used by Rawlsian scholars has been to focus on primary social goods and to explore how they can be adapted to meet some of the criticisms put forward by capability theorists. A third strategy used mainly by capability theorists has been to resort to case studies to demonstrate how certain forms of inequalities which are considered as instances of social injustice may not be appropriately addressed under the Rawlsian primary goods focused framework to distributive justice<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless, from the three approaches used in the study of the two indexes of justice, tensions on the use and interpretation of both indexes have not been resolved. Extended inquiry is needed to elucidate what should be regarded as an appropriate basis for judging what the promotion of social justice would require and how the two indexes of justice may jointly or

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<sup>9</sup> See Robeyns, Ingrid and Harry Brighouse "Introduction: Social primary goods and capabilities as metrics of justice" in *Measuring Justice: Primary goods and capabilities*. Brighouse, Harry and Ingrid Robeyns, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp. 1-15.

independently contribute for justice enhancing policy making in a concrete area of social inquiry (in this case: human development policy making).

While those who argue in favor of Rawls's primary social goods approach to justice such as Thomas Pogge and Erin Kelly, and those who are more sympathetic to Sen's capability approach to social justice such as Elisabeth Anderson and Richard Arneson tried to address some challenges arising from the use and interpretation of the two indexes of justice, their analysis remained only on descriptive level, focusing on some domains and dimensions of distributive justice. Contemporary explorations have not focused on the content of the two indexes of justice to offer a more complete and systematic study which would clarify how content based approach would respond to existing contentions on the compatibility and incompatibility theses and resolve existing contentions on the use and interpretation of the two indexes of justice for their better referential use in the area of human development policy making. This research project intends to make innovative contributions to the use and interpretation of the two indexes of justice by reexamining the challenges put forwards by Rawlsians and capability theorists on the compatibility and incompatibility theses as a way of developing a more refined and complete strategy which would help to understand and contextualize what the promotion of social justice in non-ideal conditions would require and how the two indexes of justice can better be used and interpreted in the area of human development policy making.

The thesis offers innovative horizons for resolving existing contentions on the use and interpretation of Rawls's primary social goods and Sen's capabilities as informational basis for judging what advancing social justice in non-ideal conditions would require when

the promotion of justice aims to design a full justice based strategy for inclusive development. The study of the two indexes is conducted on basis of a theoretical challenge which helps to evaluate and to judge potential contributions each of the two indexes of justice would make in promoting social justice under a strategy of justice which aims to promote inclusive development. The theoretical challenge that the study considers is the sociopolitical phenomenon of inequality trap. Inequality trap is a concept which portrays a situation by which persistent inequality of opportunities among groups of people generates conditions which stabilizes poverty and makes deprivation systemic. Under conditions of inequality trap, individuals or groups of people who are at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid are almost condemned to remain there, with little chance to break out of the dynamics maintaining them into poverty and deprivation.

The quasi inability of people under inequality trap to move out of the conditions maintaining them into low distributive optimum and durable poverty is associated with two key factors. The first is the psychological or attitudinal factor which is portrayed as people's reduced motivation to overcome their conditions of persistent deprivation. This factor is externalized through people's failure to value the capacity they have to promote and advance their own well-being. The second factor of inequality tap is the distributional factor which is associated with the sociopolitical and economic context in which people live. The sociopolitical and economic conditions of people under inequality trap contribute to maintain low distributive optimum for some groups of people by making poverty stable and systemic. The persistently low distributive optimum of social goods among groups of people under inequality trap is due to unequal access



to socioeconomic opportunities for those who live under traps of inequality.

The concept of inequality trap offers not only an innovative basis for understanding what makes poverty and deprivation durable and systemic, it also constitutes a relevant normative basis for conceptualizing justice based strategies for addressing durable poverty and promoting inclusive development. Addressing inequality trap calls for innovative approaches in area of policy making strategies by taking social justice as a normative ground for judging the adequacy of policies for inclusive development. A justice based strategy for inclusive development would aim to integrate those who live under inequality trap by promoting their upward mobility and their full integration into the process of economic development. The central question is therefore what would the nature and content of justice enhancing policies which would address inequality trap in society? Taking Rawls's primary social goods and Sen's capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion justice would require under a justice based political strategy for addressing inequality tap, this project will investigate what would be the nature and content of justice enhancing policies which would address inequality trap in society and promote collective well-being with justice as a strategy for human development. I will then evaluate how primary social goods based approach and capabilities approach would contribute to building a sociopolitical strategy for inclusive development. The research project will contextualize and address contentions on the use and interpretation of primary goods and capabilities as indexes of social justice and as informational basis for judging what the advance of distributive justice would require under a

goal oriented strategy of inclusive development which would address inequality trap and durable poverty in society.

### **1.1. Research methodology and the scope of the study**

The research uses analytical and contextual methods with an aim of bridging normative evaluation and empirical constraints as a methodological approach for analyzing the normative foundations of a strategy for promoting human development. The study focuses on the two indexes of social justice –primary goods and capabilities– as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice in the domain of human development policy making would require under a problem oriented approach to justice aiming at addressing inequality trap in society. Inequality trap is taken as a theoretical challenge for contextualizing discrepancies and contentions associated with the internal content, the use and interpretation of the two indexes of social justice in order to set the normative basis for building a justice based strategy of inclusive development. The research then addresses contentions between Rawlsians and capability theorists on the use and interpretation of primary goods and capabilities as indexes of justice and examine the ways the two indexes of justice can jointly or independently contribute for policy making strategies in the area of human development policy making.

Inequality trap, which is considered as theoretical challenge to ground the comparative study of primary goods and capabilities, is an innovative concept which portrays how persistent inequality of opportunities among individuals or groups of people creates conditions which perpetuate and stabilize poverty. The concept of inequality trap captures the dynamics which link inequality of

opportunities to durable forms of deprivation. On basis of inequality trap as key theoretical challenge that the promotion of distributive justice in real life scenarios would aim to address, I will make a concise study of the two indexes of social justice, and evaluate what would be the nature and content of policies which would address inequality trap and promote inclusive development in society. The research will then address challenges put forwards by Rawlsians and capability theorists on the use and interpretation of the two indexes of justice and evaluate whether there is any of the two approaches to distributive justice which would be necessary and sufficient for building a full justice based strategy for inclusive development. The research project aims to offer an innovative approach to political theorizing which bridges normative evaluations and empirical constraints, and to produce a comprehensive account which helps to elaborate how such an approach would be relevant for addressing concerns of judging what the promotion of social justice would require particularly in the area of human development policy making. Bridging normative evaluation and empirical constraints as methodological approach for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions implies that we do not only rely on ideal perspective but make some empirical reference in judging and evaluating the relevance of policies for promoting justice in non-ideal conditions.

### **1.2. Compatibility and incompatibility theses on the use of capabilities and primary goods.**

The compatibility thesis on primary goods and capabilities is an interpretive positional assumption on the use of primary social goods and capabilities as indexes of social justice. According to the compatibility thesis, the two indexes of justice are not inconsistent. They are interpreted as compatible in their content and workings in

the pursuit of distributive justice. According to the compatibility thesis, primary social goods and capabilities should be interpreted as complementary indexes for social justice. For instance, from the perspective of the compatibility thesis, we need resources to build or expand people's capabilities. Under this interpretation, primary goods and capabilities are regarded as complementary in policy making and implementing. The two indexes are complementary in reference of what they offer as the content of policies for advancing social justice.

The incompatibility thesis on primary good and capabilities is an interpretive positional assumption on the use and interpretation of primary goods and capabilities as indexes of social justice. According to the incompatibility thesis, primary social goods and capability substantially differ in their internal content and in the scope of justice they suggest. Hence, these indexes of justice can only lead to divergent judgments of what the promotion of social justice in real life scenarios would require. Proponents of incompatibility thesis including, Amartya Sen, who argues that Rawlsian primary social goods are means to some social ends and not ends in themselves but means to other valuable goods; while capabilities are ends in themselves. While Sen argues that the capability approach was inspired by Rawls's justice as fairness and is an extension of the Rawlsian approach to social justice, he proposes a paradigm shift from using Rawls's primary goods as reference index for judging people's socioeconomic advantages in favor of his own capabilities approach.

The two interpretive assumptions on the use of the primary goods and capabilities as indexes of justice have been the guiding lines in the study of the two metrics of social justice. The adequacy or inadequacy of primary social goods and capabilities as metrics of social justice has been evaluated in accordance with those two central

normative assumptions, either defending how the reliance to one index of justice would be inadequate to address some forms of injustice, or exploring how the two indexes may complementarily contribute to address concrete sociopolitical concerns which would require the promotion of social justice. The two indexes, however, have not yet been examined in reference to their internal content in order to evaluate how they would be relevant in the area of development policy making strategies. The evaluation of the use of the two indexes of justice in the domain of policy making strategies requires looking beyond some isolated domains of social justice to consider a full justice based strategy which would apply at the level of a political society as whole to address a concrete sociopolitical problem. This research project aims to take to a different level of analysis contemporary use and interpretations of the two indexes of justice, to consider primary goods and capabilities not simply as indexes for distributive justice, but as informational bases for judging what the promotion of justice would require when the promotion of justice aims to address the sociopolitical issue of inequality trap and to promote inclusive development under a justice based strategy which would aim to address inequality trap in society.

### **1.2. Central hypothesis of the research inquiry**

Sen's capability approach has been recently presented and defended as an alternative to primary goods focused approach to justice. In his recent publication *Idea of Justice* (2009)– Sen suggested a total paradigm shift from the use of primary social goods as metric of justice to his own capabilities as the only relevant index which would grasp in relevant way what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions would require. The central hypothesis for this investigation is that Sen's capabilities approach as an indexing

strategy for advancing social justice and as informational basis for judging what social justice would require cannot stand alone as normative basis for building a justice based strategy which would address concrete sociopolitical issues requiring the promotion of distributive justice in non-ideal conditions. Sen's capability approach still needs to be supplemented by Rawls's primary social goods approach in designing and implanting relevant social changes via the implementation of justice enhancing policies. The two indexes of social justice can contribute in a complementary way to promote distributive justice in non-ideal conditions. The capability approach has some important flows which can be resolved when the approach is supplemented with other approaches to social justice. In addition, building individuals' real opportunities to achieve valuable functionings requires resources and other societal adjustments which may not be appropriately handled under the sole capability approach to justice. Hence, there is a need to examine whether a combined strategy would be more relevant to address some concerns of justice in society. Whether a combination in use of the capability approach and primary goods approach would be necessary and sufficient for building a complete strategy for addressing inequality trap and for promoting inclusive development is an issue which will be addressed throughout the thesis.

The normative approach to justice intends to examine what should be regarded as the foundations for justice in human development policy making by appealing to primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice in that area of inquiry would require. The hypothesis of the inquiry is that advancing justice in non-ideal conditions may need some reference indexes which would serve a reference in evaluating

and in judging what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions would entail. Yet, the advance of justice in real life scenarios needs to refer to real life constraints that the promotion of justice would aim to resolve. Hence, under this normative guidance, the promotion of justice takes a problem oriented approach requiring some innovations in our common normative account on theorizing on social justice. The project therefore intends to evaluate how primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging and evaluating what the promotion of justice in area of human development policy making would require by considering the sociopolitical issue of inequality trap as the real life constraint that the promotion of justice would aim to resolve.

## **Chap.2. Theoretical groundwork: A critical review on Sen's and Rawls's indexes of social justice**

The quest over the informational basis of judging what the promotion of social justice requires has increasingly attracted attention in some domains of scientific inquiry such in political theory and normative economics. Contemporary inquiries on the subject have evolved mainly around two major accounts and indexes of social justice. On the one hand, there is the Rawlsian account of social justice which takes primary goods –all-purpose means, namely, basic liberties, opportunities, incomes and the basis of self-respect– as an index for assessing and advancing social justice. On the other hand, there is Sen's capability approach which takes capabilities – individuals' real opportunities to do and to be what people have a reason to value– as an index for advancing social justice. Some critics, mainly Sen himself, argue that assessments of social justice and philosophical theorizing on distributive justice has been largely focusing on the means of living that people have rather than looking at real opportunities individuals have to do and to be what they have a reason to want to be. In his *Idea of Justice* (2009), Amartya Sen has been very critical to Rawls for his focus on primary goods as his preferred index for advancing social justice. In Sen's interpretation, primary goods are not ends in themselves but means to some other ends. Hence, any advancing of social justice should focus, not on people's means of living, but rather on opportunities people have to do and to be what they have a reason to want or to value. In other words, Amartya Sen opts for individuals' capabilities as an index for accessing and advancing social justice instead of Rawls's primary



goods. In Sen's own interpretation, primary social goods are simply people's means of living; and the evaluation of social justice should not look at people's means of living but rather on the kind of lives people are able to live<sup>10</sup>. Sen thus opts for capabilities as the only relevant index for assessing and promoting distributive justice.

The use and interpretation primary social goods and capabilities as indexes of justice and as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice requires still involve many unresolved contentions associated with both the content each of the two indexes suggests as normative ground for social justice, and also methodological approach for advancing justice each index uses. In this section, I will trace the background on the philosophical inquiry on the issue of reference index of justice and critically review the literature on the subject. Focusing on Rawls's primary social goods and Sen's capability approach, the section will contextualize the remaining lacunae in this area of philosophical and social inquiry. Keeping in mind the ultimate aim of the study –conceptualizing a justice based strategy for addressing inequality trap and for promoting inclusive development–, with primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require, this section provides the theoretical groundwork on the research issue the project aims to address.

## **2. 1. Rawls's primary goods as an index of social justice**

John Rawls was the initiator of this philosophical inquiry over indexes of social justice. In his *A theory of justice* (1971), Rawls proposed and defended primary social goods as an index for distributive justice. In his view, primary social goods are those

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<sup>10</sup> See Amartya Sen. *The Idea of Justice*. London: Allen Lane, 2009. p. 227.

fundamental goods that people would want no matter what else their desires might be<sup>11</sup>. Primary social goods as elaborated by Rawls include basic liberties, opportunities, income and wealth and the social basis of self-respect<sup>12</sup>. Rawls's approach to social justice is based on the normative assumption that the promotion of social justice should focus on primary social goods without any consideration of heterogeneous abilities or any other individuated preferences.

In his *Justice as Fairness: A restatement* (2001, pp.58-61), Rawls clarifies the content of his index of primary social goods as follows:

- a. The basic liberties are the background institutions necessary for the development and exercise of the capacity to decide upon and revise, and rationally to pursue a conception of the good. These liberties allow for the development and exercise of the sense of right and justice under political and social conditions that are free.
- b. Freedom of movement and free choice of occupation against a background of diverse opportunities are required for the pursuit of final ends as well as to give effect to a decision to revise and change them, if one so desires.
- c. Powers and prerogatives of offices of responsibility are needed to give scope to various self-governing and social capacities of the self.
- d. Income and wealth, understood broadly as they must be, are all-purpose means (having exchange value) for achieving directly or indirectly a wide range of ends, whatever they happen to be.
- e. The social basis of self-respect are those aspect of basic institutions that are normally essential if citizens are to have lively sense of their own worth as moral persons and to be able to realize their highest order interests and advance their ends with self-confidence.

In Rawls's theory of distributive justice, primary social goods are regarded as mutually advantageous for all as sources of people's full

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<sup>11</sup> See Rawls, John. *A Theory of justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971. p. 62.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p.62.

political participation in the society in which they live. Justice in society, under the Rawlsian framework, would be evaluated and advanced in consideration of how political institutions are arranged to secure fair distribution of primary social goods and how existing social arrangements allow the maximization of the share of the least advantaged members of the society.

For Rawls, an ideally just society would be one which distributes primary social goods according to the following two principles of justice. The first principle is that each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties which is compatible with a similar scheme of liberty open for all (the principle of equal liberty), and the second principle is that social and economic inequality can be tolerated only when they satisfy two conditions. On the one hand, they must be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity. On the other hand, they must be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of the society (the difference principle)<sup>13</sup>. The difference principle is in Rawls' approach to justice of high importance because it expresses the fairness which ground Rawls's theory of distributive justice. For Rawls, reasonably just institutional arrangement are those which maximize the share of the least advantaged members of the society. The second principle under Rawls's scheme of distributive justice expresses how concerns of distributive justice are primarily concerns for the socioeconomic conditions for the least advantaged.

In Rawls's interpretation of the two principles of justice, the fulfillment of the principle of equal liberties should take priority over the fulfillment of the second principle. And, within the second

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<sup>13</sup> Rawls, *John. Justice as fairness: A restatement*. 2001. pp. 42-3.

principle, fair equality of opportunity should take priority over the difference principle<sup>14</sup>. In other words, the distribution of primary social goods in society in the Rawlsian approach to justice must be guided by fairness and maximization of the share of the least advantaged members of the society. The two principles of justice guide the distribution of social goods that the society produces. They are also regarded as the foundations for the distributional scheme that constitutes the basic structure of the society.

## **2. 2. Capabilities as an index for social justice**

In the past few decades, Sen's capability approach has gained credence as an index which is partly used in the accessing individuals' developmental progress. Indeed, Sen's capability approach has inspired some innovations particularly in the area of human development assessment. For instance, since 1990 Sen's capabilities approach has been used in annual human development reports as a metric in assessing human development. In the previous era (before Sen's capability approach became prominent in human development evaluations), assessments of individuals' development had been for a long period focusing on people's means of living expressed as disposable income. Sen's capabilities approach came as an innovation in the study and evaluations of individuals' developmental progress which partially shifted from focusing on sole people's means of living expressed through disposable income to look at the lives that people are able to live and real opportunities people have to do and to be what they have a reason to value.

In his recent writings, particularly in his *Idea of Justice* (2009), Sen has expanded further the debate on his capability approach and

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 57.

argues that the capability metric should also be used as an index for advancing distributive justice. In elaborating this idea, he claims that the use of capabilities is not limited to measuring welfare in particular situations. Capabilities, in his view, ought to be given the role of primary goods similarly to the Rawlsian analysis of distributive justice<sup>15</sup>. In his 1990 essay “*Justice: Means versus Freedom*”, Sen pointed out that “the analysis presented owned a good part of its motivation and structure from Rawls’s theory of justice as fairness. Sen also argued that his capability approach is simply one possible extension of the Rawlsian perspective to social justice<sup>16</sup>. It is in his recent works, especially his *Idea of Justice* (2009) where Sen offered an internal and radical critique of Rawls’s approach to justice and the index of primary social goods that Rawls defends. Sen even proposed a paradigm shift from using Rawls’s primary goods<sup>17</sup> as an index for social justice to his own capabilities as the sole adequate and preferable alternative index for evaluating and advancing distributive justice<sup>18</sup>. But what are capabilities and how do they relate to distributional justice?

According to Sen, a capability is “a person’s ability to be or to do what one has a reason to value”<sup>19</sup>. In different terms, capabilities represent the alternative combinations of things a person is able to do or to be; they are expression of one’s real freedom to achieve valuable

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<sup>15</sup> Sen, “Justice: Means versus Freedom,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 19 (1990): pp.111-21. See p. 111

<sup>16</sup> Sen, *Resources, Values, and Development*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984) p. 339.

<sup>17</sup> The terminology primary goods is used interchangeably with primary social goods as two expressions with similar meaning throughout this dissertation. The distinction between natural primary goods and social primary goods will not apply to my use of these two terminologies.

<sup>18</sup> Sen, Amartya *The Idea of Justice*. London: Allen Lane, 2009. pp. 260-62.

<sup>19</sup> Sen, A. “Inequality and Well-being”. In M. Nussbaum & A. Sen. (Eds). *The Quality of Life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993. p. 30.

beings or doings (functionings)<sup>20</sup>. Capabilities can then be understood as the real freedom that individuals have to do and to be what they have a reason to want or to value, or people's ability to achieve valuable states of being and doing.

It may be important to draw the interconnections between capabilities and functionings. A capability is someone's ability to do and to be what one has a reason to value. A capability is understood in terms of real freedom that one enjoys as real ability to achieve a valuable state of being and doing that one reasonably value. By expanding one's capability, one achieves some valuable states of being or doings. The doings or the beings achieved by actualizing one's capabilities are called functionings. In other words, capabilities are real freedoms for people to achieve valuable functionings. While capabilities are understood in terms of individual ability or real freedom to be and to do what one has a reason to value, functionings are those achieved statuses that one acquires by expanding and actualizing one's capabilities<sup>21</sup>. A concrete example may help to clarify the distinction between capabilities and functionings. The real freedom that one has to be educated is a capability; but the status of being well-educated which someone achieves after one has exercised his freedom to be educated is a functioning. In other words, capabilities are individual abilities based on real freedom to be or to do what one reasonably value, and functionings are corresponding statuses characterized as the doings or the beings one achieves after expanding or actualizing one's capabilities.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> See, Amartya Sen. *Inequality re-examined*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. pp. 49-50

In his defense of capabilities as an index for social justice, Sen argues that the interpersonal comparisons that must form a crucial part of the informational basis of justice cannot be provided by comparison of individuals' holdings of the means to freedom such as most of primary goods such as resources, incomes, etc. In Sen's view, there is a difference between evaluating social justice by looking at people's means of living and looking directly at the lives people are actually able to live. He then conclusively argues that accessing and promoting social justice on basis of capabilities offers a better approach for advancing distributive justice because appealing to capabilities to promote distributive justice allows putting at the center of social and political concern individuals' lives and not some other detached objects of convenience such as income or commodities<sup>22</sup>. Resources, such as most of Rawls's primary social goods, argues Sen, are not ends in themselves, but they are means for attaining some other desirable ends<sup>23</sup>.

One of the central criticisms against the use of primary goods as an index for social justice according to Sen is that primary goods cannot give an appropriate account for justice especially for individuals whose life conditions limit their capacity to transform resources into valuable ends. This is the case for disabled people. Due to their life conditions, the disabled are usually unable to transform resources into valuable ends similarly to normally-abled people. In Sen's view, disabled people would need much more resources than normally-abled individuals in order to have comparable levels of life conditions. On the basis of this argument, Amartya Sen criticizes Rawls's theory of social justice for not only excluding disabled people

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<sup>22</sup> Sen, "Justice: Means versus Freedom" p. 112.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 112

from his account of social justice, but he also rejects the adequacy of primary social goods as an index for evaluating and advancing distributive justice. Yet, a relevant judgment on which index a justice between primary social goods and capabilities would better portray what the promotion of justice would require needs to consider more broader account of justice rather than relying on some isolated domains and dimensions of distributive justice. So far, in the comparative study of the two indexes of justice, a full systematic study which looks beyond isolated domains and dimensions of social justice is still missing. This leaves underexplored the contentions on the use and interpretation of primary goods and capabilities as competing indexes of social justice.

### **2.3. Review on the use and interpretation of primary goods and capabilities as indexes of justice**

For practical convenience, the advancement of social justice in society needs some informational basis for making an evaluative judgment whether a given state of affairs or a given social policy is reasonably just or whether it falls short of what distributive justice would require. In addition, the conceptualization of justice enhancing policies and possible judgment of what the promotion of distributive justice requires in given social conditions would be better handled when there is an index which serves as reference or as informational basis for advancing justice. For instance, in the case of the central concern in this research project –addressing inequality trap in society to promote inclusive development– it would be more convenient to have some reference indexes which would allow the evaluation of the adequacy and the content of policies which would be applied to advance justice and redress inequality trap.



Nevertheless, there are some important discrepancies between resources centered approach to social justice and capabilities focused approaches. While, on the one hand, the capability approach focuses on heterogeneous capabilities (opportunities for people to be and to do what they have a reason to value), primary goods focused approach, on the other hand, considers people's means to well-being as the reference index for advancing social justice. One central observation about existing divergences between these two indexes for social justice is that the capability approach seeks to advance social justice by looking at individuals' life conditions and individuals' capacity to transform opportunities into valuable functionings<sup>24</sup>. Primary goods focused approach to justice as developed by Rawls, however, considers the promotion of justice mainly on societal level by seeking to establish social arrangements which allow fair allocation of primary social goods without taking into account individualized life conditions of people. The promotion of social justice under the Rawlsian approach seeks to advance well-being of people without necessarily taking into consideration individual desires or other heterogeneous endowments associated with natural diversity.

The two indexes for evaluating and advancing social justice, however, present some internal differences. The central difference between them is the conception of inequality which requires distributional redress. For instance, under the capability approach, any feature (natural or manmade) which affects individuals' capabilities is relevant for distributional redress. For instance, any form or case of individuals' deprivation of capabilities or any form of limitation of individuals' freedom to access valuable opportunities can

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<sup>24</sup> Functionings are according to Sen the doings and beings that individuals achieve when their individuals' capabilities are actualized. For further clarification, see Amartya Sen, *Rights and Capabilities*, 1985a. p. 57.

be considered as an issue which call for social redress based on the promotion of justice. The measure of social justice from the perspective of the capability approach is always individuals' freedom to be and to do what they have a reason to value. What is central for social justice under the capability approach is the removal of various instances of unfreedoms susceptible of undermining individuals' opportunities to achieve desired and valuable functionings. Under the primary goods centered approach –at least in Rawls's own perspective to social justice– what matters is fair allocation of all-purpose means which are essential tools for people to pursue their own life plans.

Nevertheless, even though capabilities and primary social goods as indexes for distributive justice may differ in some substantial dimensions of justice, these metrics are sometimes interpreted as related in some of their practical underpinnings. For instance, an account of human capabilities may play an evidentiary role in assessing and advancing social justice. For example, if it is noticed that many people in society are lacking some vital functionings, this would be a good reason to revise or adjust existing pattern of distributive justice in an effort to fit the nature of existing distributive concerns. In other words, a reasonably just allocation of produced social goods can be regarded as one which can allow people to expand their capabilities. Resources are not necessarily ultimate ends in human lives. But they are the means for meeting human needs and for pursuing most of the diverse ends that people may set for themselves. Hence, one may argue that a reasonably just distribution of primary social goods can be verified on the basis of individuals' development of capabilities in given social conditions.

Some challenges associated with the use and interpretation of primary goods and capabilities as indexes of social justice are worth

noting. For instance, even though capabilities and primary goods as indexes of social justice may be related in a relevant way, particularly in evaluating people's social states or the prevailing states of affairs generated from the distribution of relevant social goods, the capability approach involves some inaccuracy which are worthy investigating to contextualize the informative and the practical capacity of the capability approach as a reference index for advancing distributive justice. For instance, Sen emphasizes that his capability approach is not concerned with what individuals have or are, but with what can be specified as open opportunities for people to do what they have reason to value. Yet, this notion of "having a reason to value" which is stressed in Sen's capability approach does not necessarily present a unified rationale on the basis of which a full account of social justice can be developed. For instance, what people may individually have a reason to value does not necessarily produce a relevant normative basis for entitlement claims which calls for distributive redress.

An example may help to clarify the claim above. Suppose that a mother has a reason to value staying away from her job and remain at home for some given time after child birth in order to take care of her new born before she can start to leave her child at a child care center whenever she goes to work. According to Sen's capability approach, reasonably just social arrangements should be able to give a space of freedom to such a mother to do what she has reason to value. Yet, many other people may have different reasons to value other ways of doing and being which, in Sen's view would also constitute possible bases for social claims. Yet, under a feasible or reasonable utopia, however, there cannot be a form of social arrangement in a political society which can harmonize and distribute individuals' freedom and rights in a way which would allow each citizen to do and

to be whatever each and everyone has a reason to value. Not only this rational of “having a reason to value” would bring about clashes in individuals’ rights and preferences, it would not allow a harmonized and standardized organization of a political society in a way which would bring about justice under the perspective of Sen’s capability approach. In other words, Sen’s capability approach is far from producing a feasible capability theory of justice which can apply at the level of a political society as full approach for advancing distributive justice. The capability approach in its current format lacks any standardized indexation pattern which can be applied for everyone on societal level. The capability approach still relies on individuals’ life conditions to justify and judge potential claims for justice. Whether this critic can have any implication to the use and interpretation of the capability approach in the area policy making to advance justice is one of the central issues that this research project will address.

In addition, the use of capabilities as index for social justice relies heavily on individual capabilities while the information required to evaluate individuals’ social states is from both capabilities and functionings. Indeed, under the capability approach, assessment of justice focuses on individuals’ social states in a given state of affairs by looking at how individuals manage to transform capabilities into valuable functionings. This means that open opportunities that people have at their disposal can be judged as contributing to the betterment of their lives only when people can transform existing opportunities into valuable functionings. In other words, it may not solely be on basis of capabilities or opportunities people have that one can evaluate individuals’ social states or any state of affairs, but on the basis of both capabilities and functionings, particularly by looking at people’s capacity to transform capabilities into valuable functionings. Social

conditions under which people live are fundamental for the promotion of justice as they set the ground for individuals to actualize capabilities and to transform them into valuable functionings.

Moreover, there is an evaluative challenge for using capabilities as a metric of social justice. Such a challenge is associated with the transition between capabilities to actualized functionings. In fact, equal opportunity does not necessarily produce equal outcome. And any successful transformation of capabilities into valuable functionings may depend on some other elements and resources for which the capability approach does not account for. For instance, suppose that a political society makes social arrangements which offer equal opportunities to its citizens to be educated, while people in the society have varied amount of disposable goods and economic capacities. Individuals' transformation of such an opportunity to be educated into a functioning (state of being educated) would depend on different other capabilities and resources such as being sheltered, being nourished, having a certain income, etc. Hence, the reliance on the sole opportunity to be educated would not tell us how justice will be fulfilled in the process of transforming capabilities into correlated desired and valuable functioning of being well-educated. The transformation of an opportunity to be educated into its correlated functioning of being well-educated depends on other capabilities and resources. The capability approach, however, does not tell us what should be the accompanying capabilities and resources which would be required for justice to prevail and how different capabilities should be traded off to bring about justice. This argument is not only in support of the claim that capabilities and functionings are both needed for evaluating individuals' social states, but it is also in congruence with the hypothesis that capabilities and resources should

be interpreted as interdependent in the process of transforming capabilities into valuable functionings to promote human development.

While the critical analysis above seems to be in support of some of claims put forwards in the compatibility thesis, particularly the view that primary goods and capabilities are interdependent in the pursuit of distributive justice, it seems to lead to further complications as it favors an approach to justice which is outcome focused, while the Rawlsian primary goods focused approach to justice is essentially arrangements focused. The reference to consequentialism seems to widen further the gap between Rawlsian approach to justice and Sen's capability approach. All these unresolved contentions call for a more concise and systematic exploration of the two indexes of justice to elaborate how they may individually or jointly contribute to building a full justice based strategy which would apply to a political society as whole to promote human development.

