



*Citation for published version:*

Deneulin, S 2011, 'Development and the limits of Amartya Sen's *The Idea of Justice*', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 787-797. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2011.567008>

*DOI:*

[10.1080/01436597.2011.567008](https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2011.567008)

*Publication date:*

2011

*Document Version*

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication](#)

This is a preprint of an article whose final and definitive form has been published in 'Third World Quarterly', 2011 [copyright Taylor & Francis]; Third World Quarterly is available online at: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713448481>

**University of Bath**

**Alternative formats**

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact:  
[openaccess@bath.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@bath.ac.uk)

**General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

**Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

# Development and the limits of Amartya Sen's *The Idea of Justice*

Séverine Deneulin<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

This review article critically analyses the contribution of Amartya Sen's *The Idea of Justice* for development studies. On the basis examples of unjust situations derived from Sen's writings, the article discusses the limited reach of *The Idea of Justice* for addressing concrete cases of injustice. It contends that remedying injustice requires an understanding of how justice is structural and which recognises that discussion of justice is inseparable from reasoning about the nature of the good society. The article concludes by pointing out *The Idea of Justice*'s ambiguous relationship with liberalism.

**Keywords:** Justice, freedom, reasoning, structural injustice, liberalism, Amartya