#### **2. 4. Sen's and Rawls's views on consequentialism**

Sen's approach to social justice is outcome oriented and exhibits his commitment to consequentialism in his theoretical approach to social justice. Sen's approach to social justice differs from Rawls's contractarian approach whose account for distributive justice appeals to what individuals have a reason to want in virtue of their diverse positions and the comparing of their reasons. Under a contractarian approach to social justice, people's decision depends on the evaluative consideration of the importance of a particular benefit from one position, with the importance of a burden from some other

positions<sup>25</sup>. Contrary to Rawls's contractarian approach to social justice, Sen's perspective is outcome focused and takes the overall value of individuals' social states as central element for deciding valuable choices. Hence, Sen's approach to justice is not only consequence sensitive, but it is consequence focused.

As it was defended in Scanlon's "*Symposium on Amartya Sen's philosophy: 3 Sen and consequentialism*, 2001", Sen's consequentialism involves some normative challenges. For instance, Sen's consequentialist account for social justice is more representationalist rather than foundationalist<sup>26</sup>. In Sen's account of social justice, the normative force of an action or a social policy is less based on some notions of value such as right, wrong, duty or obligation but more on the notion that a social policy or an act is right if it produces the best consequences measured in comparison with the preferred or desired outcome, which is judged in reference to what people have a reason to value. The justification of action or a choice under this perspective is not solely centered on the goodness or rightness of the action taken, but more importantly on the consequence it produces<sup>27</sup>. If then we are to consider principles which would advance social justice, Sen's approach would suggest that we look at how such principles would affect individuals involved, and not their overall social impact or capacity to generate a more just state of

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<sup>25</sup> .M. Scanlon "Symposium on Amartya Sen's philosophy: 3 Sen and consequentialism". *Economics and Philosophy*/ vol. 17 01 (April 2001). pp. 49-50.

<sup>26</sup> Scanlon, *ibid.* p.50

<sup>27</sup> Sen's consequentialism, however, avoids reducing his approach to a situation where the ends would justify the means. In avoiding this trap, Sen departs from the narrowest model of consequentialism in which actions are part of states of affairs which must be evaluated. Such an evaluation, in his view, must take into account whether it involves instances of people's rights being violated. For more information and further clarifications on this point, see Sen's "Rights and Agency," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. No 11. 1982. pp 7-19.

affairs. By evaluating the outcome on the basis of their impact on each individual concerned, Sen's outcome focused approach to justice can become position-relative and fail to deal with some types of injustice, particularly the cases of social injustice which would require redistribution or re-allocation resources or opportunities.

For instance, a social policy may aim at adjusting some forms of unjustified economic inequalities via some form of redistribution of wealth. Sen's consequentialism would suggest that people's positions vis-à-vis such a policy would be position-relative, depending on how individuals are affected by such a policy, either positively or negatively; by taking as the deciding line what individuals have a reason to value. As such a policy would make some people worst off (in economic sense) and affect in certain ways their doings or beings, Sen's approach to justice might not allow such social policy because what justice requires under Sen's capability strategy is to act for the best possible outcome judged from the position of everyone concerned. Therefore, Sen's consequentialist approach to justice may not necessarily offer a workable strategy for resolving some forms of social injustice for which possible resolutions would require taking one step back in order to ensure two steps forwards towards a more just state of affairs in society.

Though Rawls's approach to social justice is also concerned with the outcome, his approach is not overtly consequentialist. Rawls's contractarian approach to justice can allow the implementation of a social policy which promotes distributive justice even if the policy may leave some people in less comfortable positions than initially held, provided that the overall outcome of the implementation of the policy leads to more overall justice and matches people's conception of the good which is considered after the scrutiny of reflective



equilibrium. In other words, Rawls's contractarian approach to justice and Sen's consequentialist approach to justice can sensibly differ on the nature of relevant policies for advancing social justice. This difference may also apply to possible resolutions the two approaches to justice may suggest for the choice and implantation of justice enhancing policies. A close examination these discrepancies is therefore important for a better use and interpretation of the two indexes as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require.

### **2.5. Possible interdependencies between primary goods and capabilities**

Besides these dissimilarities and divergences observed in the two theoretical approaches to justice, capabilities and primary goods as indexes of social justice may be interpreted as interdependent in practical pursuit of distributive justice. One of the central aspects of social injustice perceived from both the capability approach and the resourceist perspective is the notion of deprivation. Indeed, under the capability approach, any form of deprivation of individual opportunities and freedom to be and to do what one has a reason to value is considered as a case of injustice which calls for social redress. For instance, social norms in society which deny education to women and favor their status as house wives are obvious impediments to gender justice. This form of injustice is based on the deprivation of the opportunity and freedom for women to expand their capabilities and to achieve the actualization of some functionings.

Nonetheless, deprivation is not only understood as limitation of individuals' freedom, but it can also be grounded on unjust allocation of resources or any jeopardizing of people's opportunities to access valuable resources. For instance, suppose that a political society seeks

to expand the capabilities and justice for blind people by providing them with guide dogs; but the social policy is implemented in a way that only guide dogs are offered to blind people who prove to dispose enough resources to take care of the offered dog. While such social policy would advance the capability and enhance the functionings for some blind people to move around, it would still be attached to the resources these people individually and actually own. Hence, the distribution of resources is also crucial for the creation of economic opportunities for people in society. Resources are always needed for people to transform capabilities or opportunities into valuable functionings. In other words, capabilities are not detached entities which work independently from resources in the pursuit of social justice. This may make capabilities and primary goods more interdependent particularly in policy making strategies which aim to advance justice in real life scenarios.

Though some analysts or theorists of justice may prefer either index of justice between primary goods and capabilities in their approach to justice, the two indexes may be interpreted as interdependent in the pursuit of social justice. For instance, Elizabeth Anderson has criticized primary goods focused approach to social justice for only allowing people in society to access a certain standardized package of resources while the share offered to people is not adjusted to individuals' variations in their needs and other endowments. Anderson illustrates her criticism of the resourcist focused account of distributive justice with an example of disabled parking spaces. She argues that disabled people have a lot to complain about as lacking necessities among the facilities they would like to have at parking places. In her view, even though such claims or complaints may be based on biased conception of needs and endowments, this form of

claims cannot be addressed under the Rawlsian approach to social justice which offers a standardized package of resources to which all members of a political society are equally and individually entitled. This raises an issue of methodological approach for advancing distributive justice particularly whether the promotion of justice requires an individualized evaluative approach or whether the promotion of justice should use a standardized approach which applies to everyone in society.

It can be argued that using capabilities as an index for social justice can be more relevant and beneficial for differently-abled individuals. It is evident that disabled people are already disadvantaged by their life conditions and hence need more resources than normally-abled people. Yet, Rawls's approach to distributive justice does not offer a special provision for individuals who are differently abled. The capability approach, in this regard, may provide a supplementary alternative to the resources-based approach to social justice especially for people with disabilities. However, this particular advantage of capability approach as a metric for social justice should not be the ultimate criterion for giving priority to capabilities over primary goods or justify Sen's paradigm shift proposal from the use of primary goods to his own capabilities as index of social justice. Undeniably, disabled people constitute a category of citizens in a political society who need particular attention and more advantages from distributive justice. A theory of social justice, however, cannot take as ultimate reference particular cases. A relevant theory of justice should first be able to apply to the general context of justice, and then to expand to special cases.

Similarly to Thomas Pogge's suggestion<sup>28</sup>, a potential solution to this challenge might be to adapt the Rawlsian approach to social justice to better cover these special cases particularly under the guidance of the difference principle. Having critically examined and contextualized existing contentions between primary goods and capability as reference indexes for distributive justice, we may now explore what have been so far said in existing literature on the subject, and part of what have been done so far in this area of political and social inquiry.

## **2.6. State of art on the use and interpretation of primary goods and capabilities**

Literature on the existing contentions on the use and the interpretation of primary goods and capabilities as competing and most influential indexes of social justice has been lacking in contemporary political theorizing. It is only recently that some political theories examined this issue on discrepancies between the two indexes of justice following criticisms put forwards by Amartya Sen in his *Idea of Justice* (2009) in which he made an internal critic of Rawls's approach to justice and his index of primary social goods. Sen even proposed a total paradigm shift from the use of primary goods as an index of justice to his own capabilities as the only index of justice which can appropriately capture interpersonal comparisons and offer a relevant basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require. Nevertheless, contemporary analysis of the contentions between the two indexes of justice has remained incomplete and has not yet examined existing contentions between these indexes on basis of their internal content to offer a systematic account which would help to

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<sup>28</sup> Pogge, Thomas. "A critic of the capability approach" *Measuring justice: Primary goods and capabilities*. Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns. Eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp: 32-37.

make an appropriate judgment of what the promotion of justice would require when each of the two indexes of justice is considered as informational basis for judging the content of policies for advancing social justice or resolving a concrete sociopolitical concerns of justice.

In *Measuring justice: Primary goods and capabilities* (2010), various political theorists have scrutinized, on both theoretical and practical levels, how primary social goods and capabilities may contribute as indexes for evaluating and advancing distributive justice in different domains of society. The investigation into the theoretical and the practical uses of each of the two indexes of justice has focused on different areas such as health, education, disability, children and gender. The weaknesses and strengths of each of the two indexes of justice were explored at the same time extending their use to the practical level particularly in some areas relative to policy strategies for promoting social justice. While the study and analysis conducted show that each of the two indexes exhibit some particular advantages in advancing justice in some particular domains of people's lives or in some contexts of distributive justice, conclusions among various theorists of justice testify there are still considerable disagreements and discrepancies in the use and interpretation of these indexes of justice. In addition, the evaluation remained segmented, hence unable to offer a complete comprehensive account on how the two indexes of justice should be used and interpreted in policy making strategies and how contentions based on their internal content can be resolved when making justice enhancing policies.

The approaches used in the analysis of the two indexes left many open questions on the use and interpretation of the two metrics of justice. Indeed, defenders of either of the two metrics seem to appeal to isolated areas of justice in their arguments in defense of their

choice, and not the pursuit of justice as whole in society. This reduced the inquiry over the use and interpretation of these two indexes of justice to a superficial level of investigation. For instance, proponents of capabilities as an index for distributive justice, such as Elizabeth Anderson, argue that the capability metric is superior to any resource focusing metric such as primary social goods. Capabilities, argues Anderson, can better handle discrimination against different categories or groups of people. In her view, “the capability metric is property sensitive to individual variations of functionings that value a democratic import”; and that “the capability metric is well suited to guide the just delivery of public services particularly in the domain of health and education”<sup>29</sup>. Undeniably, the capability metric can do well in measuring and advancing distributive justice in some isolated domains of people’s lives. Yet, capabilities as a metric of justice seem to work only when the advancement of social justice focuses on a given area of justice, or when seeking to account for individualized advantages especially for people with particular life conditions. Whether the capability approach would better contribute than primary goods to handling concerns of justice when the goal of justice is to build a full strategy for inclusive development is an issue which remains open for further scrutiny.

Any decisive choice for one unique index of justice according to the analysis so far conducted seems be possible only when there is a priority attributed to the promotion of justice in one isolated domain of people’s lives. For instance, in the case durable deprivation of people such in the case for those who live under inequality trap, the allocation of some primary goods such as resources might be the

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<sup>29</sup> Anderson, Elisabeth. “Justifying the capability approach to justice” in *measuring justice: Primary goods and capabilities*. Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns. Eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp: 81-100.

starting point for the promotion of distributive justice. Taking primary goods as the starting point for justice in some particular context, however, does not imply that the approach would necessarily sideline the capability metric in the strategy for advancing justice because an allocation of resources is primordial for the creation of real opportunities for people. Resources are therefore important component for expanding individuals' capabilities. This hypothesis is in support of the claim that, depending on the context of justice which is dealt with and the political priorities which are considered in a given area and context of justice, it can be possible to focus on one metric in the practical approach. Nevertheless, the choice of a single metric might be unfitting or simply regarded as a procedural mistake whenever the ultimate goal is to advance social justice as whole in a political society, with the aim of achieving the fullest possible justice. In such context, the advancement of social justice might need to take into account various factors underlying people's social conditions in which both metrics might have a role to play. As it will be defended later, inequality trap is one of possible sociopolitical challenges whose resolution call for a full strategy based on distributive justice by which internal differences between primary goods and capabilities may be used for additive values to a strategy for advancing distributive justice on societal level. But what would be the relevant way for using and interpreting the two indexes of justice is an issue which requires more investigation.

According to the conclusion made among various political theorists in *Measuring justice: Primary goods and capabilities* (2010), a hypothesis of complementarities in the use and the interpretation of the two indexes seems to be more plausible, with some potential advantages of supplementing potential internal weaknesses for each

metric. Yet, espousing or rejecting this hypothesis requires more complete and contextualized study based on internal content of the two indexes of justice. For instance, one of the main weaknesses of the capability index for judging instances of distributive justice is its inability to offer a standard of justice which can be systematically applied for everyone on societal level. Indeed, the capability approach lacks a common ground of publicity which can constitute a basis for a standardized package which is verifiable to everyone in society. As has been argued by John Rawls (1982, p.169) and reiterated by Thomas Pogge (2002)<sup>30</sup>, capabilities as an index for social justice can only rely on individuated claims to justice motivated and evaluated on basis of individuals' life conditions. This makes it difficult to establish a standardized capability theory of justice which could be applied to a political society as whole. One may still therefore claim that the capability approach in the format Sen proposes remain at large extend incomplete to offer a full theory of justice with a standardized way of measuring and advancing justice on societal level.

The capabilities approach, however, may have some merit of providing an evaluative foundation which can clarify in relevant way how societal opportunities are contributing or not to improve individuals' life conditions. By focusing immediately on people's lives rather than to the means of living, capabilities as an index for social justice may be informative on how existing justice enhancing policies or strategies are succeeding or failing to meet the desired outcome. In this regard, capabilities can not only contribute as an index for promoting distributive justice; the capabilities approach can also contribute as an evaluative reference for judging the effectiveness

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<sup>30</sup> See Pogge, "Can the Capability approach be justified?" in *Philosophical Topic*, Vol.30, No2. (Fall 2002).



of justice enhancing policies in various areas of people's lives. Nevertheless, capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require must be able to guide decision in the pre-distributional conditions of justice as a reference indicator for judging what should be the content of justice enhancing policies which would advance justice in given sociopolitical context. Whether then capability would offer a better indexing strategy for advancing social justice than primary goods is an issue which requires much more concise investigation based in the content of the two indexes of justice.

The interpretation of the two indexes of justice has opened a hypothesis of complementarities of the two indexes of justice. In their inquiry on how primary goods and capability work for shaping educational opportunities for a reasonably just society, Harry Brighouse and Elaine Unterhalter have investigated how both metrics fare against one another. In their conclusions, they both agree that each metric considered alone prove to be incomplete. On the one hand, primary goods focused approach has two main problems. First, its resourcist focus makes it insensitive to the fact that children need different kind of treatment in order to do equally well. On the other hand, they argue that primary goods as metric for distributing education is lowly specific and hence gives very little guidance regarding the content of opportunities which are relevant for a just educative scheme. They also point out that the capability approach looks more promising as a metric of justice in distributing education, but they specify that the capability metric is under-specific and unable to solve the indexing problem. Their suggestion goes along with Pogge's proposal that the capability approach would give fuller guidance in education if an index of capabilities were developed by

looking at Rawls's two moral powers as the capabilities for a sense of justice and capability for a conception of the good. Their analysis is in support of the hypothesis that the two indexes of justice are not inconsistent, but have the potential of supplementing some of their internal weaknesses. But, verifying this hypothesis requires more investigation which goes beyond some isolated area of social and political inquiry such as the distribution of educational opportunities to consider a full strategy of justice.

## **2.7. Indexing justice and the question of the scope of justice enhancing policies**

Primary goods based approach to justice and the capability approach seem to suggest two different answers to the question of the scope of justice enhancing policies in society. Ingrid Robeyns (2010) has explored how both primary goods and capabilities can contribute in the area of gender justice and exposed possible merits and limits for each of the two indexes in the domain. On the one hand, she demonstrated how primary social goods may fail to deal with cases of social injustice generated from social norms. On the other hand, she demonstrated how the capability metric can provide a relevant account for injustice generated from social norms<sup>31</sup>. Yet, Robeyns' analysis on the use of two indexes in the domain of gender justice seems to raise one key concern for the promotion of social justice: the scope of justice which is practically and politically relevant in a political society.

Indeed, the use of the capabilities as an index of justice in the domain of gender justice makes it obvious that there is large

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<sup>31</sup> Robeyns, Ingrid. "Gender and the metrics of justice". In *Measuring justice: Primary goods and capabilities*. Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns. Eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp: 215-34

difference in the scope of social justice between primary goods based approach to justice and the capability approach. While primary goods in Rawls's theory of justice are used for indexing justice on societal level, the capability approach in Robeyns's interpretation seems to go far beyond the political organization of the society to deal with existing social norms including norms within the house hold<sup>32</sup>. Hence, the capability metric as interpreted by Robeyns goes beyond what can be regulated at political level at least in the domain of gender justice. The assumed level of political action in Robeyns's analysis on gender justice raises some important questions, especially on the scope of social justice which is relevant for political action. Apparently, the capability metric appeals to a perfectionist account for social justice which can in some cases exceed political boundaries for a liberal society. In fact, political action cannot be extended to the regulation of social norms to the level the household. There must always be a certain limit to state's involvement into citizen's lives particularly in a liberal political society. Hence, the question of the scope of justice becomes central to the practical pursuit of social justice especially when the capability index seems to call for a perfectionist account of social justice which may require state intervention beyond the limits of political responsibility of the state. Similarly to Rawls's conditions for pursuing justice, the advance of social justice in a political society might need to aim for changes which are morally permissible, politically possible and with the potential of being effective<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Ingrid, *ibid.* p. 225

<sup>33</sup> Rawls, John. *The Law of Peoples*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University press, 1999. p.89.

## **2.8. Institutional justice and the limits of the capability approach to justice**

Sen has elaborated some aspects of his capability approach which can help to clarify how far capabilities can work as a metric for evaluating and promoting social justice in a political society. Sen argues that the capability approach points to an informational focus in judging and comparing overall individuals' advantage. For instance, capabilities as real opportunities that people have at their disposal allow a comparative analysis of individuals' social states and permit the identification of areas which should be improved in order to bring about more justice. In other words, the use of capabilities is typically comparative, and equality of capabilities is taken as the most relevant form of equality among individuals. Though capabilities seems to offer a relatively strong and relevant comparative ground for evaluating people's lives in society, the approach still misses other elements which would allow capabilities to adequately work as an independent metric for distributive justice in a political society. For instance, as Martha Nussbaum argues, Sen's capability approach does not say to what extent equality of capability should be a social goal in the pursuit of social justice and how capabilities should be combined with other political values in the pursuit of social justice<sup>34</sup>. In other words, the capability metric seems to work as an evaluative tool for existing social arrangements or justice enhancing policy, but they do not give any information about how social justice can be achieved in a political society as whole.

Sen acknowledges the above critique to his account of the capability approach. He asserts that the capability approach does not,

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<sup>34</sup> Martha Nussbaum (2003) "Capabilities as fundamental entitlements: Sen and social justice" in *Feminist Economics*, 9: 2-3, 33-59. p.36.

on its own, propose any specific formula about how the information we receive from the evaluation of individuals' social states may be used. In other words, the capability approach works within different areas of people's lives depending on the questions which are asked and the areas of social justice and dimensions of people's lives that we are trying to deal with. For instance, the capability approach can apply for evaluating policies which deal with poverty, disability or even cultural freedom. But, in all those different areas of human lives, the capability approach does not suggest how various capabilities should be traded off in order to produce more just state of affairs and more just social states. One important handicap which Sen's use of capabilities is still facing is that Sen did not provide a list of capabilities which are relevant for evaluating social states, or any outcome of distributive justice. Without an agreed upon list of relevant capabilities, it becomes almost impossible to elaborate how different capabilities should be traded off or to determine which capabilities would be regarded as more important than others. In addition without a list of capabilities, it is not possible to establish a capability based theory of justice which would show how capabilities should be used to bring about more justice in society or to determine which capabilities are more important for people and for the promotion of distributive justice on societal level.

Moreover, if we take capabilities as people's entitlements that distributive justice is concerned with, Sen's capability approach does not tell us what level of capabilities a reasonably just society should provide for all its citizens. In fact, one of the most important challenges that using capabilities as a metric for social justice is that the capability approach focuses on individuals' opportunities rather than on how the political society should be organized to create such

opportunities for people. Sen himself attests that “the capability approach is a general approach, focusing on information on individual advantages, judged in terms of opportunity rather than a specific design for how political societies should be organized”<sup>35</sup>. For Sen, different uses and contributions of the capability approach in different domains such as social assessment or policy analysis must be contextualized via the informational perspective in which the use of the capability approach is based. However, given the fact that individuals’ opportunities on which the capability approach is based are largely generated as the outcome of how a given political society is organized, the capacities approach should be able to show how social justice measured on the basis of individuals’ capabilities is connected with the existing social and institutional arrangements and how different capabilities should be traded off to bring about justice in a political society. Consequently, in consideration of all these unresolved issues within Sen’s capability approach to social justice, his paradigm shift proposal from focusing on primary goods to his own capabilities is still far from asserting its practical credibility or relevance as unique approach for advancing distributive justice in society.

Primary goods and capabilities as indexes of social justice and as informational basis for judging what the promotion of distributive justice require still involve many contentions associated with their use and interpretation. While the two indexes of social justice are the most influential in contemporary political theory and development economics, normative approaches used in the analytical study of the two indexes of justice has not yet managed to address the normative

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<sup>35</sup> Amartya Sen, *Idea of Justice* (2010). p. 232.

discrepancies between the two indexes, to elaborate how these metrics of justice can be better used and interpreted in policy strategies. On basis of inequality trap as a theoretical challenge for evaluating and contextualizing the two indexes of justice, I will elaborate how the two indexes of justice can independently or jointly contribute as normative basis for building a justice based strategy for inclusive development, which would address inequality trap in society. In following the section, I will introduce the concept of inequality trap and explore the mechanisms which link the phenomenon of inequality trap to durable poverty. Thereafter, I will then explore how the phenomenon of inequality trap would constitute a relevant normative ground for contextualizing the use and the interpretation of primary social goods and capabilities as normative basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require under a justice based strategy of inclusive development.

### **Chap. 3. Inequality trap and the dynamics of durable poverty**

Persistent inequality of opportunities is one of the key causes of socioeconomic ills that people can suffer in the sociopolitical context in which they live. Not only do persistent inequalities of opportunities enhance disparities in people's access to resources, but some forms of inequality such as extreme socioeconomic inequalities can negatively affect individuals' well-being particularly for those who live under persistent conditions of deprivation. Lasting forms of inequality of opportunities among socioeconomic groups of people whenever they are transmitted from generation to generation produce the phenomenon of *inequality trap*. *Inequality trap* in the general understanding of the term describes a situation of permanent inequality of opportunities between socioeconomic groups of people<sup>36</sup>. Persistent inequalities between groups of people become inequality trap when individuals who live under persistent inequality of opportunities become unable to break out of the conditions which sustain dynamics maintaining them into their socioeconomic conditions of deprivation and durable poverty. Hence, the phenomenon of inequality trap and its grounding sociopolitical dynamics can explain how some groups of people may remain relatively poor due persisting conditions maintaining some dynamics which stabilize and perpetuate distributional inequalities.

Nonetheless, the causal interconnections between the phenomena of inequality trap and durable poverty and the link between these two phenomena have not received due attention in contemporary social and political theorizing. An elaboration of the causal interconnections

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<sup>36</sup> See Cruces Guillermo , at al. "Are there ethnic inequality traps in education? Empirical evidence from Brazil and Chile". *Poverty and Economic Policy Research Network* (2012).



between inequality trap and durable poverty can provide a relevant contextual ground for conceptualizing or designing strategies for promoting social justice in real life scenarios, particularly, whenever seeking to address the sociopolitical issue of durable poverty. This chapter is devoted to a conceptual analysis of the phenomenon of inequality trap, its basic features and an elaboration of the dynamics which link the phenomena to durable poverty. The analysis proceeds as follows. The first section defines the concept of inequality trap and explores its essential features. The second section evaluates and discusses interconnections between the phenomena of inequality trap and poverty traps, and the relevance of both phenomena in interpreting deprivation and poverty among socioeconomic groups of people and in contextualizing concerns for social justice. The third section explains the conditions under which the dynamics sustaining inequality trap and its accompanying forms of deprivation become systemic and stable, and then evaluates whether those mechanisms are relevant for contextualizing the causes of durable poverty.

### **3.1. Inequality trap: the concept and its essential characteristics**

Persistent inequalities of opportunities among groups of people can generate the phenomenon of ‘inequality trap’. The question which arises is what the terminology ‘inequality trap’ connotes? The basic definition of the phenomenon of ‘inequality trap’ is provided by Rao Vijayendra who initially coined the term. According to Rao, the terminology *inequality trap* describes “a situation where the entire distribution is stable because the various dimensions of inequality (in wealth, power and social statuses) interact to protect the rich from downward mobility and to prevent the poor from being upwardly

mobile”<sup>37</sup>. In elaborating his conceptualization of inequality trap, Rao argues that inequality trap is generated as an outcome of unequal social and economic structures and is perpetuated by persistent inequality of opportunities. He exemplifies the context under which inequality traps prevail by referring to patriarchal societies. In patriarchal societies, he argues, women are subjugated and usually denied property and inheritance rights. Under such circumstances, women are usually forced to spheres of activities which are different from those of men. They are usually prevented from accessing opportunities which would contribute to the improvement of their lives. The socio-cultural and economic structures in patriarchal societies undermine women’s opportunities and force them to opt for some particular types of activities. This nexus of unequal social and economic structures between men and women in patriarchal societies produces socio-economic conditions which sustain mechanisms preventing women from realizing their full potentials as a group and as individuals<sup>38</sup>. Under such circumstances, many women are likely to remain under conditions of deprivation in comparison to men whose opportunities are not constrained by existing socio-cultural and economic structures. In other words, the socio-economic conditions underlying unequal distribution of opportunities among men and women in patriarchal society generate mechanisms which maintain low distributive optimum for women and produce an inequality trap for them.

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<sup>37</sup> Rao, Vijayendra. On ‘inequality traps’ and Development policy. World Bank: *Development Outreach*. February 2006. pp. 10-13.

<sup>38</sup> See Rao, *ibid.* P.12. It is important to note that the mechanisms which sustains and stabilizes inequality traps involve the psychological and the economic (distributive) dimensions of inequality. These two dimensions which are the foundational to the mechanism which link inequality trap to durable poverty or durable deprivation will be developed and elaborated later in this chapter.

The mechanism which sustains inequality trap in the example above involves two factors, namely, the psychological or attitudinal factors and the distributive dimension. The psychological dimension connotes for women in patriarchal societies the internalization of the social conditions and the development of beliefs which support their resilience to their social conditions<sup>39</sup>. The internalization process contributes to stabilize the existing gender unbalance of power characterized by male domination. For instance, subjugated women in patriarchal societies may develop some beliefs that their social conditions are 'normal' and then submit to their social conditions, even though the conditions of subjugation are unjust and unfair. The resilience of women to their social conditions connotes the effect of the phenomenon of internalization which is essentially a psychological factor stabilizing inequality trap. The central effect of attitudinal dimension of inequality trap is to undermine the motivation for people affected to overcome their non-desired socioeconomic conditions marked by persistent inequality of opportunities and deprivation. The distributive dimension of inequality trap in the example above denotes the gender based unbalance in the distribution of opportunities which is associated with the social conditions of subjugation of women in a patriarchal society. The psychological or attitudinal dimensions and the distributive factor are fundamental for creating conditions sustaining mechanisms perpetuating low distributive optimum among groups of people affected and maintain them under inequality trap.

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<sup>39</sup> The resilience of women in patriarchal societies to their socio-economic conditions and the development of belief in 'legitimacy' of the social conditions of subjugation are manifestations of the psychological effects of the internalization process. Such belief, however, does not make the conditions of subjugation of women in patriarchal societies legitimate. The example emphasizes the psychological effect of subjugation of women and the underlying mechanisms which sustain and stabilize inequality and deprivation among women and prevent their socio-economic mobility in a patriarchal society.

The example mentioned of conditions of women in patriarchal societies, however, relies on the sole socio-cultural dimension of inequality trap.

The conceptualization of inequality trap on basis of the socio-cultural dimension of inequality leads to a minimalist interpretation of this phenomenon. Inequality trap in its broad sense is conceptualized as a multidimensional phenomenon which involves the political, the social, and the economic factors. All these factors, however, are constitutive part of the two central dimensions of inequality trap, namely, the attitudinal and the distributive dimensions of inequality trap. According to Francois Bourguignon, inequality trap is rooted in and maintained by persistent differences in power, wealth and statuses among socioeconomic groups of people. Existing differences in those dimensions of inequality are sustained and maintained over time by economic, political and socio-cultural dynamics and even through the nature of existing institutions<sup>40</sup>. The broad conceptualization and interpretation of the phenomenon of inequality trap as defined in the work of Bourguignon will be the basis for our analysis of the phenomenon of inequality trap and its causal interconnections to durable poverty. Inequality trap under this analysis is regarded as an explanatory phenomenon for the stabilization of poverty and the key contributing factor making poverty stable and systemic.

The central feature of inequality trap is the lack of socioeconomic mobility among some groups of people. Differences in power, wealth

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<sup>40</sup> See Francois Bourguignon at al. "Equity, efficiency and Inequality traps: A Research agenda". *Journal of Economic Inequality*. August 2007. Vol. 5. Issue2. p. 236. The socio-cultural dimension involves the psychological component of inequality. The psychological component of inequality trap is also relevant for understanding how poverty becomes stable among people. This point will be developed later in this chapter.

and social statuses between groups of people produce conditions which create mechanisms which maintain some people under the trap of inequality of opportunities and low optimum in the distribution of socioeconomic advantages. As a consequence of inequality trap, people who are born into the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid are almost surely condemned to remain there; and the probability of the replication of the same mechanism of deprivation to subsequent generations within the same socioeconomic group is always very high<sup>41</sup>. In this regard, inequality trap and its underlying inequality of opportunities can be interpreted as a cause of durable poverty and reduced socioeconomic mobility for disadvantaged socioeconomic groups of people because persistent inequality of opportunities prevent a category of people from accessing necessary resources to sustain their well-being or prevent some people from living up their potential in the sociopolitical and economic conditions in which they live<sup>42</sup>. In other words, inequality trap reinforces and sustains conditions of systemic deprivation for individuals or groups of people, hence perpetuates poverty.

Besides the above essentialist interpretation of the phenomenon, inequality trap is generically perceived as a relational form of inequality. According to Bourguignon, inequality traps are generated under a situation in which a socio-economic group of people is disadvantaged vis-à-vis an opportunity set (defined by the group's outcome in the distribution) that is worse than the set of another advantaged group as a result of persisting forms of inequalities which

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<sup>41</sup> See Miles Corak, 'Income mobility, Equality of opportunities, and Intergenerational Mobility'. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. Vol. 27. No.3 2013. pp. 79-102.

<sup>42</sup> See William Easterly. 'Inequality Does Cause Under development: Insight from a New Instrument'. *Journal of Development Economics*. Vol. 84. No. 2, 2007.

are involved in the relations between the groups concerned<sup>43</sup>. The relation between the groups concerned must be based on differences in power, wealth and social statuses. An inequality trap is, in other words, conceptualized and interpreted as a type of horizontal inequality<sup>44</sup> between groups of people upon which differences in power, wealth and statuses create conditions which reproduce mechanisms which sustain persistent inequality of opportunities among groups of people concerned.

Two general features are therefore relevant for identifying inequality traps. The first feature is that, in the distribution of advantages or opportunities among given groups of people, one or several groups do persistently worse than other groups and that the low level outcome of the worse off group is associated with the nature of existing interactions between the socioeconomic groups of people under consideration. The second feature is that there are some possible alternatives under improved distributive and social conditions where the worse off socioeconomic groups would do better provided that there are some adjustments in the existing distributive patterns and in the interaction between advantaged and disadvantaged socioeconomic groups<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> The terminology 'socioeconomic group' connotes a person's position in the society's structural and functional systems.

<sup>44</sup> Horizontal inequality connotes inequality between culturally or economically formed groups. The definition inequality trap as phenomenon which is essentially linked with horizontal inequality is borrowed from Frances Stewart in his article, 'Horizontal Inequality: Two types of Trap'. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*. Vol. 10. No.3. November 2009. pp. 315-340.

<sup>45</sup> These characteristics for identifying inequality traps are also defended by Francois Bourguignon, et al. in his article "Equity, efficiency and Inequality traps: A Research agenda". *Journal of Economic Inequality*. August 2007. Vol. 5. Issue 2. p. 243.

In other words, inequality trap is essentially understood as relational inequality and it is analyzed on basis of people's access to opportunities, by particularly focusing on the conditions which sustain social mechanisms maintaining some socioeconomic groups into durable poverty. The key effect of inequality trap is usually the limitation of the socioeconomic mobility of groups of people concerned. Inequality trap therefore produces a distributive equilibrium which is inferior to possible improved alternatives. Relative poverty becomes sustained among groups of people who are trapped into persistent inequality of opportunities because people under inequality trap lack the very means they need to break out of the conditions which sustain the mechanisms holding them into their socioeconomic conditions of deprivation. Hence, possible identification of inequality trap must look at both the mechanisms which maintain existing inequality of opportunities and the nature of trap. An illustrative case of inequality trap may help to clarify the nature of inequality which becomes inequality trap.

### **3.2. An illustrative case of inequality trap: Twa people in Burundi**

The Twa ethnic group in Burundi is a concrete case of how inequality trap maintains a group of people in low distributive optimum of disposable goods and into conditions of durable forms of deprivation. The Twa people in Burundi are a minority group with the proportion of 1% of the national population. While the population of Burundi is mainly composed by two dominant ethnic groups, namely, Hutu and Tutsi which make respectively 84% and 15% of the Burundian population, the Twa people as a group live in particular socioeconomic conditions of deprivation. Most of Twa majority group are not educated. A large majority Twa people in Burundi do not have

primary school education. A large majority of members Twa ethnic group have no land, and live in deeper conditions of deprivation in comparison to members of other ethnic groups composing the Burundian population. While the group is part of the national population of the country, they are living at the margins of the society. The Twa people seem to lack fundamental social recognition which makes them equal members in the society.

The Twa people as an ethnic group are trapped into persistent inequality of opportunity which has been transmitted from generations to generations. The socioeconomic conditions underlying inequality trap among the Twa ethnic group are essentially grounded on social marginalization for members of the group. Nevertheless, the socioeconomic conditions of underlying inequality trap among Twa people are not associated with any legal norms regulating the Burundian society. Burundi does not have any legal regulations which are particularly discriminatory against any ethnic group. Inequality trap among Twa people in Burundi is direct consequence of social marginalization against this group of people which has been perpetuated across generations at the same time influencing unequal distribution of opportunities particularly in disfavor of the Twa ethnic group. Inequality trap for the Twa people in Burundi is driven and sustained by the lack of social recognition for the Twa ethnic group in the Burundian society.

The case of Twa people in Burundi illustrates the attitudinal and the distributive dimensions of inequality trap. Long standing social marginalization which has been transmitted from generation to generation among members of Twa group has influenced many to develop a certain form of resilience to their social conditions through processes of *internalization*. The process of internalization contributes



to stabilize deprivation among members of the group by undermining their motivational foundations to change their current social conditions and to improve their socioeconomic mobility. This is the effect of the attitudinal dimension of inequality trap. The distributive dimension of inequality trap is associated with the averagely and persistently low distributive optimum of social goods that most of Twa people enjoy in comparison with members of other ethnic groups in Burundi<sup>46</sup>. The two dimensions of inequality trap, namely the attitudinal and the distributional, are important defining components of inequality trap and help to understand and contextualize mechanisms which sustain the phenomenon of inequality trap.

The attitudinal and the distributive dimensions are essential defining elements of the phenomenon of inequality trap because they are essential factors which sustain the phenomenon of inequality trap. The two dimensions of inequality define the nature of the traps which keeps people into persistent low distributive equilibrium. Though the real causes of inequality trap are persistent differentials among groups of people to access socioeconomic opportunities, any strategy for addressing the phenomenon of inequality trap must take into account the attitudinal and the distributive dimensions. These two dimensions are defining elements of the nature of the trap which keep people in low distributive optimum and in deprivation. Yet, it is important to distinguish the phenomenon of inequality trap from some of its associated aspects particularly poverty traps. Inequality trap and

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<sup>46</sup> Burundi is a country which is among the least developed countries in the world. Yet, the socioeconomic conditions of Twa ethnic group show a clear margin in disposable goods between Twa people and members of other ethnic groups. Most of Twa people live in absolute deprivation. There is a clear inequality of opportunities among Twa people and the rest of the Burundian population. The persistence of inequality of opportunities among members of this group is the key factor influencing low distributive optimum of disposable goods among members of this ethnic group.

poverty trap are two phenomena which are conceptually related. But they do not necessarily connote the same socioeconomic conditions for people. In the following section, I elaborate the distinction between inequality trap and poverty traps, and analyze how both phenomena may be used in interpreting individuals' or group deprivation.

### **3.3. Distinguishing inequality trap from poverty traps: a contextual interpretation**

One may wonder why it is so important to clarify the distinction between inequality trap and poverty traps, and to elaborate the mechanisms which link the two phenomena. The elaboration of conditions which sustain each of the two phenomena allows contextualizing the causal interconnections between them. Distinguishing inequality trap from poverty traps allows the clarification of the conditions under which inequality generates conditions which sustain mechanisms which perpetuate poverty. As it has been emphasized, poverty is not solely an issue of individuals' deprivation understood as the lack of material goods, but it is also a problem of socio-economic conditions in which people live. Severe inequalities affect not only people's access of opportunities or resources, but they also affect individuals psychologically by undermining their capacity to value the aptitude they have to promote their own well-being and to improve their socio-economic conditions. In order to better grasp how conditions which make poverty dynamic and durable are not only limited to the distributional aspects of relevant social goods, it is important to analyze poverty from various angles including dynamics of inequality. In this perspective, it is important to clarify how inequality trap and poverty traps are causally linked and how they may differ in some of their central features as

phenomena portraying conditions of individuals' deprivation. A clear distinction of the causal interconnections between these phenomena and the conditions which underlie each of them allow to make better judgment on what addressing inequality trap would require and why it may be inadequate to conceptualize and interpret poverty on the sole basis of levels of disposable goods such as income.

Inequality trap and poverty trap are usually interpreted as two phenomena which are closely related in their conceptual underpinnings. While the two concepts are sometimes interchangeably used in analyzing individuals' deprivation, they differ in some of their central aspects and mechanisms. On the one hand, inequality trap as a concept essentially connotes a situation when persistent inequality of opportunities between groups of people produce mechanisms which perpetuate deprivation among some groups. A poverty trap, on the other hand, essentially connotes 'a self-reinforcing mechanism which causes poverty to persist among individuals or groups of people'<sup>47</sup>. The analysis of the similarities and differences between the two phenomena reveals that the interconnections between them lie in the conditions which generate the mechanisms which sustain each of the phenomena and the nature of the trap which keeps people or groups of people into relative or absolute deprivation.

In order to better grasp the interconnections between the phenomena of inequality trap and poverty trap, it is important to first understand what it means for an individual to be on an unequal standing in the social conditions in which one lives and what it means to be poor. In the domain of distributive justice, to be on an unequal standing in one's social context can be interpreted as being under

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<sup>47</sup> See Costas Azariadis and John Stachurski, "Poverty Trap", *Handbook of Economic Growth*, 2005, p. 326.

persistent inequality of opportunities in the social conditions in which one lives. And the constraints which perpetuate inequality of opportunities must be beyond the control of the person or group of people whose opportunities are limited. For instance, a child born in Sweden has a life expectancy of more than 80 years, while a child born in Sierra Leone has a life expectancy which is approximately 40 years. Opportunities enhancing or opportunities undermining conditions associated with being born in Sweden or Sierra Leone do not depend on the choices that people make, but on arbitrary luck or bad luck of being born in a certain place in the world. Hence, one can argue that inequality trap is essentially a phenomenon which is grounded on and driven by persistent inequality of opportunities among groups of people. Inequality of opportunities is therefore the fundamental phenomenon on which inequality trap is based and sustained. As it will be developed later, addressing inequality trap requires opportunity equalizing policies whose content is determined on basis of the real life context and conditions of people concerned.

To be on unequal standing for an individual in the social context in which one lives may better be interpreted on basis of Amartya Sen's capability approach. According to Sen, social inequality can be analyzed on basis of capabilities which are the amount of real freedom that people have to be and to do what they have a reason to value<sup>48</sup>. What is important for Sen, however, is not simply for individuals to have opportunities at their disposal, but the amount of real freedom that people have to access and enjoy those opportunities. Hence, when one lives under persistent constraints which limit one's freedom to pursue his/her full potential and when

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<sup>48</sup> See Amartya Sen, "Rights and Capabilities". *Resources, Values and Development*, Cambridge Ma: Cambridge University Press; 1984. p. 307.

such constraints are beyond the responsibility of the individual whose freedom is limited, the person is on an unequal standing in comparison to other people whose freedom to access available opportunities is not constrained by their actual sociopolitical or economic circumstances. Therefore, to be on unequal standing in the social conditions in which one lives is to be under persistent inequality of opportunities to pursue one's full potential in the social conditions in which one lives.

Defenders of equal-opportunity as the foundation for social justice differentiate two main sources of inequality among individuals. On the one hand, there are factors which are beyond the realm of individual choice. These are specified as circumstances for which individuals concerned cannot be held responsible. On the other hand, there are factors which are generically under individual responsibilities, or factors which are dependent on individuals' efforts<sup>49</sup>. One fundamental principle emphasized in equal-opportunity theories of justice is that differences in non-chosen circumstances of deprivation are not morally acceptable source of inequality<sup>50</sup>. For instance, being born as a woman in male dominated society is not a morally relevant justification for limiting women's access to socio-economic opportunities in society. Similar examples can be found for any other type of social circumstances which do not emanate from individuals' choices or efforts. Nevertheless, inequality arising from differences in individuals' efforts can be regarded as morally acceptable.

Focusing on people's opportunities to analyze conditions of individuals' deprivation offers a more reliable approach than focusing

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<sup>49</sup> Arnaud L. and Nicolas P. 'Inequality of opportunity Vs. Inequality of outcomes: Are western societies all alike?' *Review of Income and Wealth*. Series 54, No 4. December 2008. p. 514.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* p. 514.

on distributional outcome or disposable goods. Individuals' access to socio-economic opportunities is prior to access to resources. In other words, access to socio-economic opportunities opens up access to resources. Hence, difference in individuals' access to opportunities can better explain existing disparities in the distributive outcome. Any reliance on inequality in the outcome to contextualize deprivation among people may not allow the clarification of the causes of distributional disparities which may be observable in differentiated levels of individuals' material holdings. Differences in individuals' distributional outcome can either be generated from circumstances which are beyond the responsibility of the persons or groups of people concerned; or they can also be associated with differences in individuals' efforts. While differences due to circumstances beyond individuals' responsibility are morally relevant for justifying concerns for distributive justice, differences associated with individuals' efforts are not necessarily morally relevant as concerns for distributive justice. Consequently, focusing on opportunities people have to pursue their full potential in the sociopolitical circumstances in which they live is more relevant approach for understanding and contextualizing concerns of social justice rather than relying on the outcome expressed by individuals' levels of material holdings.

By focusing on socio-economic opportunities as the measure of distributional justice, being on an unequal standing in the socio-political context in which one lives can be interpreted as being under persistent pre-determinable disadvantage vis-à-vis access to socio-economic opportunities. The pre-determinable disadvantage is conceptualized as any non-chosen constraint which limits one's freedom to access opportunities and to pursue the full potential of one's life in the context in which one lives. Individuals or groups of

people who are on an unequal standing in the society where they live have limited freedom to access the opportunities that are available. Under this perspective, access to opportunities is the most important approach for evaluating and interpreting socioeconomic inequalities among individuals or among socioeconomic groups of people.

Having explored how access to socio-economic opportunities is fundamental for understanding and evaluating inequalities and conditions of individual deprivation, we may now analyze how durable inequality is conceptually linked with poverty. Debates among development theorists have remained polarized over the conceptualization of poverty, particularly with regard to the question whether poverty should be defined or conceptualized in absolute or relative terms. Indeed, in most empirical studies, poverty has been defined in absolute way as the level of income necessary for people to purchase goods which are necessary to their survival. For instance, in development economics, the 1 dollar a day line has been adopted since 1990 World Development Report as the 'extreme' poverty threshold<sup>51</sup>. Yet, many analysts prefer defining poverty in relative terms by considering both the physical and social dimensions of individuals' deprivation as the evaluative components of poverty.

Nonetheless, the absolute and the relative conceptualization of poverty are not equivalent ways of looking at individuals' deprivation even though the two approaches may coincide at some evaluative aspects. While debates among analysts of poverty such as Akisnon (1998) and Ravallion (1992) have been going on for long, the divergences between these two dimensions or outlooks to poverty have never been settled. According to some viewers, there seems to be

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<sup>51</sup> See International Bank. *World Development report 1990*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1990.

no justification to why the debate should be settled to one of the two conceptual approaches to poverty. According to Bourguignon, absolute and relative poverty concepts can simply be regarded as aiming to describe or analyze different issues. Physical poverty is about mere survival that is the capacity to afford basic necessities for sustaining life, or basic physical needs, while relative deprivation or social deprivation is about not being like others or being worst off in social conditions in which one lives<sup>52</sup>. In Sen's terms, relative poverty arises whenever an individual cannot afford doing or functioning as most people do in the society where one is living<sup>53</sup>. Relative poverty therefore describes a social phenomenon which is closely linked to social exclusion while absolute poverty or physical poverty may not necessarily be linked with social exclusion particularly when most people in the society share the same predicament of deprivation.

Moral concerns over the phenomenon of poverty are not merely associated with its absolute or relative forms, but mainly on its persistence and perpetuation dynamics. Indeed, poverty would not be regarded an important sociopolitical problem if it were purely transitory and limited to a very short time. In many cases, poverty understood as severe lack of disposable goods and socioeconomic opportunities is persistent over time among individuals and groups of people and is sometimes transmitted across generations. This implies that the severely poor people are usually trapped into absolute deprivation with little chance to break out of their conditions of deprivation. The lack of chance to break out of poverty does not

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<sup>52</sup> See Bourguignon, Francois. "Absolute poverty, relative deprivation and social exclusion". Vila Borsig Workshop Series, 1999.

<sup>53</sup> This argument is explained in Sen's book 1983 where he borrowed an example from Adam Smith who argues that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century England, a peasant unable to afford wearing a line shirt would not participate to social even in the his village even if he or she may not necessarily be undernourished.



simply imply that poor people are structurally unlucky and subject to productivity shocks. But the lack of chance behind durable poverty and absolute deprivation are usually the traps behind the socio-economic conditions which perpetuate inequality of opportunities among people in the context in which they live. More importantly, traps into poverty are mainly associated with the structural lack of opportunities which is maintained through sociopolitical and economic mechanisms. It is on the basis of this notion of structural lack of opportunities that we can contextualize the sociopolitical mechanisms which link the phenomena of inequality trap and poverty traps, and their implications to distributive justice.

### **3.4. Links between inequality trap and poverty traps**

Inequality trap and durable poverty can be interpreted as two phenomena which are generically linked. The causal interconnections between the two phenomena can be contextualized by analyzing the conditions which sustain poverty traps. Poverty traps are generated under a situation in which poverty, understood as absolute deprivation, produces effects which act as causes of poverty. To argue that effects of poverty act as means of perpetuating poverty implies that, under poverty traps, poverty produces vicious circles which are regarded as processes of circular and cumulative causation in which effects of poverty reinforce themselves and sustain their own persistence<sup>54</sup>. For instance, a person under absolute deprivation is not only deprived of disposable goods defined in terms of disposable income, but conditions of absolute deprivation under poverty traps include the lack capabilities which are fundamental in building human

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<sup>54</sup> This definition of “poverty trap” is similar to what Swati Dutta argues in her article, *Identifying Simple and Multiple Poverty Trap: An Application to Indian Household Panel Data*. Working paper DOI 10.1007/s11205-014-0586-x 9. Springer. March 2014.

capital. Hence, deprivation understood as lack of resources and capabilities produces the vulnerability of the poor and perpetuate the poor's conditions of deprivation through self-reinforcing mechanisms. People under absolute deprivation do not only lack resources, they also lack fundamental human capital which would allow them to be competitive for socioeconomic opportunities. Their conditions of extreme deprivation make them vulnerable to chronic poverty. In other words, people under poverty trap are stuck into conditions of deprivation which they can hardly overcome on the basis of their own personal efforts. Those conditions generate mechanisms which make poverty durable and dynamic.

While the conceptualization of poverty is based on the general phenomenon of deprivation, the analysis of poverty traps looks beyond the general outlook on poverty –as a state of being deprived– to focus to the dynamics which perpetuate poverty. Poverty understood as deep level of deprivation is essentially interpreted as a state of being of individuals which is characterized by the lack of both disposable goods and other basic capabilities. The analysis of poverty traps, however, looks beyond the general outlook on poverty as a state of being of individuals. The evaluation of poverty traps looks at the dynamics of poverty –the movement of individual into and out of poverty and existing factors which influence or determine people's move in or out of poverty–. Being under poverty trap implies that an individual or a group of people are stuck into a durable state of deprivation. Nevertheless, conceptual outlook on poverty particularly in the domain of development economics has heavily relied on disposable goods (disposable income). Under such a perspective, poverty is defined and interpreted as 'a problem of low monetary

income<sup>55</sup>. Under the economic perspective, poverty is essentially understood as a state of individual deprivation of disposable income. And extreme poverty is clarified with a threshold which is usually set on 1 dollar a day per person. Any individual whose income is below that threshold is interpreted as belonging to the category of extremely poor. An analysis of poverty trap as a concept, however, looks beyond the state of being poor to focus on the dynamics which maintain people below the threshold of poverty. While the static measurement of poverty exposes the level of deprivation for individuals in a given social context without clarifying the causes and mechanisms which sustain the socioeconomic conditions of the people concerned, the analysis of poverty traps is concerned with the dynamic aspects of poverty and the conditions which influence individuals' move into or out of poverty. In other words, while the general conception of poverty is concerned with the level of deprivation, the analysis of poverty trap is concerned with the dynamics and mechanisms which hold people into conditions of persistent deprivation.

Consequently, even though inequality trap and poverty trap are two phenomena which are closely related in their conceptual underpinnings, the two concepts do not necessarily connote similar socioeconomic situational positioning for people. Poverty traps are interpreted on the basis of their self-reinforcing mechanisms which maintain individuals or groups of people under conditions of persistent poverty. Poverty traps are also identified on basis of trends and mechanisms of self-perpetuation of deprivation among individuals or groups of people. Inequality trap, however, does not necessarily imply that individuals or groups of people concerned are necessarily

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<sup>55</sup> This definition is from the article by David Hulme and Andrew Shepherd "Conceptualizing Chronic Poverty". *World Development*. Vol. 31, No.3. pp. 403-423, 2003.

into conditions of extreme deprivation. Some individuals or group of people can be trapped under durable inequality in the society where they live but without necessarily being at level of absolute deprivation or below the threshold of poverty.

Under conditions of extreme inequality, however, inequality trap may be regarded as a poverty trap. When individuals or groups of people are trapped into persistent inequality of opportunities, inequality can be a contributing factor to conditions of deprivation which prevail among people. Under this consideration, existing inequality of opportunities is regarded as the contributing factor to the social conditions which maintain individuals into poverty. This is the case when conditions of deprivation maintain people in the lowest level of distributive optimum or into absolute deprivation. Individuals or groups of people who live under the traps of inequality are at the same time into conditions of absolute poverty, and inequality becomes the sustaining factor of poverty. In other words, when individuals or groups of people are stuck into inequality trap and are persistently maintained at the lowest distributive optimum of relevant social goods in comparison to other groups, inequality trap can also be interpreted as a poverty trap.

There are some fundamental features which help to elaborate how the phenomena of inequality trap and poverty trap are related and how they can be distinguished from one another. The key element for determining whether an inequality trap is at the same time a poverty trap is the level of deprivation under which individuals or groups of people live; and the second element is the nature of the trap. On the one hand, when individuals are maintained under conditions of absolute deprivation, usually specified in empirical studies of poverty as a situation below the threshold of relative poverty as consequence

of prevailing conditions of inequality of opportunities among people, inequality trap can be regarded as poverty trap. Inequality trap is therefore interpreted as a poverty trap when individuals or group of people are trapped into the lowest equilibrium or below the threshold of poverty. In other words, distinguishing inequality trap from a poverty trap under conditions of absolute deprivation of people can be regarded as an issue of threshold setting because, under absolute and durable deprivation, inequality trap is regarded as a poverty trap. In view of this analysis, one may conclusively argue that inequality trap is not necessarily a poverty trap even though the socio-economic conditions which characterize the two phenomena are closely linked in their essential elements. A poverty trap, however, can be generally interpreted as an inequality trap because poverty traps have consequential effects of keeping individuals into positions of inequality vis-à-vis disposable goods and access to socioeconomic opportunities.

It is important to note at the outset that the goal of the analysis of the central features of the phenomena of inequality trap and poverty trap is to contextualize the causal interconnections between these socioeconomic phenomena, particularly how inequality trap contributes to create conditions which make poverty dynamic and systemic. Inequality trap portrays better the conditions which sustain mechanisms which maintain individuals or groups of people into durable poverty. Severe inequality not only affects distributing patterns of resources and opportunities but it also undermines the motivational foundations for people who are at the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid to strive for moving out of their socioeconomic conditions. An analysis of the conditions which make people move into and out of poverty must consider both phenomena to

elaborate how and in which ways inequality is a contributing factor which sustains durable forms of deprivation.

Nevertheless, even though inequality trap is evaluated by considering the mechanisms which ground enduring low distributive optimum for some individuals or groups of people in the socioeconomic context in which they live, people under inequality trap are not necessarily into absolute deprivation. The level of material holdings of people under inequality trap may rise beyond the threshold of poverty while people concerned remain stuck into persistent inequality of opportunities in their socioeconomic conditions. Inequality trap does not necessarily prevent some levels of people's upward mobility. People under inequality trap are able to improve the amount of disposable goods according to the overall development trends of the society; but the patterns and mechanisms which keep individuals or groups of people stuck into durable inequality remain unchanged. Therefore, the elaboration of the nature of the mechanisms which keep individuals or groups of people trapped into inequality of opportunities is a crucial element in evaluating how inequality trap and poverty traps are causally connected. In the following section, I will evaluate social mechanisms under which inequality traps are maintained over time and transmitted across generations. The analysis will particularly focus on scrutinizing how mechanism based explanations of sociopolitical phenomenon of inequality trap are relevant for contextualizing sustaining conditions of durable poverty.

### **3. 5. Inequality trap and dynamics of durable poverty**

In order to contextualize whether lasting inequality of opportunities is an inequality trap, one must be able to identify the mechanisms which link persisting low distributional outcome for a

group of people under the traps of inequality with the distributional outcome enjoyed by other groups of people. It is via the elaboration of causal mechanisms which link existing interaction between groups of people and unequal distribution of opportunities that one can elaborate how inequality trap is maintained over time and transmitted across generations. The mechanistic explanation of existing inequality trap must consider different dimensions of inequality through which distributional disparities between different socio-economic groups are maintained over time and the sociopolitical dynamics which justify unequal distribution of opportunities. The existence of inequality trap is confirmed by the fact that, in the distribution of opportunities among socioeconomic groups of people, there is a socioeconomic group which faces a worse long-run distribution than other groups. The observed inequality of opportunities among groups of people must be associated with existing differences in power, wealth and social status which sustain socio-economic and political mechanisms which perpetuate inequality of opportunities. How then do existing differences in power, wealth and social statuses among socioeconomic groups of people interact to generate and maintain inequality traps? What are the explanatory mechanisms which link inequality trap to durable forms of deprivation? These are the questions the subsequent analysis will focus on.

In the general interpretation of the phenomenon, inequality trap is characterized by some features which together form mechanisms which maintain persistent inequalities of opportunities. In order to qualify lasting inequality of opportunities as an inequality trap, there must be some mechanisms which link low distributional outcome for a given socio-economic group of people to outcome of previous generations within the same group. An inequality trap is

transmitted from generation to generation and is characterized by persistent low distributive outcome for a group of people in comparison with other groups which are not under the constraints of inequality trap. Inequality traps are identified by analyzing the mechanisms which link low intergenerational outcome for a socioeconomic group of people in comparison with other groups which enjoy relative advantages in allocation of opportunities. In other words, the central characteristic of inequality trap is persistent inequality of opportunities which are usually transmitted from generation to generation. The existence of inequality trap is confirmed by the lack of socioeconomic mobility among members of groups who live under inequality trap. The persistence of inequality of opportunities which maintains inequality trap is regarded as generically linked with opportunity undermining mechanisms which link low distributional outcome for the disadvantaged group of people with their actual conditions of deprivation. Those mechanisms are rooted into inequality in power, wealth and social statuses among groups of people and maintained via economic and political practices and structures.

The question which arises is then why to rely on explanatory mechanisms to contextualize the link between inequality trap and durable forms of deprivation? Mechanistic explanations are relevant for contextualizing the links between inequality trap and durable poverty for two main reasons. The first reason is that mechanisms serve to explain the causal processes which produce effects we observe in the distributional outcome. The second reason is that mechanistic explanations allow answering to the 'how' and 'why' questions and help to distinguish the direction of causality and to



isolate irrelevant explanatory factors<sup>56</sup>. It is important to note, however, that the goal of mechanistic explanations of social phenomena is not necessarily to provide an exhaustive account of all the details. A mechanistic explanation does not aim at providing deterministic clarifications, but its goal is to trace the causal process which justifies the observed outcome and the conditions under which the outcome may be improved<sup>57</sup>.

Explanatory mechanisms which link inequality trap to durable forms of poverty can be contextualized by looking at how different dimensions of inequality trap (power, wealth and statuses) interact to sustain inequality of opportunities among socioeconomic groups of people. Consider the following example from Francois Bourguignon. Suppose a case of institutional and market imperfections of a society in which productivity (hence wages) are determined by the quality of school one attends. Suppose again that we have two groups of people. On the one hand, we have poor families which cannot afford to send their children to private schools which provide good education to children while charging high fees. Poor parents who cannot afford private schooling for their children opt for free public education which has a disadvantage of providing lower quality education than offered in private educative institutions. On the other hand, we have wealthy families which can afford to send their children to private schools where they receive good quality education despite its high cost. In the allocation of members of the society to the two groups, equilibrium might arise where people beyond a given threshold of financial means or socioeconomic statuses send their children to private schools and

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<sup>56</sup> See Hedstrom, Peter and Petri Ylikoski. "Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences". *Annual Review of Sociology*. Vol. 36. 2010. pp. 55 and 57.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p. 52.

people below that threshold send their children to free public schools<sup>58</sup>.

According to Bourguignon, the society under consideration the budgets of public schools are determined via an agreed upon level of taxation which is voted by all citizens. If then political power is in some ways related to wealth, it would be possible that the pivotal voter be rich enough to afford private school for his children; hence might not attach much interest to public schooling. Owing to the initially mentioned conditions in which productivities (or wages) in the society under consideration are determined by the quality of school one attends, an equilibrium would arise upon which children from poor families remain poor because they attended low quality schools, and the children of the rich stay rich because they attended good quality schools<sup>59</sup>. This hypothetical case exemplifies an inequality trap which would be grounded on permanent inequality of opportunities between the two groups of people. The lasting inequality of opportunities between the two socioeconomic groups would be associated with unequal distribution of both the political and the economic powers, and the nature of existing political institutions. The outcome of the distribution of opportunities between the two groups would change under an alternative distributive option in which wealth and political power would be differently allocated in the society to promote greater equality of opportunities among members of the society (ibid.)

Nevertheless, though inequality trap is interpreted as a phenomenon which is maintained through sociopolitical mechanisms

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<sup>58</sup> See Francois Bourguignon et al. "Equity, efficiency and Inequality traps: A Research agenda". *Journal of Economic Inequality*. August 2007. Vol. 5. Issue 2. pp. 243-44.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p.52

which are sustained by differences in power, wealth and statuses among socioeconomic groups of people, a close analysis of the nature of mechanisms which perpetuate inequality traps reveals that difference in power among groups of people is the sustaining factor of persistent inequality as an undermining factor for opportunity equalization. Hence, power relation can be regarded as a key factor in the explanatory mechanism which maintains inequality traps via the perpetuation of inequality of opportunities. Indeed, depending on how power is conceptualized and interpreted, the three dimension of inequality trap (power, wealth and statuses) can converge into the power dimension. In fact, wealth and social statuses are not necessarily dissociated components from power, but they are constitutive elements of power. Under this interpretation, the more wealth and status a socioeconomic group of people disposes, the more imbedded power potential they would acquire. In this regard, inequality trap can be regarded as a phenomenon which is maintained through mechanisms which are sustained by existing differences in power between socioeconomic groups of people. The question then becomes what would be the nature of power as a distinctive sustaining factor of inequality trap?

The power in evidence in the phenomenon of inequality trap can be interpreted as decision-making capacity or *explicit decision-making power*, arising from overt interests and preferences of people or groups of people<sup>60</sup>. This conception of power is what Steven Lukes calls *agenda-setting power* which defines how some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out<sup>61</sup>. Such power is usually exercised outside the range of observable political behavior of

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<sup>60</sup> See Lukes, C. *Power: a Radical View*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. p. 44

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. 20 and 45.

people or groups of people with shared interests and socioeconomic preferences. It accounts for how interests of some groups of people (such as the poor) may be excluded from political agenda, or from mandates of policy making institutions. Differences in agenda-setting power among groups of people make interests of powerless groups invisible and their needs un-politicized<sup>62</sup>. Hence, differences in power among groups of people which is regarded as the driving force for phenomenon of inequality trap connotes difference in agenda-setting capacities among groups of people by which interests and preferences of some groups of people who enjoy more power overrule some interests or needs of groups under conditions of competing socioeconomic advantages or opportunities.

It is therefore important to note that power as agenda-setting capacity that a socio-economic group of people enjoy does not necessarily work in accordance with democratic representation. In a society which is democratically governed, interests or needs of people or groups of people can be part of political agenda of political parties, which can be implemented when the parties concerned come into positions of leadership. Agenda-setting power, however, works as a force which determines how some issues become organized into politics or outside politics. It is a force which is driven by fundamental interests and preferences of some groups of people, and not collective interests or advantages. Agenda-setting power as the explicit decision-making capacity to set fundamental political agenda is never distributed on democratic basis because it is a force which works behind observable political behavior of people or groups of people. Differences in upholding agenda-setting power among groups of people explain how interests or preferences of some groups of people

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. P.44.

may often fail to be politicized or to be part of fundamental political priorities.

The conceptualization of power as agenda-setting capacity through which interests and preferences of groups of people are defended allow us to better contextualize mechanisms which link inequality traps and the persistence inequality of opportunities among some groups of people. Differences in power, wealth and status among groups of people are regarded as the basic elements for inequality traps. The lack of the agenda-setting power for a group of people makes their socioeconomic interests and preferences less visible at the political scene. The channel for advancing interests and preferences of socioeconomic groups who have less agenda-setting capacities is representation. Representation, however, does not fully resolve problems of injustice arising from power unbalance between socioeconomic groups of people because the level of fulfillment of interests or preferences of the powerless (or the poor) are still determined by those who hold more agenda-setting power.

An example may help clarify the argument above. Suppose that Twa people in Burundi is a socioeconomic group of people who enjoy limited agenda-setting power to set a political agenda which would advance their socioeconomic interests and preferences than a group of wealthy people who enjoy more agenda-setting capacities to advance their interests and sociopolitical preferences. The interests of Twa socioeconomic groups can only be defended or advanced via representative structures which are decided and established under the influence of the socioeconomic groups which hold more agenda-setting power. Hence, interests and preferences of the Twa powerless group can be advanced or achieved through the channels of justice rather than the political agency of Twa people. The unbalance in

agenda-setting capacities between the two groups of people produces a systemic form of inequality by which interests of the powerless are only defended or advanced under the promotion of justice rather than agency based efforts from those who enjoy less agenda setting power. This is an example of how inequality in agenda-setting power may work to sustain inequality of opportunities in a local context of distributive justice.

Under the above analysis, being trap under persistent inequality of opportunities connotes being stuck into condition of powerlessness upon which groups of people under inequality traps are in disadvantaged positions *vis-à-vis* access to socioeconomic opportunities and promoting their socioeconomic interests and preferences in comparison with socioeconomic groups with agenda-setting power. Hence, reduced agenda-setting power becomes an influencing factor for the persistence of inequality of opportunities and deprivation among some socioeconomic groups of people. Being trapped under persistent inequality of opportunities for a group of people therefore connotes being in persistent position of powerlessness and deprivation with little capacity to move out of the current socioeconomic conditions. The mechanism which links inequality trap and durable forms of deprivation is one which links inequality in power (agenda-setting power) to systemic lack of opportunities among some socioeconomic groups of people. Persisting deprivation and poverty becomes the consequence of exclusionary mechanisms which sideline interests and needs of some socioeconomic groups of people from fundamental political agenda. This makes the concerns of those groups and their needs to remain unpoliticized. As consequence, inequality in agenda-setting power contributes to sustain conditions which maintain mechanisms which

perpetuate inequality of opportunities and poverty among some socioeconomic groups of people.

### **3. 6. Inequality trap and its relational aspects**

Inequality traps are generically interpreted as relational forms of inequality. The relational aspect of inequality under which inequality traps are maintained implies that the mechanisms which contribute to the perpetuations of inequality traps and its effects of low distributive optimum in the distribution of opportunities among groups of people is analyzed on basis of the relational aspects of inequality. In other words, inequality in wealth, power and social statuses among socioeconomic groups of people which is regarded as the basis of social and political mechanisms under which inequalities of opportunities are maintained must also consider the relational nature of inequality among the socioeconomic groups considered. Owing to the analysis above on the nature of power on which the phenomenon of inequality trap is based, the relational aspect of inequality trap can be better understood in terms of power relations between different socioeconomic groups of people upon which unequal terms of social recognition become the foundational aspect of relational inequality through which the phenomenon of inequality trap is maintained.

The relational nature of the mechanisms linking inequality traps and durable poverty can be contextualized by analyzing how differences in power, wealth and statuses between socio-economic groups of people influence the creation of networks which isolate the poor from profitable political and economic networks. Indeed, socio-economic groups of people with comparable levels of power and wealth are prone to remain into networks and relations based on

relational equality and equal recognition with groups of people with similar socio-economic and political statuses. Socio-economic groups of people which remain in lower positions in power, wealth and statuses are likely to be related on equal basis with groups with the same socioeconomic and political statuses<sup>63</sup>. Differences in power, wealth and statuses therefore create distance in the networks between socioeconomic groups of people upon which equality and interests based relations are only maintained between socioeconomic groups with comparable socioeconomic statuses.

While networks or connections between socio-economic groups of people with different levels of power, wealth and statuses are also possible, they cannot be maintained on basis of equal recognition. Rather such relations are maintained under unequal terms of social recognition upon which domination of the groups enjoying more power, wealth and statuses become the foundation for political distance between groups. The relation between the two socioeconomic groups of people becomes one of subordination or domination of the group with more power and wealth rather than equal mutual recognition and equal opportunities<sup>64</sup>. Therefore, inequality in power, wealth and statuses generate conditions which sustain mechanisms which perpetuate inequality of opportunities among groups of people.

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<sup>63</sup> This type of networks interconnections between individuals and socioeconomic groups of people has been tested and evaluated in the research by Matthew, O. Jackson and Asher Wolinsky. "A Strategic Model of Social and Economic Network". *Journal of Economic Theory*. Vol. 71. 1996. Pp.44-74; and, Matthew, O. Jackson and Alison Watts. 'Evolution of Social and Economic Networks'. *Journal of Economic Theory*. Vol. 106. 2002. pp. 265-295.

<sup>64</sup> This mechanism of subordination and domination based on power unbalance between sociopolitical groups of people was and is still observable from historical evidence at cross-country level particularly in the post-colonial relationships between former colonies and their colonizing powers.



One may therefore conclude that the key sustaining factor for the mechanism through which inequality trap is maintained over time and linked to durable forms of deprivation among some socioeconomic groups of people is through power relation between groups of people by which some interests and needs of socioeconomic groups of people who live under traps of inequality fail to be politicized and to get due recognition. The conditions which sustain inequality trap can be regarded as explanatory causes for the persistence of durable inequality of opportunities and poverty among some socioeconomic groups of people. The analysis of sociopolitical mechanisms which sustain inequality traps and durable forms of deprivation reveals that the phenomenon is grounded on relational forms of social injustice which are sustained through unbalanced power relations between socioeconomic groups of people. The analysis of sociopolitical phenomenon of inequality trap and its sustaining mechanisms have revealed that inequality trap is not only an issue of distributional justice, but also an issue of relational justice. This relational aspect of social injustice has been largely ignored in contemporary normative theories of distributive justice.

A possible political strategy for addressing inequality trap and its generated forms of individuals' and groups' deprivation would not only aim at adjusting conditions which sustain mechanisms maintaining persistent inequality of opportunities and durable poverty, but should consider the promotion of distributive justice in real life scenarios as a foundational strategy for improving the socioeconomic conditions of the least advantaged or those who are the most vulnerable to effects of inequality trap. Due to the fact that people under inequality traps are hardly able to break out of the mechanisms maintaining them into persistent inequality of opportunities, it is

mainly on the basis of the promotion of distributive justice that durable forms of deprivation associated with the phenomenon of inequality trap should be addressed. As the phenomenon of inequality trap is based and sustained by persistent inequality of opportunities among groups of people, potential strategy for addressing this phenomenon in society should appeal to opportunity equalizing strategies. Inequality of opportunities is the real causal factor of inequality trap. Any strategy for addressing inequality trap should resort to opportunity equalizing approach to justice at the same time taking into consideration the attitudinal and the distributive dimensions of inequality trap.

In other words, it is on basis of opportunities equalizing policies that the phenomenon of inequality trap should be addressed. Nevertheless, owing to the psychological and distributive dimensions in the mechanisms sustaining inequality trap, potentials strategies for addressing the phenomenon would not only rely on the distributive dimension of justice. Any relevant strategy for addressing inequality trap should also promote the empowerment of the poor and seek to expand the agency of the poor or those who live under inequality trap. The ultimate goal should also include the full integration of the poor into the process of development. The fundamental question then becomes what would be the nature and the content of policies which would contribute to building a justice based strategy for addressing inequality trap and promoting inclusive development? What would be informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require if the ultimate goal is to address inequality trap? In the following chapter I will respond to those questions by looking at how Rawls's and Sen's indexes of social justice would independently or

jointly contribute to building a political strategy for addressing the phenomenon of inequality trap.

#### **Chap.4. Transitions out of inequality trap**

The phenomenon of inequality trap has been portrayed as sustained by persistent inequality of opportunities among people. Hence, opportunity gaps between groups of people have been portrayed as the central sustaining factor of inequality trap. What matters, however, for any political strategy for addressing effects of this phenomenon is not only addressing the concern of people not having equal opportunities in their own sociopolitical context. Any relevant political strategy for addressing the phenomenon should take into account the social conditions under which people live and nature of the trap maintaining people into low distributive optimum of social goods. The social conditions under which people live are the key for understanding the nature of the trap which keeps people into low distributive optimum or into durable forms of deprivation. Addressing traps of inequality therefore may require bridging the normative evaluation and empirical constraints as a normative approach for contextualizing and designing policies which would match the nature of problem at stake. By bridging normative evaluation and empirical constraints, I mean that possible strategies for addressing the phenomenon should take a realistic approach to social justice by taking into account factors which sustain the phenomenon at stake. This normative approach to distributive justice would lead to designing policies which can match the nature of the socioeconomic problem at stake.

Under conditions of inequality trap, durable poverty becomes the consequential effect of inequality of opportunities and an external manifestation of inequality trap. Yet, what keeps people trapped into deprivation or what should be regarded as the defining components of the trap are the aforementioned factors, namely, the attitudinal and the

distributive factors sustaining persistent low distributive optimum of social goods among some people. The attitudinal factor connotes people's reduced motivation and hope which make them adapt to consider some functionings as being always out of their reach. This factor can be portrayed as negative adaptive preference associated with the socioeconomic conditions under which people live<sup>65</sup>. The other factor is the distributional factor which portrays persistently low optimum in the distribution of social goods among some people who live under traps of inequality. The distributional factor is associated with the nature of existing social institutions and how they promote or fail to promote distributive justice in its different forms. The attitudinal and the distributive factors constitute the empirical constraints that our political strategy for addressing the phenomenon should take into account. Our normative approach for evaluating the content of justice enhancing policies for addressing the phenomenon should consider these two sustaining factors. In other words, a possible strategy for addressing the phenomenon should not only take into account these two causal factors, but the strategy for addressing inequality trap must march the nature of the trap which is defined on basis of these two factors.

On basis of an analytical methodology which intends to bridge normative evaluation and empirical constraints, this section will explore what should be regarded as an informational basis for judging socioeconomic advantages for people, particularly focusing on those in position of the least advantaged and then examine how Rawls's primary social goods and Sen's capabilities would provide a relevant

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<sup>65</sup> For more clarification on this notion of adaptive preference and individuals' social conditions, see Rosa Terazzo, "Conceptualizing adaptive preference respectfully: An indirectly sustainable account". *Journal of political Philosophy* 2015, Wiley Online library.

normative guidance for designing a political strategy for addressing inequality trap and promoting inclusive development in society. The chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part evaluates primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging socioeconomic advantages for people. The second section examines what should be the nature of justice enhancing policies which would address inequality trap in society and explore principles and values which would guide the political strategy for promoting inclusive development in society.

#### **4.1. Informational basis for evaluating people's socioeconomic advantages**

Philosophical debate over equality of opportunities has been evolving in political philosophy and normative economics as a critique to the utilitarian approach of accessing distributional equity and social progress. Since the publication of Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971), some other thinkers have contributed to the debate over the informational basis for egalitarian justice. Some of other key contributors to this philosophical debate are Ronald Dworkin (1981a, b) and Amartya Sen (1980). While all these thinkers tried to respond to the question about what should be considered as the informational basis for egalitarian justice, they all provided different response to what should constitute a correct *equalisandum* for distributive justice. According to Rawls, the informational basis for judging what distributional justice should be primary goods –basic liberties, resources, income and wealth and the social basis of self-respect–. According to Dworkin, egalitarian justice should refer to resources as a currency of distributional justice. In Sen's view, distributive justice should focus on capabilities as informational basis for judging individuals' socioeconomic advantages. In one of his recent

publications –*Idea of Justice* (2009)–, Sen offered an internal critique to Rawls’s primary goods as an informational basis for judging what distributive justice would require. In Sen’s own interpretation, primary goods are not ends in themselves, but they are means to the attainment of some other valuable ends. Hence, primary goods in Sen’s view are inappropriate informational basis for evaluating people’s socioeconomic advantages because they cannot tell what individuals can real do or be given their personal characteristics and conditions<sup>66</sup>. He then proposes capabilities as the most preferable index for evaluating and judging people’s socioeconomic advantages.

While a considerable part in existing literature on equality of opportunities has focused on defining and clarifying what equality of opportunities implies, little investigation has been oriented towards how equality of opportunities can be achieved and what should be the nature and the content of sociopolitical policies which would promote equality of opportunities among people in society. Neither does current philosophical debate on equality of opportunities offer an exhaustive account of what should be considered as the informational basis for judging what policy strategies for promoting equality of opportunities in society would imply, particularly when the advance of justice aims to address concrete sociopolitical problems in non-ideal conditions such as filling opportunity gaps among groups of people in society. Taking primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for evaluating and judging socioeconomic advantages for people, the following section will analyze what should be the nature and content of a sociopolitical strategy for addressing inequality trap and evaluate what should be the principles and values which would guide such a political strategy. The section will also elucidate how Rawls’s primary

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<sup>66</sup> See Amartya Sen. *The idea of Justice*. Allen Lane, 2009. pp. 253-62

social goods and Sen's capabilities would contribute as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require under the political strategy for addressing traps of inequality and promoting inclusive development.

#### **4.2. Solving the indexing problem**

Primary goods and capabilities are considered not only as indexes of social justice but more importantly as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions would require. Yet, primary social goods as presented in Rawls's theory of distributive justice are considered as a package of goods which is offered to everyone. One may, however, wonder whether all primary social goods should be considered as being of equal value or whether one should give priority to some primary goods in Rawls's package. According to Rawls, the promotion of justice should give priority to basic liberties. The rest of primary goods are not ranked. One may then wonder whether the advance of justice in non-ideal conditions may consider the rest of Rawls's primary goods as having equal value or whether the advance of justice may have to give priority to some among Rawls's list of primary social goods.

A similar question may also arise within the capability approach to justice. Should all capabilities be regarded as of equal value or should the promotion of justice focus on some fundamental capabilities that every person should have? A comparative study of primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions require may need to re-examine the value of primary goods and capabilities, and also consider a certain ranking which may help to use each of the two indexes as reference for judging what improving people's life conditions would entail. In



this section, I will analyze how Rawlsian primary goods can better be considered for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions and see whether one may need to give priority to some primary goods in Rawls's package. A similar analysis will also be made to the capability approach in order to see whether there are some fundamental capabilities that should be given priority in evaluating and judging what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions would require.

According to Rawls, primary social goods include basic liberties, opportunities, income and wealth and the social basis of self-respect<sup>67</sup>. Primary social goods are interpreted as the goods that any rational person would want to pursue one's ends in life, whatever such end may be. They are part of those things that people would want more<sup>68</sup>. In Rawls's view, there is a problem of constructing an index of primary good. While in his theory of justice primary goods are distributed as a package which is offered to everyone, he argues that some primary goods particularly basic liberties should not be balanced against other values. In his interpretation, only rights and prerogative to authority can vary<sup>69</sup>. While Rawls argues that the promotion of justice should give priority to liberty, it is not clear whether the rest of primary goods should have equal importance in advancing social justice. For instance, one may find that the social basis of self respect portray better what the promotion of social justice in non-ideal conditions would require. Given the fact that there is no ordered ranking of primary goods, the question then becomes whether all the primary goods are of equal importance for advancing social justice in

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<sup>67</sup> Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice* (Revised Edition). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999. p. 79.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 79.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 79.

non-ideal conditions. Or, whether, it would be more relevant to give priority to some primary goods in promoting social justice?

According to Rawls, we should give priority to basic liberties. One may, however, wonder whether by giving priority to basic liberties this would allow us to better grasp what advancing justice in non-ideal conditions would require. Basic liberties are the key elements on Rawls's package of primary goods. Basic liberties in Rawls's specification are "freedom of thought and liberty of conscious, the political liberty and freedom of association, (...) freedom specified by the liberty and integrity of the person, and finally the rights and liberties covered by the rule of law"<sup>70</sup>. One would then wonder whether giving priorities to those liberties specified would help to grasp what the promotion of justice may entail for advancing justice in real life conditions? Basic liberties as specified by Rawls are important in his package of primary goods, but they are not the only primary goods. While one may agree with Rawls that basic liberties should be given priority, other primary goods are also important. For instance, income and opportunities are also important for peoples' pursuit of their ends in society. Hence, the judgment of what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions would require may need to consider income and opportunities too. Given the multiple number of primary goods in Rawls' package, we have an index number problem<sup>71</sup>. The index number problem means that we have many elements to refer to, and this makes it difficult to make a relevant judgment.

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<sup>70</sup> Rawls, John. "Basic liberties and their priority". The tanner lecture of human values, delivered at the University of Michigan, April 10, 1981. p.5.

<sup>71</sup> The idea on the index number problem was initially developed by Douglas. H. Blair in his article "The primary goods indexation problem in Rawls's theory of Justice" *Theory and Decision* (1988). pp. 239-52.

Rawls proposes a solution that the indexing should refer to weighting primary goods for the least advantaged<sup>72</sup>. But his proposed solution does not fully resolve the problem of using primary goods as information basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require. For instance, it remains unclear which primary goods would be regarded as the most important for improving the socioeconomic conditions of the least advantaged. One possible solution might be to consider all the primary goods as equally important for improving people's lives. Yet, when one needs to make policies for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions, one may need more clear reference. My alternative solution is to consider the social basis of self-respect as one of the most important primary goods that the promotion of social justice in non-ideal condition would need to take into account. My hypothesis is that the promotion of some primary goods in Rawls's package leads to the promotion to other primary goods. Hence, promoting justice would need to consider those key primary goods. Yet, in order to determine how promoting some primary goods would lead to the promotion of other primary goods when advancing justice in non-ideal conditions, we need to analyze the possible relationships between different primary goods in Rawls's package, and see how using some primary goods to promote social justice would lead to promoting the social basis of self-respect which is considered as the most important primary good even by Rawls himself<sup>73</sup>.

First, what does Rawls mean by the social bases of self-respect? The social basis of self-respect are "those aspects of basic institutions normally essential if citizens are to have a lively sense of their worth

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<sup>72</sup> Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice* (Revised Edition). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999. p.80.

<sup>73</sup> Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice* (Revised Edition). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999. p.386.

as persons and to be able to advance their ends with self-confidence”<sup>74</sup>. According to Thomas E. Hill, self-respect is a subjective attitude which cannot be objectively identified, measured or socially controlled<sup>75</sup>. Yet, the social bases of self-respect have some objective aspects on which they are dependent. The social bases of self-respect in Rawls’s interpretation are the features of the basic structure of the society that support fundamental interests of people in society and preserve self-respect<sup>76</sup>. In other words, the social bases of self-respect are part of the sociopolitical conditions under which people live. Hence, taking the social basis of self-respect as the central primary good that the promotion of justice in society would take into account, we give a central place to the sociopolitical conditions under which people live.

As argued above, promoting just distribution of some primary goods in Rawls’s package can lead to the promotion of other primary goods. For instance, reasonably just distribution of rights, opportunities or resources (income and wealth) would lead to promoting the conditions for enhancing the social bases for self-respect for people in society. Promoting the conditions for enhancing the social basis of self-respect can be regarded as largely dependent on the general conditions of social justice. The question that we are concerned with here is to examine whether, by giving priority to some of the primary goods in Rawls’ package, we can better grasp what the advance of justice in non-ideal conditions may require. Due to existing interconnections between Rawls’s primary goods, we may not

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<sup>74</sup> Rawls, *Justice as Fairness* p. 59. (Quoted in Thomas. E. Hill, at al. *A Companion to Rawls*, Oxford: Wiley Blackwell 2014, pp. 206).

<sup>75</sup> Thomas. E.Hill. at al. *A companion to Rawls*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2014, p. 206.

<sup>76</sup> See Rawls *Justice as Fairness*, p.60. Quoted in Thomas. E. Hill, at al. *A Companion to Rawls*, Oxford: Wiley Blackwell 2014, pp. 206).

necessary grasp what the promotion of justice in society would require by referring to one isolated primary good. Yet, on evaluating the conditions for advancing social justice, we may need a plural approach which may appeal to multiple primary goods. Nonetheless, by looking at possible interlinks between primary goods, one may argue that all the primary goods in Rawls's package can lead to the enhancement of the social basis of self-respect. If then we need an objective reference for evaluating conditions for social justice, we can consider the social basis of self-respect as possible reference for promoting justice.

Sen's capability approach is not exempt of the problem of indexing. In fact, the capability approach gives some normative perspective to social justice by appealing to what people are able to do and to be in order to be and to do what they have a reason to value. Yet, when it comes to content of policies for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions, the approach does not tell what should be regarded as key capabilities for making policies for promoting justice. The question is whether we should have some fundamental capabilities that the promotion of social justice should focus on? As Sasiko Fukuda-Parr argues, one of the challenges of applying the capability approach to development policy making is how to decide which capabilities to consider as the most important<sup>77</sup>. One may note that under the capability approach, there is no objective measure of what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions may require. From the perspective of the capability approach, we may manage to evaluate individuals' conditions, but the capability approach does not necessarily indicate what we should choose in terms of policy content

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<sup>77</sup> See Sakiko Fukuda-Parr. The Human Development Paradigm: Operationalizing Sen's Ideas on Capabilities. *Feminist Economics* 9(2-3), 2003. pp. 301-317.

to promote justice. With the capability approach, we are faced with the problem of individuals' diversity and the problem of publicity. We cannot find an objective measure of what promoting justice for everyone would entail. The solution to this problem is to choose some capability sets to be achieved and help people to pursue that end according to what they have a reason to value.

The question then is whether we can have some fundamental capabilities that the promotion of justice should take into account? Nussbaum has offered a list of capabilities. Her list, however, is not exhaustive as it does not include all capabilities. While her list shows some important capabilities that individuals would need in order to promote their well-being, one may not necessarily take Nussbaum list of capabilities for granted. We cannot deny, however, that some capabilities are more important than others. But it does not necessarily follow that those are the capabilities which should be given priority for the sake of advancing justice. According to John M. Alexander, "the importance of capabilities can vary with the social and the cultural context"<sup>78</sup>. If then it is the case that capabilities can vary due to the context in which they are used, it may be inappropriate to take for granted that some capabilities can be considered as important in various contexts. Under this interpretation, capabilities that should be chosen to advance justice in non-ideal conditions are those which would better meet the improvement of people's lives as required under the guidance of justice in the actual context in which they are used.

It is important to note that some viewers, including Amartya Sen, are not in support of having a fixed list of capabilities. One of the key arguments against having a fixed list of capabilities is to keep the

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<sup>78</sup> See Alexander, M. John. *Capabilities and social justice: The political Philosophy and Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2008.

capability approach open to various ways of usage and interpretation. Nevertheless, depending on the conditions under which the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions takes place, we may need to consider some viable capabilities, as necessary for promoting justice. For instance, if the context in which we promote social justice is under conditions of deprivation of people, we may need to consider some fundamental capabilities as priority for meeting the actual needs of people in non-ideal conditions. In other words, the capability approach can be used in various ways depending on the values and goals we intend to promote and the sociopolitical goals we intends to achieve.

Owing to the context sensitivity associated with the use of the capability approach, it may not be taken for granted that capabilities, even those that are regarded as important, be considered as such in all contexts. The issue of context sensitivity of the use of the capability approach raises some questions, particularly on the valuation of capabilities and their use for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions. As it has been noted, the judgment over the importance of capabilities may vary according the social and cultural context. This implies that we may be more cautions in judging the relevance of capabilities to the context in which we intend to promote justice in non-ideal conditions. One may not deny, however, that there are some viable capabilities that every person should have. The lack of such viable capabilities would make life unworthy living. We can rightly say that those capabilities are the most important given the value they add to human life. If then the advance of justice is to apply to the distribution of such capabilities, it would be worthwhile to give them some priority.

Judgments about what the promotion of justice would require are always bound to some complexities from either primary goods

perspective or the capabilities approach. On the one hand, under the primary goods approach, we are faced with an index number problem associated with the plurality of elements to be taken into account. Under the capability approach, the problem is not only the multiplicity of capabilities, but also how to rank them and determine what should be regarded as the most important in the context in which we advance justice. Besides some solutions that the analysis has proposed, the ultimate solution is to consider the choice of the beneficiaries of the promotion of justice. This would help to avoid resorting to paternalistic perspective for advancing justice in favor of more liberal approach to the promotion of justice in society. For the sake of justice enhancing policy making, however, we may need to more contextualize the complexities associated with each of the two indexes of justice. But, the ultimate choice should be bound to public reason and the will of the ultimate beneficiaries of the promotion of social justice.

Ultimately, the use of primary goods and capabilities as indexes of justice and as informational basis for promoting justice involves some complexities. Yet, such complexities can be overcome by appealing to more context sensitive perspectives for the capability approach and by being more sensitive to possible interconnections between different primary goods. Given the context in which we use these indexes for policy making, we may have to give priority to some primary goods or capabilities, but this would largely depend on the judgment of what the promotion of justice in the actual context may entail. In the section below, we will elaborate more on the two indexes as informational basis for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions, and contextualize their contribution for policy making to promote inclusive development.



### **4.3. Rawls's primary social goods as informational basis for evaluating people's socioeconomic advantages**

Primary social goods –basic liberties, opportunities, income and wealth and the social basis of self-respect– as an index for social justice are usually analyzed and interpreted as resources broadly understood or as a means for people's pursuit of well-being<sup>79</sup>. In some of the contemporary interpretations of Rawls's primary goods as an index of justice, the question of internal content has not attracted much attention among political theorists. By internal content, I mean what primary social goods as index of justice can offer as essential goods that public policies aiming to advance distributive justice would focus on. Yet, when primary goods are considered on different level of analysis as, not simply an index of distributive justice, but as informational basis for judging people's socioeconomic advantages, the issues of the content and the indexing problem become the central questions to be addressed. The indexing problem is a normative quest intending to determine whether in the package of primary goods some primary goods would not be considered as more important and eventually requiring priority in the distribution. Resolving the indexing problem requires addressing the question whether all the primary goods should be considered as equal in their value and consideration as fundamental goods.

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<sup>79</sup> This interpretation of primary social goods as means and resources broadly understood is commonly shared among theorists of distributive justice such as Ingrid Robeyns, Harry Brighouse or Thomas Pogge who focused on the different usage and interpretation of primary goods and capabilities as metrics of social justice. For more information on this point, See Ingrid Robeyns and Harry Brighouse. "Introduction: Social primary goods and capabilities as metrics of social justice". In *Measuring justice: Primary goods and capabilities* (2010). p.1; and Thomas Pogge. "A critic to the Capability approach" in *Measuring justice: Primary goods and capabilities* (2010). Ingrid Robeyns and Harry Brighouse, eds. pp. 17-60.

Rawls's primary social goods as an index of justice has raised a number of normative questions associated with the issue of indexation. Chief among those questions is that Rawls identifies primary goods as a package which includes basic liberties, opportunities, income and wealth, and the social basis of self-respect. These primary goods, which in his view constitute what every rational person would want independently of his individual preferences and desires, are allocated to people in society as a standardized package which is applicable to everyone. Yet, Rawls does not specify whether some indexes of justice are regarded as more important than others, or whether some primary goods should be given priority over the rest of primary goods<sup>80</sup>. Rawls reserves a special proviso of unequal distribution of these social goods only when unequal distribution aims at improving the conditions of those who would end up as disadvantaged in a standardized distribution of these primary social goods. Hence, the first issue that we are faced with under the use of primary social goods as an informational basis for judging socioeconomic advantages for those under conditions inequality trap is the issue of aggregation of primary social goods. The issue of aggregation is understood as an index number problem associated with the plurality of elements in Rawls's package of primary social goods and the potential attribution of priority to some elements in the package to promote distributive justice.

Rawls initially attempted to respond to this problem of indexation by arguing that the indexing problem only concern the weighting of primary goods for the least advantaged to determine the combination

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<sup>80</sup> Rawls, however, has defended the priority of liberty over other social goods. Yet, his defense of the priority of liberty is not associated with resolving the problem of indexation of his proposed package of primary social goods.

of primary goods that the worst off would prefer<sup>81</sup>. For Rawls, the only index problem that raises concern is that of the least advantaged because, in his view, it is unnecessary to define weights for those in more favored positions as long as we are sure that they are more favored<sup>82</sup>. In other words, the concern for social justice under Rawls's approach to distributive justice is primarily for improving the conditions of the least advantaged in the distribution of primary social goods. This is the reason why Rawls defines justice as fairness, suggesting as a foundation for his egalitarian theory of local justice that the pursuit of social justice must be via the maximization of the share of the least advantaged. Hence, any indexation strategy of primary goods should ensure the maximization of the share of the worst off.

In order to better contextualize how Rawls's index of primary social goods is interpreted in his scheme of justice and how it can apply to judgments about people's socioeconomic advantages, it might be useful to clarify to which domain of justice his index of primary goods belongs. Rawls has clarified that his index of primary social goods does not belong to theory in the economist's sense, but it instead belongs to a conception of justice which falls under the liberal alternative to the tradition of the one rational good: utility. In Rawls's interpretation, the problem of indexing justice under his primary goods approach is not how to specify an accurate measure of attributes available for clarifying people's social conditions; but the problem is moral and practical one<sup>83</sup>. Similarly to Marc Fleurbaey's interpretation, Rawls rejects not only the idea of interpersonal

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<sup>81</sup> Rawls, John. *A Theory of justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. p. 80

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* p.80

<sup>83</sup> See Rawls. "Social unity and primary goods". In *Utilitarianism and Beyond*. Sen AK, William, B. (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1982.

comparisons in his interpretation of primary goods as index of social justice, but he also rejects an indexing approach which would be based on utility comparisons<sup>84</sup>. Rawls therefore prefers an indexation approach which can reflect ethical priorities in solving the practical problem of sharing and allocating social goods among people in society. One may therefore argue that possible evaluative reference on primary social goods as informational basis for justice should focus on the moral appropriateness of the distributive scheme of justice rather than on the content of socioeconomic opportunities offered to people. Under this interpretation, the ultimate target of the strategy for addressing inequality trap would be to uplift the socioeconomic conditions of those who live under traps of inequality and to promote their upward mobility at the same time maximizing their share in the allocation of primary social goods. Yet, this interpretive approach to the use of primary social goods may not solve the whole problem of using primary goods as an informational basis for judging people's socioeconomic advantages. One important question is whether primary goods can be a reference for framing socioeconomic opportunities for the least advantaged. Or, can inequality trap as a deprivation based phenomenon be framed in terms of Rawls's primary goods?

One may respond to this question by analyzing in which ways inequality trap may be framed in terms of lack of primary social goods. Primary social goods are usually interpreted as resources broadly understood<sup>85</sup>. The distribution of primary goods is informed

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<sup>84</sup> See Fleurbaey Marc. "Social choice and the indexing dilemma". In *Social choice Welfare* (2007) vol. 29. p. 635.

<sup>85</sup> This interpretation of primary goods as resources broadly understood was defended by Thomas Pogge. See Thomas Pogge, "A critic of the capability

by the design and workings of existing social institutions. People under inequality trap lack resources because they enjoy a limited amount of disposable goods. Increasing the amount of disposable goods for those under inequality trap would constitute an important step for resolving some among the problems distributional inequality. Yet, disposable goods in general or even primary social goods in particular can never be looked upon as direct components of people's social states. But they are simply the means for building individuals' social states. An example may clarify this point. Income and wealth are part of what we may need to promote social conditions which would allow people in society to overcome poverty. These social goods do not necessarily contribute to building people's social states and improving their well-being. Therefore, given the nature of the problem at stake and its sustaining factors, primary social goods as resources may not necessarily provides a unique evaluative basis for judging people's advantages, particularly for those in positions of least advantaged. Primary social goods approach is better useful for evaluating and judging the workings of existing social institutions and social conditions they afford for people, and not direct component of people's social states. As I will argue later, primary social goods approach can play an important role in designing institutional framework which can offer relevant social conditions to allow people to overcome absolute forms of deprivation. But, primary social goods may not be the ultimate reference for judging socioeconomic advantages for those in positions of the least advantaged because deprivation may not be fully grasped only by relying on disposable goods such as resources. Some other elements such as individual freedom constitute a central element for judging individuals'

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approach" in *In Measuring justice: Primary goods and capabilities*. Ingrid Robeyns and Harry Brighouse (eds) 2010. pp. 17-60.

socioeconomic advantages. From this hypothesis, one may wonder whether Sen's capability approach can do better than the Rawlsian primary goods approach for evaluating people's socioeconomic advantages.

#### **4.4. Capabilities as informational basis for evaluating individuals' socioeconomic advantages**

To evaluate the potential contribution that the capability approach may make as normative basis for designing a strategy of inclusive development, one may need to respond to the following question: can the capability approach offer a relevant normative guide for evaluating and grasping the nature of deprivation that characterizes individuals' social states under inequality trap? One can respond to this question by referring to the analytical perspectives of human development. Human development approaches considers human lives as the center of development initiatives. Hence, improving life conditions or increasing people well-being is regarded as the cornerstone for advancing human development under the capability approach. The question then is what can be regarded as the contributive role of the capability approach as normative guide for evaluating and comparing individuals' or groups' social states and social advantages. The capability approach can play an informative role as an evaluative tool for comparing individuals' or groups social advantages. Under the guidance of the capability approach, the evaluation of individuals' social states would look at the real freedom people have to achieve valuable functionings –valuable beings and doings that are acquired after one has expanded his/her capabilities–. Real freedom to be and to do what someone has a reason to value is taken as a normative ground for evaluating individuals' social states. The capability approach, however, is not only resorted to as an evaluative tool for examining

how individuals' lives has gone in terms of well-being. According to Ingrid Robeyns, the capability approach can also serve for designing and conceptualizing policies for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions<sup>86</sup>. It is on the basis of the two dimensions on the use and interpretation of the capability approach as both an evaluative tool for assessing people's social states and as normative basis for conceptualizing policy proposals for societal changes that the contextualization of the potential contribution of the capability approach to address inequality trap will focus.

#### **4.5. Inequality trap from the outlook of capability approach**

The capability approach can help not only to contextualize the nature of deprivation that people who live under inequality trap are subject to, but the capability approach can constitute a relevant normative guide for judging the nature of socioeconomic advantages that policies for addressing inequality trap should take into account. As already argued, inequality trap is a deprivation based phenomenon. The deprivation which sustains the phenomenon is based on two key factors, namely, the attitudinal factor and the distributive factor. The distributive factor connotes the persistently low distributive optimum of social goods among those who live under traps of persistent inequality of opportunities. The attitudinal factor connotes people's reduced motivation and undermined hope for achieving some functionings, at the same time creating conditions for people's adaptation to consider those functionings as being always out of their reach. Inequality trap undermines individuals' capacity to frame opportunities and people's capacity to transform opportunities into

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<sup>86</sup> See Ingrid Robeyns and Harry Brighouse. "Introduction: Social primary goods and capabilities as metrics of social justice". In *Measuring justice: Primary goods and capabilities* (2010) p.3.

better living conditions. The psychological and distributive dimensions of inequality trap have consequential effects of making deprivation and poverty systemic among people affected. Under this outlook on the phenomenon, inequality trap can be interpreted as primarily a deprivation of capabilities: real freedom for people to achieve valuable functionings.

How far can inequality trap be framed as a deprivation of capabilities? People under inequality trap have reduced ability to value their capacity to pursue and achieve valuable functionings (valuable states of being and doing). A capability is essentially understood as human ability to be and to do what one has a reason to value; or simply an ability to transform resources into valuable functionings. Capabilities are based on human agency to pursue and achieve the doings and the beings that one values. Yet, people under inequality trap have reduced agency to value their abilities to promote and eventually achieve valuable functionings. This is due to the fact that, under conditions of inequality trap, individuals' framing of their abilities and their choices is affected and undermined by the actual conditions of inequality trap. In other words, one may argue that inequality trap is a capability undermining phenomenon. Effects of inequality trap can not only undermine individuals' real freedom to do or to be what people would value; but inequality trap affects even individuals' ability to value their own aptitude to promote their own well-being. Consequently, inequality trap can be rightly interpreted not only as a capability undermining phenomenon, but also a capability depriving phenomenon.

The distributive dimension of inequality trap has also effect on people's development of capabilities. There may be some correlation between resources possession and the development of capabilities.



Resources generally understood are means for transforming capabilities into valuable doings or beings that people would value. For instance, income can be regarded as valuable means for having an adequate shelter. Or, having some income can allow one to afford the means to be well fed, sheltered, to have health care, etc. In other words, resources are important means for transforming capabilities into valuable functionings. The distributional dimension of inequality trap has consequences on the doings or the beings that people can achieve because inequality trap has consequential effect of sustaining low distributive equilibrium of social goods among individuals or groups of people affected. This has consequence of limiting people's real freedom to do and to be what they may have a reason to want. Consequently, the capability approach is a normative approach which can help to contextualize the nature of deprivation that people under inequality trap are subject to by evaluating the nature of effects that the conditions under which people live affect their ability to achieve valuable functionings and make valuable choices. The question, however, is not only about the evaluation and contextualization the nature of deprivation that people under inequality live. It is also about conceptualizing normative foundation for addressing the phenomenon itself. The capability approach is a relevant normative approach for judging the socioeconomic advantages for people who live under inequality trap. How? In the following section, I analyze in which ways the capability approach may offer relevant normative guidance for judging individuals' or groups social conditions and contextualize some values which would be considered in conceptualizing policies for addressing the phenomenon on societal level.

#### **4.6. Addressing inequality trap: grounding values and their justification**

A relevant approach for addressing inequality trap in society should take a problem oriented perspective to social justice by focusing on causes of the phenomenon. What makes inequality trap sustained over time are conditions sustaining persistent inequality of opportunities among people. While an exploration of the conditions which stabilize inequality trap allows the clarification of how this socioeconomic phenomenon is sustained over time and help to uncover the conditions which make poverty stable and systemic, observations based on the analysis of the conditions maintaining the phenomenon and its sustaining conditions are in support of the hypothesis that any policy strategy for addressing the phenomenon should be opportunity equalizing. Such strategy would imply taking a problem oriented approach to social justice by bridging normative evaluation and empirical constraints. By bridging normative evaluation and empirical constraints, I mean that possible policy strategy which may be chosen for addressing inequality trap and promote inclusive development would have to match the nature of the problem at stake. Hence, the adequacy of our normative approach to justice which would aim to address inequality trap should be judged on basis of how it adequately fits and match of the nature of the sociopolitical problem at stake as evaluated in non-ideal conditions.

Consequently, taking a problem oriented approach to distributive justice requires a realistic account of social justice. The promotion of justice under this perspective would consider the nature of the problem at stake and evaluate the strategy and policies for addressing inequality trap. Hence, under this perspective, the promotion of inclusive development should be on the basis of their fitness to the

nature of the problem at stake. The problem oriented approach to justice has some implications to the conception of justice. Social justice under this perspective is not simply conceived as a transcendental ideal using ideal principles to portray what should be the ultimate goals of justice, but rather distributive justice under this methodological approach is perceived as viable practice which informs policy choices and implementation in non-ideal conditions. In other words, the normative orientation for the promotion of social justice under the problem oriented approach of addressing inequality trap is grounded on a realistic account to justice upon which successful advance of justice would depend on how policies for addressing inequality trap would take into account and fit the nature of this sociopolitical phenomenon. By taking into account the nature of the sociopolitical problem. The political strategy of addressing inequality trap would take a realistic turn which would allow bridging normative evaluation and empirical constraints associated with the factors sustaining inequality trap. Consequently, designing a political strategy for addressing inequality trap may require taking a realistic approach to social justice. Having explored what should be the key focus on our strategy for addressing inequality trap and normative constraints such strategy should take into account, I may now move to the exploration of what should be the nature and content of policies which would address the phenomenon of inequality trap and contextualize the relevance of primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require under a justice based strategy which would aim to address traps of inequality in society and promote inclusive development.

#### **4.7. The nature of policies for addressing inequality trap.**

Inequality of opportunities has been detected as the key sustaining factor of inequality trap. Due to the fact that inequality of opportunities is the key foundation of inequality trap, one may argue that the sociopolitical policies for addressing inequality trap should be opportunity equalizing. The equalization of opportunities would aim to adjust the conditions which sustain inequality trap and promote the upward mobility of people who live under traps of inequality. Hence, any strategy for addressing inequality trap should focus on promoting equality of opportunities among people. Under this normative approach to distributive justice, possible evaluation of the adequacy of sociopolitical policies for addressing the phenomenon should be judged on basis of their capacity to afford for individuals equal chance to pursue the socioeconomic outcome that they care about.

Addressing inequality trap therefore may require taking opportunities as the real currency of egalitarian justice and the normative foundation of policies for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions. Taking the promotion of equality of opportunity as a normative ground for building the strategy for addressing traps of inequality and promoting inclusive development, however, may raise some questions. One of the key questions that we would need to address is what is the nature of equality of opportunities that we should aim for in addressing inequality trap and also the question of the content of justice enhancing policies which would promote equality of opportunities. Therefore, it might be useful to first clarify what opportunity equalization means, before moving to the nature and content of policies for addressing inequality trap and the values such a political strategy should involve.

#### 4.7.1. Equality of opportunities

Equality of opportunities is a concept with a plural interpretation and meaning. The concept also involves a number of positions ranging from formal equality of opportunities to the substantive understanding of equality of opportunities. It may be helpful to first explore the plural interpretation of the concept before focusing on the particular aspects of equality of opportunity that we are concerned with in our theory of social justice.

The first meaning of equality of opportunity is the formal understanding of the concept. Formal equality of opportunities requires that positions and posts which involve superior advantages be open to all applicants. Under the formal equality of opportunities, applicants for positions should be evaluated according to their merit, and the most qualified gets the position. The ideal of formal equality of opportunities is usually associated with the liberalization of economic practices and institutions from offering illegitimate privileges and the restrictions and the development of competitive market economies<sup>87</sup>.

Another position on equality of opportunity is substantive understanding of the concept. Substantive equality of opportunities is an ideal of equality of opportunities which looks at some given values for distributing opportunities. According to the substantive understanding of equality of opportunities, people should have equal chances to develop the values that are needed to access associated privileges. For instance, consider this hypothetical example of

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<sup>87</sup> Arneson, Richard, "Equality of Opportunity". In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/equal-opportunity/>>. Accessed on 18/06/2016.

Richard Anerson of a society which is ruled by hereditary warrior class; and worriers are selected not in reference to their wealth but on the basis of a competitive examination of military power skills administered to any young adult in that society. From the perspective of substantive equality of opportunities, every member of the society should have equal chance to develop worrier skills to be qualified for social privileges<sup>88</sup>. In other words, substantive equality of opportunities requires that all people concerned have a genuine opportunity to qualify for a given social advantages or any position of value.

Though formal equality of opportunities and substantive equality of opportunity are the key positions for understanding the meaning of equality of opportunity, the two positions are not the only understanding of the concept. There are some other wide interpretations of equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunities as understood in its formal and substantive forms is mainly designed for the application to the economic sphere of human life. Yet, some wider understanding of equality of opportunities look at the background conditions under which equality of opportunities is appealing, and not only the opportunities people have to move ahead. One view of the wide understanding of equality of opportunities is leveling the playing field conception of equality of opportunity, or luck egalitarianism. It is this particularly wide understanding of the concept of equality of opportunity understood as leveling the playing field that our concerns for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions is appealing. I will hereafter focus on that particular conception of equality of opportunity as leveling the playing field.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid. Richard Anerson "Equality of opportunities".

Leveling the playing field conception of equality of opportunities or luck egalitarianism can be understood as rendering everyone's opportunities equal in an appropriate sense by letting people's outcome be dictated by individuals' effort or people's voluntary choices. Leveling the playing field to promote distributive justice requires that non-chosen conditions and uncounted for constraints be eliminated to allow people to have appropriate initial conditions to make relevant life choices. In other words, leveling the playing field requires looking back to the background conditions which influence people's choices and adjust constraints which undermine conditions for accessing opportunities. That is what we call widening opportunities or the wide understanding of equality of opportunities.

The wide understanding of equality of opportunities may better be interpreted from the general understanding of the concept. Equality of opportunity generally means that people have equal chances to pursue socioeconomic outcome of value which they care about. Equality of opportunities for people implies that there is no pre-determinable barrier for individuals to pursue some socioeconomic outcome they care about and that differential outcome in people's upwards mobility is justified on basis of individuals' difference in efforts and not on some circumstances beyond people's control. Equality of opportunity, however, does not aim to establish flat equality among individuals' levels of disposable goods. Equalizing opportunities for people has a primary aim of dealing with unfair forms of inequality, which are inequalities emanating from circumstances beyond individuals' control or circumstances which are independent of individuals' voluntary choices.

Why is the distinction between unfair and fair inequality matter?  
The distinction between unfair and fair inequalities matters because

we need an ethical justification for orienting our political strategy particularly to unfair forms of inequality rather than other alternatives. Indeed, when one takes into account the ethical justification of inequality, two different forms of inequality are distinguishable, unfair inequality and fair inequality. Fair inequality means inequality due to differences in individuals' circumstances associated with people's voluntary choices or any other circumstances that individuals can be held responsible of. Unfair inequality means any form of inequality which is due to circumstances or other causes which are beyond the responsibility of individuals concerned. Though inequality in general is usually considered as the central concern of distributive justice, it is only unfair inequality that policies for addressing inequality trap would target. Targeting inequality per se would not constitute a relevant or justified political strategy for promoting distributive justice. Taking into account the idea of responsibility is important for setting the ethical ground which justifies political policies for advancing distributive justice. Opportunity equalization therefore would aim at offering equal chance to people to pursue some distributional outcome they value and care about, and to adjust social conditions which affect people's choices. Opportunity equalization under this approach of social justice would mean leveling the playing field on which people makes their own choices to ensure that individuals' distributional outcome depends on their personal efforts and not on some social circumstances which are beyond the range of people's voluntary choices<sup>89</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> By arguing that equalization of opportunities should focus on adjusting social conditions which affect individuals' choices, I do not discriminately include everything affecting people's choices in their social context such as the nature of relationships that people may have among themselves, or their religious believes. The social circumstances beyond individuals' control that state policies would



Taking into account individuals' responsibility as the normative basis for contextualizing ethical justification for sociopolitical policies for promoting distributive justice may lead to a deterministic criticism of the defended strategy for advancing social justice. Indeed, if a political strategy for addressing inequality trap requires elucidating whether individuals concerned are responsible or not of their conditions of low distributive optimum or deprivation, this would beg a deterministic question to the strategy for advancing social justice in real life scenarios. Yet, for the particular case of the phenomenon of inequality trap, the issue of responsibility does not arise. As it has been developed throughout the previous chapter, persistent inequality of opportunities can only be said to be an inequality trap only when the circumstances behind the conditions sustaining durable inequality of opportunities are beyond the control of individuals or groups of people concerned. In other words, no one can be held responsible for being under inequality trap. Persistent inequality of opportunities becomes an inequality trap because it is sustained by conditions beyond the control of individuals concerned. Hence, inequality trap is by its nature an unfair form of inequality. This argument elucidates the ethical justification of the defended political strategy and justifies the state's obligation to address the socioeconomic phenomenon of inequality trap. Given the defended moral justification for justice enhancing policies for adjusting inequality trap in society, some principles would guide the political strategy for promoting inclusive development.

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target must be within the range of political action of the state and not at the level of private lives of people.

#### **4.7.2. Equalizing opportunities as a field setting principle for promoting distributional equity**

As defended above, the promotion of justice under the defended strategy for promoting inclusive development would require taking opportunities as the real currency of egalitarian justice. Under this perspective, equality of opportunities becomes the most important principle which guides the practical pursuit of distributive justice in non-ideal conditions. In the subsequent section, I will examine what the promotion of equality of opportunities in non-ideal conditions would require under the defended strategy. By taking into account the distributive and the attitudinal dimensions that influence distributional disparities among people. The section also explores how and in which ways the principle of stake fairness would apply to the defended strategy as a normative guide for addressing inequality trap.

Defending equality of opportunities as guiding principle for the strategy for advancing distributive justice requires addressing some key questions. For instance, one possible question that equality of opportunities as guiding principle for social justice may raise is about the nature of equality that the practical pursuit for justice would aim for. Equality of opportunities as a concept essentially connotes setting the playing field for competitive fairness in accessing opportunities or any other social advantages that people in society care about<sup>90</sup> (Yet, equalizing opportunities under the defended strategy of inclusive development requires a further step than simply relying on setting the playing field for promoting competitive fairness in distributing social advantages among people in society. Given the already exposed constraints, which can negatively influence the distributional outcome that our strategy for inclusive development would aim to redress, the

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<sup>90</sup> See. John Roemer. *Equality of opportunities*, 1998, pp. 1-5.

promotion of distributive justice under the strategy of promoting inclusive development may need to re-consider the concept of equality of opportunities. This normative proposal is justified by the fact that, under the general conception of equality of opportunities, this concept may not fully grasp what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions to address inequality trap would require; hence, it may fail to provide a relevant normative guidance for policy design under the strategy aiming to promote social justice in non-ideal conditions.

An example may help to clarify the claim that the concept of equality of opportunities as generally understood may not fully grasp what should be the nature of policies which would aim to promote equality of opportunities in non-ideal conditions. Indeed, equality of opportunities among individuals only relies on equal conditions of accessibility of opportunities or other social goods people care about. Equality of opportunities in this way applies to external conditions under which people live and the actual conditions and processes of making life choices. In other words, equality of opportunities does not refer to individualized conditions or background constraints which may influence the outcome<sup>91</sup>. Under this interpretation, equality of opportunities essentially connotes setting equal conditions for competitive fairness for accessing relevant social advantages among people in acquiring opportunities or any other social goods which is to be allocated among people. Nevertheless, pursuing equalization of opportunities among people may, however, require widening opportunities by considering background constraints which undermines desirable distributional outcome. For instance, given the

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<sup>91</sup> As we are concerned with justice and improving the conditions for those at the bottom level of the society (the least advantaged under the Rawlsian terminology), the conditions of accessibility which would matter would be those pertaining to the worst off, whichever way the concept of 'worst-off-ness' may be defined.

fact that the attitudinal dimension of persistent inequality of opportunities is usually ignored or has never been taken into account in contemporary theorizing about distributive justice and in building people's capabilities, a wide understanding of equality of opportunities which take into account the background constraints associated with the attitudinal dimension would be an innovative way of taking a problem oriented approach to social and distributive justice.

Ultimately, setting the playing field to ensure equal conditions for accessing opportunities among individuals or groups of people would only be a necessary but not sufficient condition for a full strategy which would promote inclusive development. Why? The principle of setting the playing field does not grasp some aspects of distributive justice, particularly, those elements which belong to people as individuals and not existing as shared aspects of distributive conditions. For instance, putting people under condition of equality of opportunities may not ensure equal conditions for accessing opportunities for people under traps of inequality. Under conditions of inequality trap, people's capacity to frame opportunities and to transform them in better living conditions is undermined. As consequence, individuals under traps of inequality cannot frame opportunities or enjoy similar conditions for accessing opportunities in comparison to those who are free from traps of inequality. Hence, applying the principle of setting the playing field may not necessarily ensure conditions of equality of opportunities. Neither would this principle help to address some aspects of social injustice, particularly those which are associated with the attitudinal dimension. Therefore, the principle of setting the playing field relies on the general conditions and may help to contextualize some aspects of persistent

inequality of opportunities. For instance, some of the factors associated with the attitudinal dimension may not be fully grasped by simply examining the general conditions of people in society. As a consequence, any approach which would only rely on setting the playing field principle would not necessarily ensure equality of opportunities particularly for those affected by the attitudinal dimension of inequality trap<sup>92</sup>. People under the influence of the attitudinal factor may not be able frame and grasp opportunities or transform opportunities into better living conditions in a similar way other people would do. Hence, leveling the playing field does not ensure equal chances for some people, particularly those who live under traps of inequality. Therefore, taking into account the attitudinal and the distributive dimensions of inequality may require some additional input to the policy making strategy. The principle of setting the playing field is necessary for promoting equality of opportunity, but it is not sufficient owing to the empirical constraints associated with the attitudinal dimension of inequality. Hence, there is need for additional input to supplement the flows of the setting the playing field principle as a normative guidance to promote social justice in non-ideal conditions under the defended strategy of promoting inclusive development. This is what the widening the playing field would aim to adjust.

As argued above, the attitudinal factor affects individuals' capacity to frame opportunities by undermining their motivation and hope for pursuing some functionings. People become adapt to

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<sup>92</sup> As we need a political strategy based on distributive justice applicable in non-ideal conditions of society, taking into account the psychological dimension of inequality would not necessarily take the defended theory of justice beyond the reach of political concerns. The emphasis on individuated factors of persistent inequality of opportunity is primarily for highlighting the moral concern of the necessary political action which would be need to address the problem at stake.

consider those functioning as being out of their reach. The attitudinal factor is expressed through reduced motivation and hope undermines people's capacity to transform opportunities into better living. Under the influence of the attitudinal factor, individuals' framing of opportunities and the people's capacity to transform opportunities into valuable functionings can be affected. As consequence, people under the influence of the attitudinal factor cannot enjoy similar conditions of framing opportunities and transforming them into better living conditions in comparison to those who are free from traps of inequality. In this regard, people under effects of the attitudinal factor are subject to some pre-determinable constraints which negatively influence both their framing of opportunities and their capacity to transform opportunities into well-being. The advance of justice should therefore aim to address the aforementioned handicap.

Consequently, equalizing opportunities for people under the influence of the attitudinal factor would require taking another step further to take into account the background conditions of those who, due to existing pre-determinable constraints, may not benefit from flat equality of opportunities. The attitudinal dimension of inequality can be interpreted as competitive handicap. To be fair to the actual conditions of people under inequality trap, one may need to take into account those factor affecting conditions of accessibility to opportunities. Those factors are mainly associated with the socioeconomic conditions under which people live. Nevertheless, taking into account the actual conditions of people to ensure distributional equity may raise some questions, particularly the issue of the scope of justice. By the scope of justice, I mean whether the promotion of justice should consider individual life conditions or resort to some objective reference which is applicable to everyone. In

the section below, I will analyze how the principle of stake fairness may remediate the problem of evaluating the relevance of policies for addressing the attitudinal constraints of inequality trap and examine its potential to suggest what equalization of opportunities would imply.

#### **4.8. Stake fairness and equalization of opportunities**

The principle of stake fairness can help to contextualize the nature of equality of opportunities that we should aim for in the pursuit of justice and equity for people under conditions of inequality trap. But, what does the principle of stake fairness stand for? The term “stake fairness” was originally coined by Lesley Jacobs in his book *Pursuing Equal Opportunities: The Theory and Practice of Egalitarian Justice* (Jacobs, 2004). He argues that:

Equality of opportunity is, I suggest, an ideal for the normative regulation of competitions that distribute valuable opportunities in society. It is possible to distinguish two dimensions of fairness that might guide this regulation. *Procedural fairness* reflects a concern with the basic rule of procedure that guide a competition, including the determination of the winners. *Background fairness* reflects a concern that there be a level of playing field for all competitors. *Stake fairness* focuses on the prizes or what at stake in the competition. (He adds) My three-dimensional model of equal opportunities as a regulative ideal is normative because it adds the dimension of stake fairness (Jacobs, 2004, p.4).

Jacobs clarified further the meaning of the principle of stake fairness. He argues that “stake fairness reflects a concern with the distribution of benefits and burdens within a competition. The issue here is whether it is fair to have, for instance, a winner-take-all scheme” (Jacobs, 2004, p.16). Jacobs explains further that stake fairness has three dimensions. The first dimension is concerned with the fairness of the effect or outcome within the sphere of competition (Jacobs, 2004, 44). This dimension of stake fairness is for regulating the prize structure. It also clarifies the difference between winning and losing

(ibid.). The second dimension is concerned with “limiting the effects of one competition on another” (Jacobs, 2004, 33). The third dimension concerns “how much is at stake in the given competition” (Jacobs, 2004, 33). According Jacobs, this third dimension of stake fairness is more specifically concerned with the normative claim that “there should be constraints on the risks that participants in competitions are exposed to”<sup>93</sup>. Jacobs exemplifies the application of the principle of stake fairness on sporting activity of professional boxers who share the prize between the winner and the loser, the only difference between them being the proportion of their prizes (Jacobs, 2004, p. 38). The principle of stake fairness is therefore grounded on the idea that, in any competitive advantages among people, the winner take-it-all is not necessarily fair given what is at stake in the competition and given the constraints on the risks that participants in the competition are exposed to.

The principle of stake fairness, however, does not only apply to rewarding competition related activities. The principle also applies to any context of distributive justice which requires widening opportunities to adjust what would end us as stake unfairness. As I will argue below, this is the case with addressing inequality trap, particularly for those affected by the attitudinal factor of persistent inequality of opportunities. People under the influence of the attitudinal factor have reduced motivation and hope to achieve some valuable functionings and consider some functionings as always being out of their reach. Being under the influence of the attitudinal factor of persistent inequality of opportunities implies that those affected will not only be the losers for any competitive advantages, but also people

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<sup>93</sup> See Jacobs. Equality, adequacy and stake fairness: Retrieving the equal opportunities in education approach. *Theory and Research in Education* 8 (3). 257.



under the influence of the attitudinal factors are unable to profit from flat equality of opportunities because they may even not enter the competition because they believe that they will fail. The attitudinal factor of inequality trap under this perspective is regarded as a competitive handicap for the people by preventing them from valuing and assessing opportunities.

According to Jacobs, to apply the principle of stake fairness requires looking at how much is at stake in a given competition and the cost of losing the competition (Jacobs, 2004, 33). For people under inequality trap, what is at stake is their well-being. The attitudinal dimension of inequality trap is a competitive handicap preventing people concerned from appropriately framing of opportunities and transforming opportunities into better living. In different terms, people affected by the attitudinal dimension of inequality trap may even choose not to compete because they are adapted to believe that they cannot succeed. They consider some functionings to be always out of their reach. In other words, people under the conditions of the attitudinal factor of inequality trap are under competitive handicap which make them losers for competitive advantage that the society produces. As consequence, people affected by the attitudinal factor of persistent inequality cannot enjoy similar conditions of equality of opportunities similar to those who are free from inequality trap because they are unable to appropriately frame opportunities and to transform them into better living conditions similarly to those who are free from the trap.

Hence, the principle of stake fairness can adjust the competitive gap created by the attitudinal dimension of inequality. Stake fairness can offer relevant normative guide on how to widen opportunities to ensure that the scheme of distributing opportunities

alleviate the cost of potential disadvantages associated with the attitudinal dimension of inequality trap. Promoting equality of opportunities or setting the playing field by putting people into similar competitive conditions to offer equal chance for assessing available opportunities does not help the people under the attitudinal handicap to enjoy similar conditions of grasping and transforming opportunities into better living. People under the attitudinal factor of persistent inequality are potentially persistent losers because they may even not enter the completion due to the lack of motivation and hope for winning. This is because they are adapt to consider winning or in our case -achieving some functionings- as unachievable for them. The principle of stake fairness can offer a relevant normative guidance for promoting the motivation and hope for those affected by the attitudinal dimension of inequality by guarantying for them some safety net of opportunities regardless their competitive abilities. According to Jacobs, one of key dimension of stake fairness is to consider what is at stake in the competition. In the case of inequality trap, what is at stake is people's well-being and their capacity to overcome durable deprivation. Affording for the people under inequality trap some safety net of guaranteed opportunities would be fair for the people concerned owing to the value of what is at stake for competitive opportunities. Given the ultimate goal the advance of justice would target –addressing durable poverty-, this is part of the moral justification to this political strategy of advancing justice.

In this regard, taking the principle of stake fairness as a normative guide for widening opportunities for people is matter of justice rather than an outcome of merit or reward to the effort that someone has made. The idea or the principle of stake fairness is usually interpreted as rewarding the effort of the loser in a completion.

But if someone is persistently inclined to lose due conditions which are beyond his control, and when the cost of not participating is too high due to what is at stake in the completion –well-being of people concerned in our case–, it is morally justified to raise concern for those whose conditions may never allow them to win. If participating into the competition is the only possible way of dignified survival, it is important to raise the question of the welfare for those whose conditions beyond their control put them into persistent losing positions. Under this perspective, the principle of stake fairness may offer relevant normative guidance for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions by guarantying some opportunities or social advantages to the worst off to boost their hope and motivation for participating. The principle of stake fairness can therefore help to set some safety net for those who would always be the losers and offer relevant normative guidance for alleviating the cost of potential disadvantages. This would overall boost the motivation and hope for those affected by the attitudinal dimension of inequality trap.

Under this outlook to stake fairness, the attitudinal dimension of inequality trap and stake fairness are interpreted as linked. To demand for stake fairness is to demand more than equality of opportunities, and even more than background and procedural fairness. Stake fairness demands that the framework of outcomes be fair.<sup>94</sup> Stake fairness offers a wider approach to equality of opportunities which can take into account concerns of justice for those who would end up as persistent losers due to conditions beyond their control. The application of the principle of stake fairness can help to boost the motivation and hope for those who live under persistent

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<sup>94</sup> See Brown Alexander. Principles of stake fairness in sport. *Politics, Philosophy and Economics*. Vol. 14 (2). 2015. P.178.

inequality of opportunities by guarantying a safety net of opportunities even when they do not compete. Guarantying some opportunities to those who would otherwise end up as persistent losers would boost their motivation to participate.

#### **4.9. Stake fairness and indexing justice**

The principle of stake fairness allows better contextualization of how Rawls's index of primary goods and Sen's capabilities would independently and jointly contribute as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice in real life scenarios would require under the defended strategy for promoting inclusive development. On the one hand, primary social goods an index of justice can contribute in judging distributional equity by referring to disposable goods. Primary goods as resources largely understood would be relevant for judging distributional disparities among groups of people and allow orienting the priority to the worst off<sup>95</sup>. While primary goods would be distributed as a package which is applicable to everyone at the same time maximizing the share of the least advantaged, the distributional scheme would refer to the actual conditions that people in society are living and the real constraints that affect people's choices.

While the indexing approach using primary social goods would refer Rawls's distributional theory of justice, this distributional approach would not be sufficient particularly for judging what the promotion of justice would require when one takes into account both the distributional and the attitudinal factors. Primary social goods as an index of justice can better contextualize the distributional factor and help to offer some normative guidance for the political strategy of

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<sup>95</sup>The worst off here is understood in terms comparative comparison of the amount of disposable goods in the post distributional context of distributive justice.

inclusive development. Primary social goods, however, may not help to grasp what justice would require when the judgment about justice take into account the attitudinal factor of distributional inequalities. The attitudinal factor can be better evaluated on basis of an individualized perspective. The approach to justice which would fit this factor may also need to accommodate such a methodological individualism. In this regard, capabilities would better grasp what the promotion of justice would require and the nature of policies which would deal with this factor. Under the attitudinal factor, individuals would need to develop some abilities to grasp opportunities and to transform them into better living conditions. In this regard, the capability approach would better contribute as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require and contextualize what should be done to advance justice in real life scenarios.

Under this interpretation, primary goods and capabilities would not be regarded as inconsistent indexes for social justice. But rather, the two indexes of social justice would be interpreted as complementary in the pursuit of social justice. While primary social goods as elaborated in the Rawlsian theory may address the distributive factor associated with social arrangements, primary goods may not allow going deeper into individual social states. Hence, primary goods may not tell what should be done to promote justice when one takes into account the attitudinal constraint. One would then resort to capabilities to supplement this shortcoming of resorting to primary goods approach. While the two indexes may differ in their internal content and the scope of justice each of them may suggest, the two metrics of justice may complementarily contribute as informational basis for evaluating what a political strategy for promoting inclusive development would entail.

#### **4.10. Fundamental values for a justice based strategy of inclusive development**

The political strategy for inclusive development may need to involve some political values. For instance, even though in the defended strategy of inclusive development the moral concern for advancing justice is particularly oriented towards those in positions of the least advantaged, any political strategy which would promote inclusive development may not force people to take up opportunities. People in society should be free to decide how they would lead their own lives. In this regard, the political strategy of inclusive development would ground on some key values particularly people's freedom and the respect of basic liberties. The appeal to those values would give room to individuals to decide and choose how they would promote their own well-being.

One among the challenges that the defended political strategy of inclusive development may need to address is how to ensure the value of liberty and freedom of choice for the most beneficiaries<sup>96</sup> of this developmental strategy; meaning those at the very bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid. As it has been argued, the socioeconomic constraints that sustain conditions maintaining inequality of opportunities also affect how individuals frame opportunities. The reduced capacity of framing opportunities also undermines individuals' abilities to transform opportunities into better living. In

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<sup>96</sup>The prime beneficiaries for the defended developmental strategy are those are under traps of inequality. The ultimate goal of the strategy being to promote the upward mobility of that category of people via the promotion of distributive justice. The strategy seeks to supplement to the lacunae of the top down approach to development by trying to reach the categories of people who may not necessarily benefit from the top down model of development. The upward approach to development does not intend to replace the top down model to development. But the two models are regarded as commentary with the down up model aiming promoting more justice in the development policy making.

other words, under the influence of the attitudinal factor, people's ability to frame opportunities can be affected as the consequence of the reduced motivation and hope for people to reach some functionings. Nonetheless, freedom of choice may not necessarily be of additional value for improving individuals' capacity to promote their upward mobility. For instance, due to this psychological constraint, the normative evaluation of what justice would require in the domain of human development policy making might need to match empirical constraints as defined and evaluated in non-ideal conditions. In the section below, I examine what should be the fundamental values which should ground the political strategy of inclusive development. I will explore how the promotion of individuals' agency can be the foundational value for promoting inclusive development.

#### **4.11. Agency as a value for human development**

Agency is one of the central values for human development. Yet, in order to understand why and how agency is so important for human development, we may explore its role as trait of developmental processes. First, what does the notion of human agency connote? Agency can be defined as “the power that people individually have to act purposely to their advantage”<sup>97</sup>. Agency is a particularly a human capacity and a defining characteristic of human species. Agency is also the human trait which allows individuals to command two types of capabilities. First, the capability to meet the needs that have to be met in order to survive; second, the capability to take opportunities

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<sup>97</sup> Bakan, D. *The duality of Human Existence: An essay on psychology and religion*. Boston: Beacon, 1966.

which have to be taken in order to survive<sup>98</sup>. Agency, as power capacity that people have to willingly act in favor of their own interests, is rooted in the human motivational system; and it is through its rootedness into the motivational system that agency becomes a key driver for human development<sup>99</sup>. Hence, it is through its role as a trait that grounds human capacity to be a self-sustaining and self-reliant in the pursuit of one's good and in promoting one's well-being that agency becomes an important component of human centered development.

According to Amartya Sen, human development is any developmental trend which promotes the most human trait –agency– (Sen 1999). Human development is the maturation of a person's agential traits. Taking agency as a valuable component for justice sensitive approach for development policy making can lead to some particular ways of valuing and interpreting how to promote justice in non-ideal conditions. By considering agency as a central value for policy designing and implementing, individuals are not only viewed as recipients of justice but also as agents of justice who participate and play a key role in their own development. From this perspective, development is for the people and by the people.

Any policy strategy which would aim to promote inclusive development should take the promotion of human agency as a

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<sup>98</sup> See, Christian Welzel and Ronald Inglehart. *Agency, values and well-being: A human development model*. Social Research Indicators, 2010. Springer

<sup>99</sup> The rootedness of agency in human motivational system can also explain why human development may not proceed in some given circumstances. This is because the weight with which feelings of agency impact on human satisfaction can vary with the character of life. For instance, when life is a constant threat to suffer, people may place less emphasis on agency. For more information on this point, see Delhey (2010) on "Post materialist satisfaction" in *World Values Research*, 2.pp 30-54.



normative guide to policy design and implementation. Given the central role that human agency plays as driving force for human development, agency should not only be considered as an important component for human development policy making, but agency should be given priority in human development policy designing and implementing. The promotion of individuals' agency is a very important normative approach for advancing human centered development because, by promoting human agency as central value for guiding the developmental strategy, the approach to development becomes a developmental strategy for the people and by the people. Hence, an inclusive developmental approach aiming to address the phenomenon of inequality trap should not only consider human agency as an important value, but human agency should be given priority in policy designing and implementing. This normative proposal for prioritizing human agency is justified by the central role that agency plays in empowering people to be the subjects of their own development. The inclusive developmental strategy whose normative grounds this project investigates must put individuals at the center of developmental initiatives as the subjects of their own development and then seek to promote people's agency as a central normative value for designing and implementing development policies aiming to foster inclusive development. The priority that should be offered to human agency is justified by the fact that human agency is a necessary driving force for human development and guiding value in the pursuit of the ultimate goal of our political strategy which is to promote inclusive development by building individuals' capabilities.

## **Chap 5. Integrative development as opportunity equalization**

The phenomenon of inequality trap has been interpreted as the central socio-political challenge for contextualizing the normative grounds for evaluating the relevance of policies for promoting inclusive development and addressing durable poverty. The core strategy of inclusive development would then consist in building people's capabilities and by targeting some basic capability sets that people in the society should have. The basic capability set is conceived as threshold setting for equalizing opportunities among people in society. The promotion of justice under this perspective would consist in applying some target oriented justice enhancing policies to ensure that people at the very bottom of socioeconomic pyramid are progressively building their capabilities until they reach a minimum threshold of capability set which would allow them to overcome absolute poverty.

The core strategy of inclusive development would therefore consist in ensuring that every member of the society is at least at the level of basic capability set; and policies for addressing inequality trap would aim to ensure that individuals or groups of people under durable forms of deprivation are progressively moved to or beyond the threshold level of basic capability set to allow them to have the starting point for promoting their own upward mobility. Under this perspective to social justice, the core strategy for promoting inclusive development would turn into empowering people through capability building. The normative question we may need to respond to is what should be considered as the normative ground for building people's capabilities? What would be the contribution of primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions?

This chapter will address the question of conditions for building individuals' capabilities and the normative grounds that justice based policies for promoting inclusive development would entail. The policy based strategy is conceived as people's empowerment with the core aim of promoting inclusive development by addressing traps of inequality. The chapter will also examine whether we may need to amend the capabilities approach and primary goods primary goods approach with one another in building a complete strategy of inclusive development. The ultimate goal of the chapter is to examine whether primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging people's socioeconomic advantages would be necessary and sufficient for evaluating the nature and the content of policies for addressing inequality trap and setting the normative foundations for inclusive development.

### **5.1. Building individuals' capabilities as an approach for opportunity equalization**

As it was argued in the previous chapter, inequality trap undermines people's motivation to pursue some functionings with hope of success. The reduced motivation and undermined hope can affect people's capacity to appropriately frame opportunities by making them adapt to consider some functionings as always being out of their reach. In this regard, a political strategy which would aim to promote inclusive development and address traps of inequality should consider rebuilding people's hope and motivation by empowering them through capability building. How would this approach to justice work in practice? That will be the point of focus of the section below.

The analysis on how to build individuals' capabilities can be done by taking the capability approach as the normative guidance for advancing justice. Under the capability approach, the normative

ground for promoting justice is that social arrangements should aim at expanding people's capabilities. This implies that the organization of society should promote people's freedom to be and to do what they have a reason to value, or in the case of inequality trap, the promotion of justice should aim at reviving people motivation and hope by building their basic capabilities. From the perspective of the capability approach, therefore, the project of designing policies for advancing justice or promoting inclusive development should be guided by the normative value of ensuring that people have more freedom to do and be what they have a reason to value. Under this perspective of social justice, capabilities are not solely interpreted in terms of real freedom people have to do and to be what they have a reason to value, but most importantly capabilities are regarded as people's real abilities to transform resources and opportunities into valuable functionings.

Similarly to Ingrid Robeyns's view, promoting justice under the capability approach may involve "removing obstacles in (people's) lives so that they have more freedom to live the kind of life which, upon their reflection, they find valuable" (Robeyns, 2005, 3)<sup>100</sup>. In other words, building capabilities for people involves both society building to adjust possible obstacles which may undermine people's opportunities and their capacity to be and to do what they may have reason to value, and also address those obstacles which undermines people's abilities to value or to appropriately frame opportunities. Under this interpretation, inequality trap would be regarded as a possible obstacle to be addressed to build people's capabilities. The capability approach in this regard does not only offer a normative basis for evaluating policies for advancing justice. But more importantly, the approach offers normative guide for designing

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<sup>100</sup>The parentheses are mine.

policies for promoting distributive justice and a tool for promoting human development.

It might be useful to make some observations on the use of capabilities and primary goods as informational basis for judging the nature and relevance of policies for promoting justice in the area of development policy making under the goal oriented approach to advancing social justice. The first observation is that the capability approach is normative approach which is usually employed as an evaluative tool. The normative guidance for the capability approach is the idea that people should have freedom to do and to be what they have a reason to value. Yet, this idea of having a reason to value on which the capability approach is based involves some problems. One of the main problems that the capability approach involves is its incapacity to offer a standardized account of distributive justice which would apply at the level of the political society as a whole. For instance, the capability approach as a normative approach which seeks to promote individuals' freedom to be and to do what people have a reason to value does not offer a full account on how it would apply to the political society as whole. The approach appeals to what people can do and be given the freedom they have to do and to be what they have a reason to value. Nonetheless, this idea of having a reason to value is problematic.

An example may help to clarify the argument above. Someone may have a reason to value having more days of maternity leave to take care of a new born child. From the perspective of the capability approach, a reasonably just society should be able to offer to the person who values having longer maternity leave the opportunity to expand her capabilities. Yet, other members of the societies may have reason to value other ways of doing or being. These valuable desires

for doing and being would also serve as the basis for social claims that people may formulate against the state. By taking the pursuit of social justice in the Rawlsian way as reasonable utopia, it might be impossible to make social arrangements in a way which would allow the society to offer to each citizen the freedom to be and to do what each one may have a reason to value. Hence, the idea of having a reason to value cannot constitute relevant normative guidance for social arrangements which would promote individuals' capability building in a standardized way. Rather, the idea of having a reason to value may lead to positional relativism upon which judgement about relevant policies for advancing justice under the capability approach would be made in consideration whether a given social policy make a person gain or lose when the policy is analysed from the lenses of what the person concerned has a reason to value. Consequently, the evaluation of relevant policies for promoting justice and inclusive development should not only be judged on the basis of the sole capability approach or simply in terms of the freedom people have to do and to be what they have a reason to value, but on basis of functionings or materialized states of beings and doings that the promotion of justice would intend to bring about for people. Under this perspective, it may not solely be on the basis of the capability approach that we should evaluate what the promotion of justice would require under the strategy of building people's capabilities. Policies for promoting justice should also be judged by considering achievable functionings that people should have after the implementation of relevant policies. Hence, the promotion of justice must focus on building capabilities for people so to ensure that they can achieve some targeted valuable functionings.

According to Sakiko Fukuda Parr, one of the main challenges of applying the capability approach to development policy design is about deciding which capabilities should be regarded as the most important for people<sup>101</sup>. From the perspective of the capability approach, the range of capabilities may be infinite and the value that individuals may attach to some capabilities may also vary from one person to the other. Though some capabilities might deserve more public attention than others, the relative importance of capabilities may still vary according to the social context –from one community or society to the other or even from one time to the other– (ibid). In this regard, using capabilities as normative guide for designing policies for promoting development must therefore refer to some values which would work as normative guidance for evaluating and judging the relevance of policies to achieve the targeted goal.

Nevertheless, to use the capability approach as informational basis for judging the nature of policies for promoting justice in the area of development, there is need for some reference which can allow the determination of the type of capability set that policies for advancing justice should aim for. Indeed, having some clear aims to build people’s capability sets may allow to better contextualize what should be the nature of policies which would be relevant for achieving the goal of advancing justice. Consequently, the determination of some capability sets that policies for promoting justice and development should aim for should be the starting point for promoting inclusive development. In this regard, designing policies for promoting justice and inclusive development would require setting a threshold for capability set that we should aim to achieve as the

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<sup>101</sup> Sakiko Fukuka Parr, “The human development Paradigm: Operationalizing Sen’s idea of capabilities”. *Feminist Economics* 9, 2-3.p. 305

minimal level of individuals' capability expansion. After achieving that minimal level capability set, individuals would have the basis for moving on with their own upwards mobility by expanding further their capabilities. The minimal capability set should be regarded as the basic starting point for promoting inclusive development.

Building people's capabilities require some resources. Whenever a political society set goals for building real opportunities for its people, there are some key elements that must be taken into account. For instance, to ensure real freedom for people to be and to do what they have a reason to value, people do not only need appropriate social conditions; they also need some resources. For instance, to build people's capabilities for being well-housed, well-nourished, or being educated,..., there is a need for some resources in order to pursue and achieve those functionings. In other words, building real opportunities for people to achieve some valuable functionings, there is always an important contribution of resources. In other words, resources are important ingredients for building capabilities. Empowering people through capability building, therefore, would require both primary goods and capabilities as essential components of the strategy for promoting inclusive development. But how can primary goods contribute to building individuals' capabilities?

Ralwsian primary goods, namely, basic liberties, opportunities, income and wealth and the social basis of self-respect, are sometimes interpreted as resources generally understood. These goods are regarded as primary because they are what people in a democratic society would need to pursue their rational plan of life. While from the perspective of John Rawls all primary goods are distributed as package, one may classify them in three groups. The first group is



made of rights, liberties and opportunities, the second group is made of income and wealth and the third group is made of the social basis of self-respect. Rights, liberties and opportunities are regulated in the Rawls's theory of justice by rules and regulations that the state puts down through its institutions. The distribution of rights, liberties and opportunities depends on the socio-political conditions that the basic social structure of the society provides through existing institutions. Income and wealth are resources that the society distributes through the market and other benefits which are directly paid to citizens or other exchanges of income among citizens through, for example, inheritance. And the final group in the Rawls's package of primary goods is the social bases of self-respect. The social bases of self-respect are considered in Rawls's own interpretation as the most important primary good (TJ, p. 348). For Rawls, depending on how the basic structure of the society is organized, people can develop the sense of self-respect and have respect for others. All these primary goods are the measure of what people can expect from the society over the course of their lives. The greater the share of primary goods for the people, the better people can fare because, in Rawls own interpretation, it is through these goods that people can realize their hopes and manage to satisfy their wants and needs in the course of their lives.

It is important to note at the outset that Rawls's list of primary goods is sometime criticized for being incomplete. For instance, when the promotion justice aims at advancing justice in some domains such as justice for the disabled, Rawls's list of primary goods may be regarded as incomplete. The promotion of justice for the disabled may need to add, for instance, care as an additional primary goods to Rawls's list. Nevertheless, our concern for promoting justice in area of

development policy making and our reference to Rawls's primary goods as an informational basis for judging what policies for advancing justice require does not take into account the critique of incompleteness. Our defended strategy for promoting inclusive development offers a comprehensive understanding of what the promotion of justice in area of development policy making would require and set foundations for an inclusive developmental strategy which is applicable at the level of the society as whole. The evaluation of primary goods and capabilities as informational bases for judging what the promotion of justice would require in the area of development policy making refer to these indexes as they are, and not in their extended interpretation. In other words, we are not concerns with potential incompleteness that each of the two indexes may involve.

To return to the issue of building individuals' capabilities to promote social justice, primary goods as understood in the Rawlsian way would play an important role as components for pursuing some individuals' capability sets. On the one hand, the distribution of rights, liberties and opportunities allows the creation of appropriate social conditions for people to expand their capabilities. Under the Rawlsian approach to justice, the distribution of rights, liberties and opportunities is associated with how the basic structure of the society is arranged. The better the basic social structure is arranged to address concerns of social justice, the more people will develop their capabilities. In other words, some primary goods such as rights, liberties and opportunities are essential for building appropriate social conditions for building individuals' capabilities. On the other hand, income and wealth are the resources needed to build real opportunities for people. Resources are not ends in themselves, but they are

important means that people need to build real opportunities and to pursue some states of being and doing that people may value.

Using primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require in the area of development policy making must start by addressing the issue of starting point that the two indexes of justice suggest. On the one hand, the capability approach starts with the components of the good life, but without necessarily offering the complete account of what a good life is. On the other hand, in Rawls's account of primary goods, he does not define what the goods life is, neither does he pursue it. What is important in Rawls's theory of justice is the plural character of public conception of the good that define how people engage into social cooperation<sup>102</sup>. Despite the difference in the starting points between the two indexes of justice, the two approaches to social justice can still contribute as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice in the area of human development policy making would require.

Nonetheless, one important question needs to be addressed: why empowering people through capability building should be regarded as an approach for justice sensitive strategy of development? This is because there are some empirical constraints that the developmental strategy which would aim to address the phenomenon of inequality trap should take into account. Those constraints are associated with the aforementioned factors which influence the distributional outcome that people may enjoy. Those factors, namely, distributive and attitudinal factors sustain conditions of adaptation of people to consider some functionings to always be out of their reach.

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<sup>102</sup> Alexander, M. John. *Capabilities and social justice: the political philosophy of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum*. Ashgate: Burlington, 2008.

Such an adaptation is manifested via people's reduced motivation and hope for achieving some valuable functionings. The undermined motivation and hope lead people to consider some functionings to be out of their reach. Hence, empowering people via capability building as a strategy for promoting development would aim at rebuilding their hope and motivation by creating conditions which would allow them to pursue some valuable functionings. Yet, it may be important to note that pursuing some capability sets may lead to a certain prioritarian approach to promoting social justice. Indeed, by taking inequality trap as a socio-political concern to be addressed; our approach to promoting social justice takes a bottom up perspective to development rather than the commonly known top down approach. The bottom up approach to development implies that people at the very bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid are the most concerned by the justice based approach to development. This would imply that they are the most beneficiaries in the practical pursuit of justice. The ultimate aim of the approach to development is therefore to primarily improve the conditions for those at the very bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid by targeting some capability sets. From such a level of capability set, people would be able to move on with their own upward mobility.

One may criticize this defended approach to promoting inclusive development for overlooking the possible needs for upward mobility for those who might already have the targeted capability sets. One would respond to this critique by arguing that people who are the most concerned for the justice sensitive developmental strategy are the least advantaged. Indeed, justice as a concept insinuates the notion of fairness. Fairness in this case would imply that distributive justice put a particular emphasis to improving conditions of the worst off who are at the same time the ultimate beneficiary of the promotion of

distributive justice in real life conditions. In addition, while the defended strategy is based on the upward approach to development, it is not intended to replace the downward perspective to development. The two approaches to development are regarded as complementary with the upward approach aiming at emphasizing the justice dimension in development policy making to improve the conditions of those who would otherwise remain as the least advantaged. While the defended strategy of inclusive development may not primarily be in favour of those who would be at higher levels of capability sets, the strategy would not undermine their socioeconomic opportunities.

How would then the equalization of opportunities apply in non-ideal conditions? The equalization of opportunities would apply by empowering people by building their capabilities. The strategy would apply in two steps. The first step is to choose some minimal capability sets that every member of the society should have. This is what I will call the basic capability threshold setting. The aim of advancing justice would then be that every member of the society reaches at least that minimal capability set or possibly go beyond that capability set. The second level of the strategy would be to ensure enabling conditions for people to promote their well-being, at the same time allowing those under the minimal capability threshold to move on with capabilities expansion until they reach the minimal capability set. In the following section, I will develop further the notion of minimal capability set and the idea of threshold setting and then evaluate how the defended indexing approach of primary goods and capabilities would contribute in evaluating the relevance of policies for promoting inclusive development.

## **5.2. Defining basic capability set**

The idea of basic capability set is from Sen himself. At the level of basic capabilities set people have the freedom to do things which are considered as necessary for survival and to escape poverty and various forms of serious deprivations. Acquiring basic capabilities set in Sen's view implies achieving a threshold level for relevant capabilities upon which certain elementary and crucially important functionings are satisfied up to a certain level (Sen 1992, 45 n.19). It might be, however, important to note that basic capabilities do not necessarily refer to a living standard, but a certain threshold for accessing poverty and deprivation (Sen 1987, 109). In other words, basic capability set must refer to a certain threshold of people's well-being. The promotion of justice under the strategy of promoting inclusive development should aim at ensuring that people under traps of inequality are promoted until they reach the basic capability set defined as the threshold level of individuals' well-being<sup>103</sup>.

## **5.3. From basic capability set to inclusive development**

The inclusive development strategy can better be interpreted as opportunity equalization. Opportunity equalization implies that we not only set the playing field for distributional equity, but also promote equality of opportunities in non-ideal conditions. Yet, opportunity equalization does not necessarily imply that we aim at flat equality as the main goal for promoting distributive justice. Equalizing opportunities means that we focus on people under conditions of inequality of opportunities and try to build their capabilities until they

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<sup>103</sup> The level of threshold fixing should be one on which people who are regarded as the least advantage or the poor would have overcome poverty and other form of or durable deprivation. Nonetheless, there would be no objective level of fixing the threshold what would be applicable to every society. Fixing the threshold would be the outcome of public deliberation.

achieve some capability sets that can allow them to reach a level on which they can stand on their own and pursue their upward mobility. In other words, the ultimate target of the justice sensitive strategy to development would be to promote the upward mobility of people by giving priority to those who might end up as the least advantaged. Under this normative guidance to distributive justice, the strategy of inclusive development as defended above would not appeal to any form of levelling down equalization because the main goal of the strategy is not redistribution but a strategic allocation of opportunities to promote social justice.

One of the main objectives of this integrative development strategy which is based on social justice is to allow people to be the subject of their own development by helping them to set the basis for building their own capabilities. In this regard, equalizing opportunities under the defended strategy of inclusive development would imply promoting the upward mobility of those who are poor and deprived by building and promoting the development of capabilities until they reach some desired capability sets. In other words, equalizing opportunities to promote inclusive development implies that we have a target to pursue and that target is defined in terms of valuable capability sets that we would want people at the bottom level of the socioeconomic pyramid to have. After people have reached that threshold of capability set, they would move on as agent of their own development and as subjects of their own upward mobility.

Nevertheless, building capabilities for people implies building real opportunities for them to achieve some valuable functionings which would substantiate the targeted capabilities sets. As developed in the previous section, building real opportunities for people requires both resources broadly understood (in our case, primary goods) and

also capabilities. Capabilities here are understood not only as real freedom for people to achieve valuable functionings, but also as people's real abilities to transform resources into better living conditions defined as valuable functionings. Building capabilities for people therefore means creating enabling conditions for them to be and do what they have a reason to value. Yet, in order to build people's capabilities, we may need to know what are the capabilities that we would need to promote. Martha Nussbaum has elaborated a list of what she regards as the most essential capabilities. According to Nussbaum, the following are the most important capabilities for human development:

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

**2. Bodily health:** being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished, to have adequate shelter.

**3. Bodily integrity:** being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matter of reproduction.

**4. Senses, imagination and thought:** being able to use the senses, to imagine, to think, and to reason; and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in way protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experience and to avoid non-beneficial pain.

**5. Emotions:** being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence, in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety.

**6. Practical reason:** being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.

**7. Affiliation: (A):** being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to image the situation of another. **(B):** having the social basis of self-respect and no-humiliation, being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is



equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin.

**8. Other species:** being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

**9. Play:** being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities. Control over one's environment. **(A) Political:** being able to participate effectively in political life to govern one's life; having the right to political participation, protections of free speech and association. **(B) Material:** being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the rights to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as human being; exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers<sup>104</sup>.

Each of these capabilities as specified by Nussbaum is related to some dimension of human life and each of them is needed for human flourishing. Yet, when one seeks to build or expand capabilities for people, one may have to choose among some key capabilities to focus on than roughly seeking to promote each of the capabilities elaborated in the Nussbaum's list. While Nussbaum's list may help as a guideline for setting the capability threshold that a policy maker may use to evaluate how people are doing in society and to evaluate what should be the nature and the content of policies for building people's capabilities, the list does not give any indication about how and at which level we should set the threshold for building people's capabilities. To fix a potential threshold as a reference for promoting distributive justice, we may need to refer to some other values or indicators that would be more reliable in evaluating what should be the nature and content of policies for promoting justice and promoting inclusive development.

It may, however, be important to note at the outset that Sen and Nussbaum differ in their interpretation of capabilities. For Sen, capabilities are real freedom that people have to achieve valuable

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<sup>104</sup> From Martha C. Nussbaum. *Creating capabilities: The human development approach*. Library of congress cataloguing (USA, 2011.pp.33-34).

functionings. Yet, Sen did not provide any list of capabilities. But, his normative account of the capability approach is not totally dissociated with Nussbaum's list. In this regard, Nussbaum's list of capabilities can play a role as reference for establishing the capability set that people in society should have as minimal level of social state that a society would aim to afford for every citizen. Consequently, allowing people at the bottom level of the socioeconomic pyramid to achieve a reasonable level of these capabilities as mentioned in the Nussbaum's list would constitute relevant achievement for promoting inclusive development.

For instance, some of the capabilities mentioned in Nussbaum's list refer to general concept of human rights. Those are for instance, those capabilities related to bodily integrity, health, freedom, etc. Depending on how a political society distributes people's rights, individuals can develop some capabilities in Nussbaum's list. For instance, it can be through the promotion of individual freedom that people in society can expand some of individuals' capabilities particularly those associated with bodily integrity and health, imagination, thought, etc. This implies that the way the society distribute individual or collective rights influences how people develop some capabilities. One may then argue that policies for promoting people's development of capabilities should aim at affording for individuals a reasonable level of those capabilities as established in the Nussbaum's list.

It may, however, be disputable to take for granted Nussbaum's list of capabilities as the only possible capabilities that any society should expand for people. The number of capabilities are multiple in a way that would make a fixed list incomplete. Arguing that policies for promoting human development should take reference to Nussbaum's

list of capabilities is to say that the list may give some guidance in policy choice, without necessarily indicating what we should do. The advance of justice should also take into account the actual needs of people in the society and choose policies accordingly.

Nonetheless, it may be important to note that in setting the threshold of capabilities that the society should aim to achieve in its policy strategy for promoting social justice and inclusive development, there would be no objective measure for evaluating where the threshold should be fixed. The goal of setting the threshold is to have a reliable reference of what policies for advancing justice should aim to achieve in promoting people's development of capabilities. The threshold level should be fixed at the level on which people's capabilities expansion would allow them to overcome durable poverty and other forms of severe deprivation. The pursuit of this goal implies ensuring that those who are regarded as the least advantaged reach the level of the threshold of basic capabilities. This level would allow them to overcome poverty and other forms of severe deprivation. Under these conditions, the strategy for promoting inclusive development should consider building individuals capability as the normative foundation for promoting opportunity equalization. Nonetheless, our approach to promoting inclusive development has given more emphasis to the capability approach as a more reliable perspective for promoting inclusive development. While our normative approach to justice focused on comparing primary goods and capabilities, we may need a justification why the capability approach should be more privileged in evaluating and setting the threshold for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions. In other words, is the capability approach more relevant for evaluating and judging individuals' life conditions than the resourcist approach?

#### **5.4. Informational basis for evaluating and judging individuals' life conditions**

The capability approach has been developed as an alternative reference index and has been used since 1990 in human development index<sup>105</sup>. The capability approach has been appreciated for offering a better approach and some innovation in evaluating people's lives particularly individuals' quality of life. For the sake of development policy making, the capability approach is an important tool for judging and evaluating how individuals are doing in society by evaluating some key aspects of people's lives. The capability approach focuses on the freedom people have to do and be what they have a reason to value. From the perspective of the capability approach, we look at how individuals are doing by focusing on the freedom or ability they have to do things and to be the kind of persons they reasonably value. Under this interpretation, the capability approach is a normative approach focusing on people's lives understood in terms of well-being rather than the means to well-being.

Capabilities as an index of justice looks for real freedom people have to achieve valuable functionings. For instance, to be well-housed, to be educated, to be well fed are all functionings that are achieved via individuals' expansion of capabilities. The real freedom people have to achieve those functionings are the capabilities related to those functionings. One may then evaluate someone social state by examining the freedom one has to be and to do what one may reasonably value to achieve some relevant functionings. The interconnection between capabilities and their corresponding functionings help to contextualize what is valued in improving people's lives in terms of capability expansion. Under this

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<sup>105</sup> See Human development report 1990.

interpretation, the capability approach better grasps what one may need to consider in designing policies for promoting human development. One of the possible questions on the use of capabilities for policy making is whether the notion of real freedom people have to achieve some valuable functionings is adequate for contextualizing the nature of policies one would need to promote human development.

The capability approach focuses on individuals' lives. The approach can indicate how someone's life can be improved. But what can be regarded as relevant capabilities for improving someone's life is not necessarily relevant for everyone. An example can help to better understand this claim. To promote the capability to be well educated, people may have various needs in order to achieve the functioning of being well educated. In other words, there is no standard on what each person would need to achieve some relevant functionings. The capability approach always resorts to methodological individualism. By focusing at people's lives rather than people's means of living, the capability approach offers a better perspective for evaluating and judging what improving individuals' lives may involve. The same approach can also help to detect how someone's life conditions has improved given some input that has been provided to promote justice. In other words, the capability approach puts people's lives at the centre in promoting justice or evaluating how individuals are doing in society.

Contrary to resources which are usually regarded as means to well-being, capabilities are constitutive components of individuals' well-being. Expanding someone's capabilities is equivalent to improving someone's life. By promoting people's capabilities to be what they have a reason to value or to want, we would promote people's conditions of well-being. In other words, the capability

approach offers a perspective of justice by which people's lives comes first. It is important to note, however, that resources are important means to well-being. But resources have to be converted into well-being. This is reason why resources are interpreted as means to individuals' well-being. By directly indicating how someone's lives in going, the capability approach offers a better informational basis for evaluating and judging what the promotion of justice would require.

The capability approach, however, as an evaluative tool for judging how individuals are doing is open to some criticism. One of the possible critics against the approach is positional relativism associated with the idea of "having a reason to value". The capability approach is a normative approach appealing to what individuals have a reason to value. With regard, for instance, to the promotion of social justice, a social policy may be regarded as contributing to the improvement of someone's life if it is in line with what one has a reason to value. Yet, people may have various views on what they value as contributing to the improvement of their lives. This makes the capability approach to justice relative to positions that individuals may hold vis-à-vis what they value as contributing to the betterment of their lives. From this criticism, one may argue that the capability approach does not offer any standard for improving someone's life. Individuals' diversity plays an important role in the use of the capability approach to promote social and distributive justice in a society.

Another critic against the capability approach to justice is from the perfectionist point of view<sup>106</sup>. According to moderate

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<sup>106</sup> A critic of the capability approach from a moderate perfectionist view is also developed by Severine Deneurin. For more information on this point, see

perfectionism, any policy or action should promote human excellence. In the area of policy, the capability approach is interpreted as tending to promote some particular conception of the good. In fact, the capability approach looks at what people are able to do and to be on basis of the real freedom they have to do and to be what they have a reason to value. Under the normative guidance of the capability approach, policies for advancing justice must be forwards looking by promoting and expanding people's real freedom to do and to be what they reasonably value. Yet, the promotion of justice may sometimes require taking one step back in order to ensure two steps forwards. Under the moderate perfectionist appeal of the capability approach in the area of policy making, taking one step back to ensure two steps forwards may go against what some individuals may value. In this regards, the capability approach seem to promote some particular conception of the goods and suggests a forwards looking perspective to social justice.

Despite those critics to the capability approach, it remains a more reliable perspective for evaluating how people's lives are going in comparison to the resources based alternative. Resources are important means for people's well-being. Yet, these must be transformed in order to contribute to people's lives. Capabilities, however, are ends in themselves, focusing on individuals' lives. In other words, there is a large difference between judging how someone's lives is going by using the resources based approach or by using the capability approach. For instance, giving resources to a disabled person can improve his/her life. Yet, any evaluation of how the provided resources have contributed to improving the life of the

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"Perfectionism, Paternalism and Liberalism in Sen and Nussbaum Capability Approach? Review of Political Economy, 2002, pp. 497-518.

disabled person would appeal on how the person has managed to transform resources into better living. From the perspective of capability approach, however, the judgment would alternatively appeal to what the disabled person is able to do or to be and seek to improve his/her life. The capability approach in this case would lead us to look at the components of good life while the resources centred alternative would lead us to look at the means for good life. The capability approach in this case offers a better perspective for evaluating and judging what improving someone's life conditions would require in comparison to the resources focused alternative.

Nevertheless, even though the capability approach is regarded as a more reliable approach for judging how individuals are doing in society, one may not ignore possible relationship between the capability approach and the resources approach at least in the area of policy making and implementing. Indeed, in some cases people need resources to expand their capabilities and achieve some valuable functionings. For instance, if a policy maker intends to expand capabilities for people to be well-housed, some resources would be required to allow people to expand their capabilities and achieve such valuable functionings. It should be noted, however, that resources may not always be a precondition for capability expansion. For instance, if one considers the capability to enjoy friendship, one may not necessarily need resources to expand such a capability. Yet, in the domain of policy making, particularly in the domain of human development, the interconnection between resources and capabilities building should necessarily be maintained.

Resources are important means that people need to sustain their living. Indeed, resources as necessity for sustaining life. Yet, with regard to judging how life conditions can be improved, we may



need more information than what we may get from the sole resources focused approach to social justice. Under this interpretation, the capability approach may be regarded as the prime perspective that one may need to first consider as it focuses on human life rather than the means to sustaining life. By then ranking different perspectives for evaluating and judging how one's life can be improved under the normative guidance of justice, the capability approach may be regarded as more relevant than resources based approach. Ultimately, the capability approach as an informational basis for evaluating and judging how individuals' lives are going offer a more reliable perspective in comparison to the resources based approach. From the point of view of what the capability approach focuses on (people's lives) and the information this approach can provide in evaluating individuals lives, one can conclusively argue that the capability approach is better alternative than the resources centred alternative.

Nonetheless, the consideration of the capability approach as the best perspective for evaluating people's lives and contextualizing the conditions for promoting social justice is not necessarily an agreed upon conclusion. In fact some viewers, such as Erin Kelly argue that the resource based approach is more relevant as informational basis for justice. She argues that "primary goods provide a public and readily quantifiable measure for interpersonal comparisons"<sup>107</sup>. In her view, primary goods such as basic rights, liberties and other material resources are part of what people would prefer better shares<sup>108</sup>. From her point of view, we may resort to primary goods also as

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<sup>107</sup> See Erin Kelly, "Equal opportunity, equal capability" in *Measuring justice: Primary Goods and Capabilities*. Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. p.62

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*62

informational basis for promoting justice to avoid more comprehensive assessments<sup>109</sup>.

Nevertheless, Kelly's point of view is open to some criticism. For instance, primary goods as interpreted in Rawls's theory of justice are used as package which is offered to everyone. There is no interpersonal comparison dimension which is involved. In addition, even though the public dimension of primary goods is more expressed, the quantifiable dimension of primary goods cannot be taken for granted. Primary goods, namely, basic liberties, opportunities, income, wealth and the social basis of self-respect involve a large spectrum of dimension of people's lives which would hardly be quantified. We can only quantify primary goods when we consider one isolated category of resources such as income and not when primary goods are considered as a package offered to everyone in the Rawlsian way. In addition, even though by isolating some category of primary goods we may secure the interpersonal comparison dimension, it would still be problematic to have a quantifiable reference linking primary goods to well-being. Hence, the resources focused approach as defended by Erin Kelly does not offer a satisfactory account on how that alternative would better help to respond to some complexities associated with the evaluation of components of good life than the capability approach can do.

One of the key differences in the use of the capability approach and resoucist approach for evaluating how someone's life is going is the issue of relativity to aims. Under the capability approach, the aim of evaluation is to look at components of goods life while under the resources based approach the evaluation focuses on conditions for

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*62.

good life. The question then becomes what should be regarded as the ultimate aim? By looking at the components of goods life, we get a direct assessment of what improving one's life would require. Alternatively, by focusing on conditions for improving someone's life we necessarily need further information to determine what improving one's life would entail. For instance, it may be difficult to conclusively judge whether some given conditions are necessary and sufficient for attaining a certain outcome. Hence, under this analysis, one would rather prefer the capability approach as informational basis for evaluating and judging rather than the resources based approach. The choice of the capability approach in this case would be defended by its capacity to offer a more complete information on how someone's life is going.

One may then conclude that the capability approach as an evaluative tool for judging how individuals are doing in society is a better approach in comparison to the resources based alternative. The choice of the capability approach as a more reliable index for evaluating how someone's life is going is associated with both its direct focus on individual's lives and possible aims that the capabilities approach suggest. It is important, however, to note that the resources based approach and the capability approach are better interpreted as complementary in the area of policy making. As it will be defended later, primary goods or resources in general contribute for creating conditions for capability building. Policies for advancing social justice should take into account the interconnections between the two indexes of justice. Nevertheless, when the two approaches are considered as evaluative tools to determine what should be done to promote justice, the capability approach becomes, in my view, more

relevant perspective for contextualizing what improving people's lives would require.

Having analysed why the capabilities should be regarded as a more relevant approach for evaluating individuals' life conditions in society, we may now return to the issue of aiming for some individuals' capability sets as normative approach for advancing justice and promoting inclusive development. Promoting some capability sets for advancing justice is to take the capability approach from the analytical level of judging people's conditions to policy level. The analysis of the conditions for individuals' capability building can help to contextualize possible interconnections between the two indexing approaches at the level of development policy making and implementing. Improving individuals' lives in society requires setting some policies which would contribute for that end. In the defended perspective to social justice, the aim for advancing justice would be to achieve some basic capability sets for everyone. The pursuit of this goal of justice would lead to setting some policies which would aim to advance justice in the non-ideal conditions. As introduced above, setting and implementing policies for promoting social justice in real life conditions would lead to reconsider existing interconnections between the resourcist perspective to social justice (primary goods) and the capability approach. In fact, it may be a mistake to take for granted that the reliance to one indexing approach would be relevant for designing and implementing justice enhancing policies which would aim to allow people who are deprived to achieve the threshold of basic capability set. The analysis of the conditions for building individuals' capabilities is in support of the fact that individuals need resources to build fundamental capabilities.

For instance, if a society set some policies to allow people to achieve some basic capability sets, such in our case, allowing people to overcome durable poverty, there would be a need to create conditions which would allow individuals to promote their well-being. The threshold level for capability building would be understood as the actualization of some valuable functionings which would constitute the basic capability set the society would aim to bring about for people. If for instance, the threshold level for basic capability set is conceptualized as materializing conditions of individuals' well-being, the question would be how would that goal be achieved? How would the two indexes help to grasp what would be the nature and the content of relevant policies for promoting people's well-being?

Conditions for promoting individuals' well-being with the aim of building their capabilities may not be fully grasped from the sole resources centred approach to social justice. From primary goods point of view, we may partly contextualize what may be the content of policy that we may need to apply. As resources need to be transformed in order to contribute to the improvement of people's well-being, we may not fully grasp what should be the content of policies from the sole resourcist approach because individuals may have different capacities or abilities to transform resources into well-being. In addition, the resourcist approach may not tell us how to deal with the problem of people's diversity in their abilities. In this regard, we may need to resort to the capability approach which directly focuses on individuals' lives to clarify what should be the content of policies that we may need to consider for advancing justice. The problem which arises is how to combine the use of the primary goods and capabilities at level of policy making and implementing for advancing social justice?

One of the possible solutions would be to assign some functional roles to each of the two indexes of justice. How? As already argued, the capability approach better works as an evaluative tool of how individuals' lives are going in society. Under such an evaluative role, the capability approach provide some reliable indications on how individuals are doing in the actual conditions in society and offers some guidance on how such conditions may be improved. Yet, as the normative approach to justice appeals to the promotion of the conditions of individuals' upward mobility as an approach to development, the primary goods would contribute as informational basis for judging the content of policies to be implemented in society. For instance, from the perspective of the capability approach, the evaluation of individuals' lives in society may suggest that some people are deprived of some basic capabilities. Yet, taking capabilities as informational basis for judging what should be done to promote justice would not allow setting some policies which would promote well-being for the people. Policies for promoting justice would need to consider some other values, particularly basic liberties for people concerned, at the same time expanding their opportunities in some other dimensions of people's lives such access to resources such as income. By setting some guidelines on how each of the two indexes can contribute to the project of advancing justice, we can adjust their potential role to the values and goals we aim to achieve in promoting justice in non-ideal conditions.

Having evaluated how primary goods and capabilities may contribute as indexes of justice and as informational basis for judging what should be the nature and the content of policies for advancing social justice, we may now return to the issue of interpretation of the defended normative approach to development. The focus here is to

determine whether the inclusive approach to development can be interpreted as opportunity equalization.

### **5.5. Inclusive development as opportunity equalization: meaning and perspectives**

Inclusive development as understood in our normative account of social justice is ultimately interpreted as an opportunity equalization. The normative approach for advancing social justice as discussed aims at improving the socioeconomic conditions of the least advantaged. To be in position of the least advantaged means to be under conditions of inequality trap, or under durable forms of deprivation. This terminology of the least advantaged is from Rawls. In his view, someone is counted as the least advantaged not by looking at her/his handicap but by looking at the amount of primary goods at his disposal, particularly, income and wealth. For Rawls, the least advantaged are those persons “whose family and class of origins are more disadvantaged than others, whose natural endowments (as realized) permit them to fair less well, and whose fortune and luck in the course of life turn out to be less happy, all with the normal range and with the relevant measures based on social primary goods” (T.J. revised, 83). The normative approach which intends to promote inclusive development appeals to an inclusive developmental approach. The question is how would the inclusive developmental approach defended in this project be interpreted as an opportunity equalizing approach? We may first of all analyze what opportunity equalization in non-ideal condition would require and how it would apply to development policy making. The equalization of opportunities under the perspective of inclusive development would imply that our normative approach to development aim at setting conditions for accessing opportunities by putting greater concerns for

those who might end up as the least advantaged. The equalization of opportunities under the defended approach to development therefore would imply that the approach taken for improving people's lives in society have some targets to be achieved. And one of the key targets is to promote equal opportunities among people for their own development. The target that is to be aimed for some fundamental capability sets which would materialize some basic functionings for people in society. Promoting inclusive development therefore require focusing on people in this category of socioeconomic conditions and allow them to reach a certain level of basic capability sets that would constitute the basis for equal opportunities in the socioeconomic context in which they live. This normative account of social justice implies that after people have reached a certain level of capability set, they would have the basis for moving on by expanding their own capabilities and by promoting their well-being as subjects of their own development.

This normative account of social justice purports to promote equality of opportunities for addressing the phenomenon of inequality trap. In doing so, we first set the threshold for capability expansion and then seek to promote individuals' capability building until they reach a certain level of capability set. Opportunity equalization as an inclusive approach to development would connote the normative guide for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions upon which the ultimate goal is to improve the socioeconomic conditions of those under traps of inequality and then to put them into conditions upon which they are subject of their own development. Equalization of opportunities then connotes the normative goal of improving the socioeconomic conditions of those under the threshold of basic capabilities to integrate them into the process of economic



development. In other words, inclusive development becomes opportunity equalization.

It may be useful to clarify the meaning of opportunity equalization in order to avoid possible misinterpretation. Opportunities equalization as understood here does not have any connotation of low levelling equalization. Opportunity equalization as defended connotes the procedural readjustment of the distribution of opportunities with greater emphasis on improving the share of worst off. Opportunity equalization implies setting the playing field to improve the share of the least advantaged. Opportunities equalization does not aim at any form of flat equality in terms of disposable goods, but the concept connotes setting the playing field to promote distributional equity.

Having clarified the meaning of opportunity equalization, we may now return to the issue of the use and interpretation of the two indexes of social justice for human development policy making. The normative question that we need to address is how would primary goods approach and the capability approach be ultimately used and interpreted in judging the content of policies for promoting inclusive development? Would we need to amend one approach with the other? In the following section, these questions will be addressed by analyzing the potential each of the two approaches to distributive justice and then see whether one may need to amend one approach with the other.

## **5.6. Foundations for justice in human development policy making: towards a combined interpretation of the two indexes of justice**

It may be useful to make some clarifications on the use and interpretation of primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging what policies strategies for promoting inclusive development would entail. The first note is that Rawls theory of justice and his use of primary goods is not outcome focused<sup>110</sup>, even though he may care about what the promotion of justice would bring about. To argue that Rawls's theory is not an outcome theory means that the theory is intended to offer a fair scheme for distributing primary goods and not their outcome understood as what people can achieve with their primary goods.

Another observation is about the use of the capability approach to promoting inclusive development. Building capabilities or real opportunities for people to be and to do what they have a reason to value require resources. For instance, if a society aims to build people's capability to be educated or the capability to be well sheltered, the society would need to provide some opportunities to people to pursue what they have a reason to value. Yet, to build real opportunities for people, there is always a need for resources. Such resources are in turn converted into valuable functionings. With regard to distributive justice, the better the distribution of resources in society is arranged, the better people averagely develop their capabilities. In other words, the success of a given political society to distribute its social goods can be verified by looking on how people have averagely developed their capabilities and how they have achieved valuable

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<sup>110</sup> This interpretation of Rawls's theory of justice and his use of primary goods approach was defended in John N. Alexander in his *Capabilities and Social Justice: The Political Philosophy of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum*. Ashgate: Burlington, 2008. p.36

functionings. One may conclusively argue that resources are necessary for building real opportunities for people to be and to do what they have a reason to value. Capabilities in this regards are real abilities for people to transform resources into well-being conditions. Due to the role that resources play in building individuals' capabilities, one may wonder whether building people's capabilities in society may not require amending the capability approach with Rawls's primary goods approach. In the section bellow, we will analyze how and in which ways primary goods approach and the capability approach can supplement mutual weaknesses in building real opportunities for people in society.

The capability approach is usually interpreted as an evaluative tool for assessing individuals' life conditions. The approach does not necessarily tell us what policies for capabilities building would require. Yet, when making policies to expand capabilities for people in society in order for them to achieve the doings and the beings that they would value, there is need for institutional perspective to social justice. This institutional approach to social justice can be borrowed from the Rawlsian perspective to social justice. For Rawls, the society's basic economic and political institutions shape the "wants and aspirations that its citizens come to have" and determine "in part the sort of persons they want to be as well as the sort of persons they are" (TJ, 259). These social conditions which are shaped by institutional structures (the basic social structure) are important for building people's capabilities. In other words, it is important to emphasize the social conditions under which people live in any approach for building real opportunities for people in society.

Nevertheless, the socio-political concern that we aim to address in our normative approach to social justice is the issue of

inequality trap and its effects of durable poverty. The focus on inequality trap has been initially justified by the capacity of this phenomenon to offer explanation on how and why poverty becomes durable and systemic. Yet, to address this phenomenon, a social policy strategist may not necessarily have to focus on the dynamics that maintain the phenomenon, but on the external manifestations expressed in the form of durable poverty and deprivation, but at the same time taking into account the attitudinal and the distributive factors sustaining traps of inequality. As already defended, addressing inequality trap requires an opportunity equalizing policies which would improve the conditions of people who live under traps of inequality and allow them to expand their capabilities until they reach a certain level of some capability set. In other words, under this approach to distributive justice, policy making processes may have to focus on addressing durable poverty and deprivation. Nevertheless, the key concern that we initially determined is about the informational basis for judging what justice would require and how primary good approach and the capability approach would contribute in conceptualizing and implementing policies for promoting inclusive development and addressing traps of inequality. The socioeconomic policies would address concerns of inequality trap. While the two approaches to justice have been judged to be both relevant in their own right for building the strategy of inclusive development, it is still to be determined whether one may need to amend these approaches to justice with one another.

The distribution of primary goods under Rawls's approach to social justice is associated with how the basic social structure is arranged and how it maximizes the share of the least advantaged. Nevertheless, by looking at the content of socio-political opportunities

that people would need to expand their capabilities and to overcome poverty and other forms of deprivation, it can be possible to understand what would be needed to promote justice. It may be useful to note that poverty is not only understood as the lack of resources, but more importantly poverty is essentially understood as a capability deprivation. When then one seeks to address concerns of inequality trap, one may need to look at both the ressourceist perspective and also the capability approach, and how these approaches can complement each other in the pursuit of distributive justice under a goal oriented approach.

The capability approach is sometimes interpreted as an alternative to the ressourceist approach to social justice. Critics of the primary social goods, including Sen himself, argue that the promotion of justice should not access people's well-being and their standing in society on the basis of primary goods, but on basis of capabilities. In Sen's own interpretation, Rawls's primary goods account does not give any attention to interpersonal comparisons or differences in people's capacity to transform primary goods into valuable functionings. Nevertheless, the merit of the arguments for or against Rawls's approach to social justice particularly his metric of primary goods should be evaluated in reference to some normative guidance. On the one hand, some theorists argue that the primary goods approach cannot capture some aspects of justice. This critic has largely focused on justice for the disabled. Primary goods account of justice does not adequately capture or suggest what promoting justice for the disabled would require. Disabled people would need much more primary goods or resources to have a comparable level of well-being in comparison to those who are normally-abled. The critic to primary goods for failing to capture interpersonal aspects of justice seems to

stand only depending on the aims that the promotion of justice intends to bring about. For instance, whenever the promotion of justice aims to achieve a certain general states for people (e.g. achieving some capability set). The promotion of justice aims to bring about a general state of affair upon which people would be put into conditions of equal opportunities. Under such conditions, the interpersonal comparison is not necessarily an important issue.

A concrete example may shed light to the above claim. Suppose that there is a political society which sets policies to help people to overcome poverty. To achieve this goal, the practical approach may not look at individuals' need and conditions but to set some basic capabilities that everyone in society should at least have. Possible effort that people in the society should use to achieve the targeted capability would be the responsibility of individuals concerned. The role of the political society should be to put people into conditions of equality of opportunities. The reference to interpersonal comparisons would not allow any standardized approach for advancing justice. Therefore, the real concern that we may need to address in judging the nature of policies for advancing justice and promoting inclusive development is how we would use the two indexes of justice in building people's capabilities in society given the fact that we need primary goods to build real opportunities for people or to promote some capability sets which would substantiate some valuable functionings. How then would the two indexes of justice be ultimately interpreted in policy making strategy for building people's capabilities?

The evaluation the potential of primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for justice may look at how each of the two indexes of justice is used in policy making strategies. In *Measuring*

*Justice: Primary goods and capabilities* (2010), different theorists of social justice have focused on evaluating how primary goods and capabilities are used in different domains of people's lives. Their analysis focused on some domains, particularly, the domain of health, children welfare, justice for the disabled, gender justice, and justice in the distribution of educational opportunities. Each of the two indexes exhibits some particular advantages in one particular domain and context of people's lives. Yet, evidence is still lacking for justifying the ultimate preference for one index of justice as the only relevant approach for advancing social justice and judging what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions would require.

So far in the philosophical analysis of the two indexes of justice, defenders of each of the two accounts seem only to take position on the choice of one index only when the promotion of justice aim to advance justice in one particular domain of people's lives and not in the context of pursuing justice as whole on societal level. For instance, Ingrid Robeyns has analyzed how both primary goods and capabilities can contribute in promoting gender justice. She explored the merits and possible limits of each of the two indexes of justice in this area of inquiry. On the one hand, she demonstrated how primary goods may fail to handle some forms of injustice associated with gender justice, particularly those forms of injustice associated with existing social norms. On the other hand, she explained how the capability approach can better handle issues of gender justice associated social norms<sup>111</sup>. Yet, the evaluation only seems to be relevant when the focus on one index of justice is exclusively oriented

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<sup>111</sup> See Robeyns, Ingrid "Gender and the metric of justice". *Measuring justice: Primary goods and capabilities*. Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns. Eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.pp.215-34.

on one particular domain of social justice such gender justice, disability or children welfare.

Harry Brighouse and Elaine Unterhalter have also explored how the primary goods approach and the capability approach can fair against each other when one takes them as informational basis for shaping educational opportunities for children. They argue that both approaches, when considered alone, seem to be incomplete. They argue that primary goods approach has two main problems. The first problem is that primary goods approach, by focusing on resources, become insensitive to the fact that children need very different kind of treatment in order to do equally well<sup>112</sup>. They add that primary goods are under-specific to provide a relevant guidance on what the content of opportunities for children to be educated should be. They add that, the capability approach may be regarded as more promising in judging educational opportunities, but the approach is equally under-specific as far as the indexing problem remains unresolved<sup>113</sup>. Their analysis proves that the choice of one single index of justice is problematic, and the choice is largely relative to the domain of inquiry and potential goals that we aim to achieve in our pursuit of social justice.

The problem of using and interpreting primary goods and capability also arise when the two indexes of justice are used in policy area. When a policy maker seeks to design some policies for promoting justice in real life conditions by using primary goods and

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<sup>112</sup> Harry Brighouse and Elaine Unterhalter. "Education for primary goods and capabilities". In *Measuring Justice: Primary goods and capabilities*. Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns. Eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp.193-214.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* 193-214 (The indexing problem here connotes the problem of judging and determining which capabilities should be regarded as more important and then given priority in policy making strategies for promoting social justice. So far the indexing problem remains unresolved in actual theoretical literature on the capability approach).



capabilities as informational basis for judging what justice would require, the problem of judging the relevance of each of the two indexes and how they can be used as reference index of justice must be the cornerstone for the exploration. This is when the promotion of justice aims to address a concrete socio-political problem through policy making and implementing. In the case of this thesis, the problems of poverty and durable deprivation have been taken as the central issues which has been grasped and interpreted through the phenomenon of inequality trap. The core issue has been to investigate what should be regarded as foundations for justice in human development policy making, and then elaborate how primary goods and capabilities may contribute as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require. While it has been clarified that any policy strategy which would aim to address the phenomenon of inequality trap and its effect of durable poverty and deprivation would have to resort to both primary goods and capabilities, it remains unclear whether one would need to amend one indexing approach with the other or how the two indexes of justice should be used in evaluating and judging the relevance of policies for advancing social justice.

One may then wonder whether one would need to amend one index with the other between primary goods and capabilities. As it has been argued, any goal oriented strategy for advancing social justice and promoting inclusive development would need to refer to both primary goods and capabilities. It is possible to have a preference of one of the two indexes of justice as the most appropriate reference for judging what justice would require; but the level of policy making, the two indexes should be interpreted as complementary. On the one hand, primary social goods as resources broadly understood are

needed for building real opportunities for people to overcome poverty. On the other hand, capabilities as people's real abilities, are defined in terms of the freedom people have to do and to be what they have a reason to value in order to achieve valuable functionings. The valuable functionings that policies for advancing justice would aim to achieve for people are social states in which people would have overcome poverty and other forms of deprivation. Due to the fact that poverty is essentially understood as a capability deprivation, it becomes evident that both primary goods and capabilities are needed for building people's real opportunities to overcome poverty and other forms of durable deprivation.

Nevertheless, in evaluating whether primary goods approach and capability approach can amend each other in designing justice enhancing policies for addressing traps of inequality and promoting inclusive development, one may need to consider other values, such as institutional requirements and also the issue of publicity of policies that would be implemented. In fact, primary goods approach to justice as interpreted in the Rawls's theory of justice is essentially institution based approach to justice. According to Rawls, the distribution of primary goods among people depends on how the basic structure of society is arranged and how it maximizes the share of those who would end up as the least advantaged. Justice, in other words, is associated with social arrangements and how fair is the distributive scheme of existing social goods. An appropriate distribution of primary goods can be verified by looking at how people in society have averagely expanded their capabilities by achieving some valuable functionings. While the capability approach has been

criticized for failing to offer the public criteria of social justice<sup>114</sup>, this shortcoming of the capability approach can be supplemented from the primary goods approach. The primary goods approach to social justice as developed in Rawls's theory has strong institutional foundation and a clear public criterion of justice. As we need primary goods to build real opportunities for people in society, one can take the distribution of primary goods as the starting point for building people's capabilities. Under this perspective, one may only use the capability approach as an evaluative tool for judging how the strategy of promoting justice and inclusive development is achieving the desired outcome. In other words, the primary goods approach is relevant not only for setting the social conditions under which people would expand their capabilities, but primary goods is also an important ingredient for promoting individuals' capabilities.

Owing to the existing complementarities between primary goods approach and the capability approach in promoting justice in non-ideal conditions, at least in building real opportunities for people, it would be possible to amend each of the two approaches to social justice with one another to supplement their mutual weaknesses. In which way can the capability approach and primary goods approach amend each other? The capability approach lacks the public criteria for advancing justice. Yet, the advance of social justice may aim at some social states understood as the materialization of some functionings among people. On the bases of achieved functionings, one would evaluate whether a given policy strategy has achieved its goal or whether it falls short of the targeted goal for advancing justice.

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<sup>114</sup> The critic of the capability approach for lacking the basis for publicity has been formulated by Thomas Pogge. See Thomas Pogge: A critic of the capability approach". *Measuring justice: Primary goods and capabilities*. Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns. Eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp. 193-214

To build people's capability to achieve some targeted level of capability sets, there is need for institutional foundations of justice. Building capabilities for people depends on the social conditions under which people live, particularly the real opportunities that people have in their own socioeconomic context. The socioeconomic context in which people live is therefore fundamental for setting the conditions for people to expand their capabilities.

Given the interdependency between people's capability expansion and the socioeconomic conditions in which they live, one can contextualize how the capability approach and the primary goods approach may amend each other to supplement the weaknesses that each of the two indexes of justice involves. The capability approach works better as an evaluative tool which indicates how people are doing in society. Whenever people have achieved valuable functionings (valuable states of doing and being), there is real indication of the success of existing political institutions to promote well-being of people. An averagely high level of capability building among people in society is both the outcome of institutional performance in promoting distributive justice and in putting people into appropriate socio-political conditions for pursuing what people have a reason to value. The Rawlsian primary goods approach and its institutional focus exemplifies not only the social conditions in which people can expand their capabilities, it also indicates how the justice parameter can be included in the project of building people's capabilities. On the one hand, promoting people's capability expansion require appropriate social conditions defined on basis of institutional set up which is originally designed to promote justice. Appropriate institutional set up constitute relevant social context under which people can expand their capabilities. On the other hand,

people need resources to expand their capabilities. The more resources (income and wealth) are distributed in society according to justice, the more people will develop and expand their capabilities. In other words, the capability approach and primary goods approach complement each other in promoting distributive justice in society.

Due to the shortcomings of the capability approach to incarnate the public criteria of justice, it would be useful to amend the capability approach with primary goods approach in designing policies for promoting inclusive development. The capability approach is relevant indicator for judging how people are doing in society by evaluating their level of well-being and capability expansion. Nevertheless, while the capability approach can relevantly contribute as an evaluative tool of individuals' social states, the approach does not provide any indicator on what should be the nature of policies for promoting distributive justice, or what should be done to promote people's capability building. The primary goods approach in this regard can supplement the flaws of the capability approach by offering institutional basis for promoting people's capability building and also by providing normative guidance for resources allocation to build real opportunities for people.

Consequently, primary goods approach and the capability approach are not incompatible normative accounts of social justice. The two accounts of justice should be interpreted as complementary in the pursuit of distributive justice and in promoting inclusive development in society. While the capability approach can better contribute to the strategy of inclusive development as an evaluative tool for examining how people are individually and collectively doing in terms of well-being, the primary goods approach can supplement the capability approach by offering the public criteria of justice and by

portraying what should be regarded as relevant socioeconomic conditions which would allow people to expand their capabilities and achieve some valuable capability sets. In addition, the primary goods approach can better grasp the justice aspect of inclusive development by showing the conditions which should be fulfilled to allow people to expand their capabilities. In other words, the primary goods approach and the capability approach are complementary in what they offer as central aspects for advancing justice and promoting people's well-being. The primary goods approach has a potential to supplement in relevant way some of the flaws of the capability approach particularly by offering the public criteria of justice.

Ultimately, the capability approach can offer relevant normative guidance which can indicate in relevant way what should be the capability sets that policy makers for development should aim for in addressing durable poverty and promoting inclusive development. On the one hand, the capability approach can offer relevant normative ground for evaluating how policies for promoting development are succeeding in improving people's lives and how the policy strategy taken to promote justice in non-ideal conditions is attaining its goal. On the other hand, the primary goods approach can help to evaluate the nature of social conditions and institutional framework that would allow people to expand their capabilities. Primary goods approach may supplement the capability approach by providing the resourcist dimension for capability building and offering the public criterion of justice in the framework for promoting justice in non-ideal conditions. Though the primary goods approach and the capability approach suggests two quasi different starting points for advancing justice, the two indexing approaches can contribute in a complementary way to policy design aiming at addressing durable

poverty and promoting inclusive development. The difference in the starting point the two approaches suggest cannot prevent these indexes of justice from supplementing their mutual weaknesses and to guide to relevant conceptualization and contextualization of what the policy strategies for promoting justice and inclusive development would require.

## **Chap.6. Implications of the research**

The research project has focused on evaluating the foundation for justice for human development policy making by looking at the informational basis of justice that would be relevant for evaluating and conceptualizing policy for promoting inclusive development. Primary goods and capabilities have been the central indexes of justice that the project focused on. Our normative approach to justice aimed not only at evaluating what would be the foundations of justice for addressing the phenomenon of inequality trap, but more importantly for building a strategy of inclusive development which would appeal to the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions to address durable poverty in society. Some observations are in order.

### **6.1. On the use and the interpretation of primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for justice.**

Rawls's primary social goods and Sen's capabilities have been analyzed and contextualized for their relevance for evaluating and judging the relevance of policies for advancing distributive justice in non-ideal conditions under the strategy of addressing inequality trap and promoting inclusive development in society. The ultimate goal of the study has been to contextualize which ways the two indexes of social justice can contribute as informational basis for judging what the advance of justice would require when the promotion of justice is goal oriented. The particular aim for the promotion of social justice analyzed throughout the thesis is to address the sociopolitical concern of inequality trap and its effects of durable deprivation among people in society. The phenomenon of inequality trap has been detected as a source of moral concern as individuals affected by the consequences of the phenomenon are pushed into a situation beyond their control; and this affects not only the conditions for their well-being, but it also



undermines the conditions for their upward mobility. Hence, the phenomenon of inequality trap and its accompanying dynamics of durable poverty can better help to contextualize what should be the foundations for justice in the area of human development policy making particularly whenever the promotion of justice aims to resolve a concrete sociopolitical issue in non-ideal conditions such as addressing traps of inequality to promote inclusive development.

The analysis of the two indexes of justice in their use and interpretation as informational basis for judging what the promotion of social justice under a goal oriented approach to justice has revealed that we need to adjust our usual methodological approach to justice from sole normative approaches to more pragmatic approaches to justice to allow bridging normative evaluation and some empirical constraints. Such an innovative methodological approach for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions can be practically relevant as it allows designing policies for advancing justice which are able to match the nature of the problem that the promotion of justice would intend to address.

The two indexes of justice were not only explored for their relevance as indexes for distributive justice but more importantly as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions would require when the goal of justice is to resolve a concrete sociopolitical problem. Primary goods and capabilities, whenever they are considered as informational basis for evaluating the relevance of policies for advancing justice with an aim of addressing a concrete socio political problem –in our case, the socio-political issue of inequality trap and its accompanying effects of durable poverty–, there is no ultimate choice to be made between the two indexes of justice. The two indexes have been revealed to be complementary in

what they can offer as internal content of policies aiming to promote distributive justice under a goal oriented strategy aiming to resolve traps of inequality and to promote inclusive development. For instance, if one intends to promote distributive justice with the aim of building individuals' capabilities, there are always needs for resources to build real opportunities for people to be and to do what they may have a reason to value. A concrete example may help to clarify this claim. Policies in Burundi which intended to promote equal opportunities for education by offering free primary school education has been partially handicapped by the lack of basic necessities in some poor families. Children from extremely poor families have been revealed to have a problem to make profit from equal opportunity policy for primary school education because of the lack of food and other basic necessities in their families. Children from poor families are not fully free to transform the opportunities for education in its correlated functionings because the lack of basic necessities undermines the opportunities for children to do well in their studies. Hence, poor families need resources to afford food and other basic necessities in order to make the equal opportunities for primary school education profitable to their children. Consequently, the possibility to expand capabilities for children's education in poor families, the amount of resources that families have influences positively the outcome of capability building for education, at least in enhancing conditions for capabilities building. In other words, governmental effort to expand equal opportunities for primary school education is a policy which must be accompanied with other complementary policies, particularly access to resources. The example mentioned is a concrete case which shows the importance of resources in shaping conditions for children to expand their capabilities for education. Under this interpretation, primary goods and capabilities are

complementarily required in building individuals' real opportunities in some important area of people's lives.

It is important, however, to note that primary goods and capabilities as indexes of justice involve some aspects which make them differ. For instance, the primary goods approach to justice and the capabilities approach have two different starting points for advancing justice. While on the one hand primary goods as used and interpreted under the Rawlsian approach are institutional focused and aim to promote justice by shaping the basic social structure to refine the sociopolitical context in which people make their life choices, the capability approach, on the other hand, takes as the point of departure individuals' lives as the foundations for evaluating and promoting justice. Judgments about justice under the capability approach look at how people are doing in their actual socioeconomic conditions by looking at the real freedom individuals have to do and to be what they have reason to value. The capability approach takes real freedom people have to achieve valuable functionings as the key for contextualizing what the promotion of justice would require. In other words, while the capability approach resorts to methodological individualism in evaluating and judging what the promotion of justice require, primary goods approach, under the Rawlsian perspective to justice remains at the institutional level (societal level) in evaluating and promoting distributive justice. The difference in the starting points that the two indexes of social justice suggest may have some implications on what each of the two indexes of justice may involve as informational basis for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions particularly, on the issue of publicity of policies which would aim to advance distributive justice and address concrete sociopolitical issues in society.

In most of contemporary approaches to distributive justice, emphasis is usually put on the normative account for analyzing what justice in a particular state of affairs would entail. In doing so, different theorists of justice take a normative approach and usually resorting to ideal perspectives. Yet, when the promotion of justice is goal-oriented or when the advance of justice aims at resolving concrete sociopolitical concerns, the sole normative account of justice is not necessary sufficient for judging the nature of relevant policies for promoting justice. As it has been explored throughout the thesis, there is need to look beyond the usual methodological approach to social justice which has so far relied on the normative accounts for some innovative methodological approach which would better match the promotion of justice under a goal oriented alternative. The methodological approach that we found fitting for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions is one which bridges normative evaluation and empirical constraints.

In more concise terms, two important aspects of justice have been at the center of the project. The first aspect was to investigate what should be regarded as the foundations for justice in human development policy making and implementing. The investigation on this particular aspect of justice has focused on the informational basis for justice by looking at how primary goods approach and the capability approach can contribute for that end and whether these indexes of justice may allow amending each other's weaknesses to overcome their internal flaws. The second aspect which was considered is the methodological input that we would resort to when the promotion of social justice is aimed at resolving a concrete sociopolitical problem in non-ideal conditions. The investigation on these two central aspects of justice can lead to some observations.

The first observation is about contemporary approach to political theorizing on social justice. Contemporary approaches to social justice have largely resorted to normative approaches resorting particularly to the ideal approach to justice. Yet, when concerns of justice are grounded on real life conditions such as judging the relevance of policy for promoting justice in non-ideal conditions, we need a different approach to justice which would take into account real life constraints that the promotion of justice would aim to address. As it has been demonstrated throughout the thesis, the real life constraints which we considered for addressing inequality trap are the distributional and the attitudinal factors. The distributional factor implies that, to promote social justice, we need some institutional framework which defines the scheme of justice that the society uses to allocate existing goods. The distributional factor is associated with the nature of existing political institutions and how they support and promote distributive justice. The attitudinal factor connotes concerns of psychological effects and conditions that people in the low distributional share experience as a consequence of their social conditions. The advance of justice under a goal oriented strategy should take into account the two factors mentioned in order to design policies which would meet the nature of the problem as evaluated in non-ideal conditions. This innovative approach to justice enhancing policies has a particular advantage of allowing a better contextualization of what the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions would require and can also be able to guide to the design of justice enhancing policies which would fit the nature of the problem at stake under a goal oriented approach to social or distributive justice. Besides the innovative methodological approach for theorizing and advancing social justice in non-ideal conditions, the defended approach to distributive justice was oriented to promote inclusive

development by addressing traps of inequality and their effects of durable poverty.

The second observation is about the methodology for theorizing and advancing justice in real life scenarios. The methodology which is to be used for advancing justice in real life scenarios have to bridge the normative approach and empirical constraints. In our case of justice in the area of for development policy making, the nature of policy for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions has to match the nature of the problem to be addressed as it is defined and interpreted in real life scenarios. Under this methodological strategy of advancing justice in non-ideal conditions there is a methodological innovation from the usual ideal perspective focusing on conceptual analysis to an approach which would bridge normative evaluation and empirical constraints. This innovative methodological approach makes a particular difference for advancing social justice in non-ideal conditions by taking into account real life constraints that individuals may faced in real life scenarios, and at the same time allowing the design of justice enhancing policies which would fit the nature of the sociopolitical problems. In other words, the promotion of justice in the area of development policy making requires not only an innovative theoretical approach to justice but also some methodological innovation.

Nevertheless, in contextualizing the use and interpretation of primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require under a goal oriented approach to distributive justice, the ultimate goal has been to address traps of inequality and to promote inclusive development. Yet, the focus on inequality trap and its effect of durable poverty as an approach to promote inclusive development may raise some questions: why to

focus on inequality trap and what is the moral justification for focusing on this phenomenon?

## **6.2. The ethical justification for addressing inequality trap and promoting inclusive development**

The phenomenon of inequality trap which has been taken as a theoretical challenge for contextualizing the potential contribution of primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require is justified by two reasons. Firstly, the phenomenon of inequality trap better explains the dynamics which makes poverty and deprivation systemic and dynamic. Individuals or groups of people who live under inequality trap are hardly able to overcome the conditions maintaining them under poverty while they cannot be fully held responsible of their own conditions low distributive optimum<sup>115</sup>. It is therefore under the state obligations to take appropriate measure to help people concerned to break traps of inequality and to expand their capabilities. Secondly, development should be a right which is enjoyed by everyone. In any society, unequal development is not only a potential manifestation of social injustice, but it is also a sign of withholding of some individuals rights such as the negative rights not to be left into dehumanizing conditions of deprivation. Therefore, under the promotion of human rights, the state has obligation to ensure that development is as inclusive as possible and that there are no individuals or groups of people who are left into severe deprivation due to conditions which are beyond deliberate choice of individuals concerned. In other words, under this outlook to development as a right which should be enjoyed by everyone, a political society is under political obligation to ensure

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<sup>115</sup> For more elaboration on how inequality trap is due to conditions beyond the people concerned, see chap. 3.

that processes of development are as inclusive as possible and that produced goods in society are fairly distributed at the same time allowing the maximization of the share of the least advantaged. Under this perspective, improving the conditions of the least advantaged to ensure that they break traps of inequality and they progressively achieve the socially targeted capability sets where they would overcome severe poverty and other forms of durable deprivation should be part of key political agenda of societies.

Applying socioeconomic policies to allow the least advantaged to overcome severe and durable poverty is a political goal that societies, particularly, those in the developing world should take into consideration as a strategy of human development. The eradication of severe forms of deprivation via the promotion of social justice has many advantages. First, helping people to overcome durable poverty allows them to be self-sustaining and subjects of their own upward mobility. Breaking traps of severe poverty and its sustaining dynamics allows people to overcome the intergenerational transmission of low distributive optimum of disposable goods and help them to building strong foundations for capability building for the current generation and subsequent ones. In other words, breaking traps of severe deprivation and poverty allows people to afford some capability sets which become the foundations for better conditions of individuals' well-being; (this is supposed to go on for future generations). Addressing inequality trap and its effects of deprivation is a political goal which not only aims for advancing justice and well-being for current generations but also for future ones. Secondly, promoting inclusive development by affording some level of capability sets to everyone would enable people to better contribute to the overall development of the country. Indeed, a country whose people have a



certain average level of capabilities expansion may be prone to develop further due to the contribution of its members. Therefore, promoting inclusive development is advantageous not only to individual members of the society but also to the society as whole. Nonetheless, the justification for advancing justice by addressing traps of inequality and by promoting inclusive development is justified by the goods that this political strategy would bring about for the people concerned particularly the least advantaged.

The inclusive development strategy as initially conceptualized is essentially a human centered developmental approach with a particular goal of promoting justice in non-ideal conditions. This approach to development is morally and politically justified by the good that its implementation in society can bring about for the people particularly those who would otherwise end up as the worst off in the socioeconomic conditions in which they live. One of the central goals of the project has been to contextualize the normative foundations for justice for human development policies which would allow the implementation of the justice based approach to development. In doing so, the focus has been oriented to the informational basis for judging what the advance of justice in human development policy making would require with a particular emphasis on primary goods and capabilities as the central indexes for evaluating individuals' socioeconomic conditions.

### **6.3. Foundations for justice in human development policy making**

The normative foundation for promoting justice in the area of human development policy making is that development is central to individual well-being; and that everyone should enjoy and be part of developmental progresses. An inclusive approach to development as

developed in this project purports to enlarge people's opportunities to improve their lives with particular focus to those who would end up as the least advantaged. In addition, owing to the important values attached to development particularly as a pathway to promoting people's well-being in society, an inclusive approach to development is interpreted as matter of social justice. Under this interpretation, it would be regarded as part of political obligations of the state to ensure that developmental processes are as inclusive as possible and that people in the society have equal opportunity to expand their capabilities. The respect of the obligations of the state to ensure equal opportunities for all members of the society would require taking concerns of social justice more seriously by adjusting possible shortcomings preventing equal opportunities among people in society.

In addition, in order to set foundations for human development, access to development should be regarded as a right that every person should enjoy. The idea of interpreting development as a human right is not new. By taking human development as part of basic rights that every individual should enjoy, development policies would be oriented to expanding such a right to everyone. The inclusive dimension of development would then be justified and defended under this dimension of expanding people's rights.

Nevertheless, our approach to advancing justice as defended in the project is intended to respond to the question: how to promote social justice in non-ideal conditions in society and to clarify the informational basis of justice we would need to refer to for justice enhancing policies design. Yet, as it was noticed, this theoretical approach to distributive justice may require some methodological adjustment. The judgment of what would be the nature and content of policies for advancing social justice in non-ideal conditions may not

only take a normative orientation. But we may also need to consider some empirical constraints in real life scenarios that the promotion of justice would aim to address. This approach to justice would require taking real life constraints as an important reference for designing policies which would match the nature of problem that our political strategy would aim to address. Hence, the promotion of justice under this goal oriented approach to justice would require some innovation into commonly known methodology for theorizing about social justice which largely remains to the normative level. Advancing justice under a goal oriented approach to development would need to bridge normative evaluation and empirical constraints. This methodological approach would imply considering some life constraints as reference for contextualizing the nature and the content of relevant policies for advancing social justice. In addition, this methodological approach to advancing justice in real life scenarios as applied in our case of human development policy making would permit the design of justice enhancing policies which would fit and match the nature of the problem that the promotion of justice would aim to address.

In contextualizing of what justice enhancing policy for advancing justice and promoting inclusive development would entail, our investigation has considered the phenomenon of inequality trap to understand the dynamics which make poverty durable and systemic. The phenomenon of inequality trap exemplifies some the possible constraints that policies which would aim at advancing social justice in non-ideal conditions should take into account. The constraints that we considered in our investigation are the distributional and the attitudinal factors that influence individuals' distributional outcome. The consideration of real life constraints for advancing social justice in non-ideal conditions is susceptible of bringing about some

methodological innovation which would offer a better normative guide for advancing social justice in non-ideal conditions and contextualizing what the promotion of justice in some areas of inquiries, such as in human development policies making, would entail. Nonetheless, the practical pursuit of justice in the domain of human development policies making under the strategy of addressing durable poverty is performed by equalizing opportunities among people by putting much emphasis on improving the conditions of the least advantaged.

#### **6.4. Equalization of opportunities as a normative foundation of inclusive development: new horizons for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions.**

The advance of justice in non-ideal conditions under the strategy of promoting inclusive development should consider opportunities as the real currency of egalitarian justice. Opportunities as understood in this research enquiry connote any socioeconomic advantage that can contribute to improving individuals' socio-economic conditions or improving people's well-being. Creating real opportunities for people has been portrayed as the most relevant approach for promoting human development. Nonetheless, as the ultimate goal of the political strategy is to promote inclusive development by taking social or distributive justice as the normative foundation for justice enhancing policy making, the equalization of opportunities becomes the normative foundation for advancing justice in non-ideal conditions.

The equalization of opportunities as the normative foundation for advancing social justice requires taking a prioritarian approach to distributive justice. Under the prioritarian approach to justice, equalization of opportunities as an approach to social justice would require that greater concern for justice be oriented towards those who

are the least advantaged. The goal of justice would be to ensure that some opportunities are attributed to the least advantaged so to promote the conditions for capabilities building. The equalization of opportunities would appeal to the distribution of some fundamental opportunities; meaning those opportunities which open up to other greater opportunities. These are, for instance, opportunities to be educated; opportunities to have adequate shelter; etc. Nonetheless, the equalization of opportunities should not appeal to low leveling equalization, but the approach would seek to promote justice by building capabilities for the least advantaged. In addition, the equalization of opportunities can apply to the distribution of socioeconomic advantages by taking the difference principle more seriously in distributing social goods among people. Under the normative guidance of improving the conditions of the least advantaged, the distributive scheme of produced goods would ensure the highest possible share to the worst off.

Nevertheless, the promotion of justice under the principle of equalizing opportunities would apply under a certain target. Equalization of opportunities as a strategy for promoting justice and inclusive development would be regarded as a transitional approach to justice upon which the political society would aim at improving the socioeconomic conditions of the least advantaged or the poor until they overcome poverty and reach a certain level of capability sets. When people have reached the targeted level of capability sets (when they are free from poverty and other forms of durable deprivation), they would be able to move on as subject of their own development. In other words, the equalization of opportunities as an approach to promoting inclusive development is a goal oriented perspective to

social justice with a particular aim to be achieved in the processes of pursuing social justice.

It is, however, important to note at the outset that equalization of opportunities as elaborated throughout this thesis does not only apply to the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities. The approach to advancing justice under the opportunity equalization strategy goes beyond the simple principle of equal opportunities understood as setting the playing field and take into accounts some real life constraints that are susceptible of preventing individuals from enjoying comparable conditions for accessing and grasping socioeconomic opportunities. A close look on the two terminologies may clarify how they differ in the practical pursuit of distributive justice. On the one hand, while equality of opportunities refers to distributive scheme and fair competition in allocating available opportunities, equalization of opportunities means more than simple equality of opportunities. Equalization of opportunities moves beyond setting the playing field for competitive fairness in acquiring opportunities to consider some life constraints in non-ideal conditions. The equalization of opportunities as a normative approach for advancing justice and promoting inclusive development is based on the normative assumption that there are some life constraints that may prevent some individuals from accessing and grasping opportunities. In the particular case of this thesis, I have focused on two constraints or factors which influence distributional outcome, namely, the attitudinal and the distributional factors. The distributional constraint connotes how the political institutions are organized and how they promote social justice in allocating existing social goods among people. The attitudinal constraint connotes reduced motivation and hope that people under persistent inequality of opportunities

experience. The undermined motivation and hope affect how they frame opportunities and also affect their capacity to grasp and transform opportunities into better living conditions. The equalization of opportunities to promote social justice and inclusive development would require taking into account the distributive and the attitudinal constraints that undermine proper equality of opportunities among people. By taking into account real life constraints that can influence the distributive outcome among people, the promotion of justice would take a goal oriented approach or a problem solving perspective.

#### **6.5. On the nature and the content of justice enhancing policies for promoting justice and addressing durable poverty**

The philosophical concern that this research project aimed to investigate is what should be regarded as foundations for justice in human development policy making with particular focus on primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require. The nature of justice enhancing policies for promoting justice in non-ideal conditions and promoting inclusive development should be opportunity equalizing and capability enhancing. As developed in the previous parts, opportunities should be considered as real currency of egalitarian justice. Under such a normative approach to social justice, equalizing opportunities among people would be regarded as the most relevant approach for advancing social and political justice and promoting inclusive development. The equalization of opportunities as developed in the thesis would consist in improving the socioeconomic conditions of the least advantaged and promote their development of some fundamental capability sets. Nevertheless, in evaluating the nature and the content of justice enhancing policies which would advance justice in non-ideal conditions and promote inclusive development, resolving

the issue of informational basis for justice or simply deciding which indexes of justice can be used as reference in judging the content of policies for advancing justice is fundamental. As elaborated, primary goods and capabilities are relevant indexes of justice, and they can also work as informational basis for judging what should be the content of policies for promoting justice and inclusive development in society. Yet, there is no index of justice between primary goods and capabilities which ought to be preferred as informational basis for judging what the advance of justice in real life scenarios would entail. On the one hand, primary goods as resources largely understood are needed for building real opportunities for people to develop their capabilities. Capabilities, on the other hands, as real freedom for people have to be and to do what they have a reason to value can better contribute as evaluative tool in judging individuals's socioeconomic conditions. Relevant policies for advancing justice and promoting inclusive development should offer equal opportunities for people to expand their capabilities. Ultimately, there is no index of justice which ought to be preferred for advancing social justice in non-ideal conditions and promoting inclusive development. A combined approach on the use and interpretation of the two indexes of justice seem to be more promising than resorting to an isolated use of one indexes of justice. A combined use of the two indexes of justice is more relevant because the approach would allow the two indexes of justice to supplement their mutual weaknesses.

Primary goods and capabilities has been analyzed for their use and relevance as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice would require under a goal oriented approach to social justice. The goal oriented approach to social justice has aimed to solve a concrete sociopolitical problem by taking inequality trap and its



effects of durable deprivation as the sociopolitical problem that our approach to justice would aim to solve. Yet, the promotion of justice in non-ideal conditions, particularly in the area of policy making requires moving beyond the sole normative evaluation to consider some life constraints that affect individuals' capacity to access opportunities and to transform them into better living. The attitudinal and the distributive constraints that we analyzed are among possible examples. The reference to real life constraints has particular advantage of designing policies which can match the nature of the sociopolitical problem at stake.

In addition, building people's real opportunities to overcome severe poverty requires some appropriate social conditions because the society is a context in which individuals make their life choices. The primary goods approach is a relevant for contextualizing the nature of social conditions which would allow people to build their capabilities. Under this interpretation of the use of primary goods and capabilities, the two indexes of justice can ultimately be regarded as complementary in their content and in what each of them can suggest as essential value for improving people's lives via the promotion of social justice. The use of primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice in non-ideal condition require particularly in the domain of human development policy making should always take into account the complementary nature of the two indexes of social justice in advancing justice in non-ideal conditions. Ultimately, the promotion of justice under a problem oriented approach require more input than the commonly used normative approaches in order to take into account some constraints that the promotion of justice would aim to resolve. An inclusive developmental approach is the approach that

currently developing countries should apply to pursue their processes of development. The implementation of the inclusive development strategy as developed in the thesis would be beneficial to people by making them more apt to participate in the processes of development and to progressively become subjects of their own development. Primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for justice enhancing policy making are important tools for evaluating and contextualizing how people are doing in society and possible ways for improving their socioeconomic conditions. Any use of the primary goods and capabilities for the sake of advancing social justice in non-ideal conditions and promoting inclusive development should take into account their complementary nature as informational basis for evaluating and judging what the promotion of justice in the area of development policy making would require.

Primary goods and capabilities as informational basis for judging what the promotion of justice in the area of human development policy making are not incompatible indexes of justice, but they are complementary. Primary goods as resources largely understood are needed for building real opportunities for people in society to expand their capabilities. The promotion of justice should take a prioritarian approach by putting greater emphasis on improving substantially the conditions of the least advantaged. The advance of justice under this strategy should aim to some target which is improving people's lives until they overcome severe poverty and other forms of deprivation. Ultimately, this approach to inclusive development, if taken seriously, can help to address some concerns of justice, particularly in improving the lives of many people in developing countries.

**End note:**

Some among the ideas developed in the thesis on primary goods and capabilities were introduced in my Mphil thesis on “Social Justice and capability building: The normative ground of social criticism”. This is thesis submitted as a partial requirement for a Research Master degree in Philosophy at Tilburg University, Netherlands in 2013.

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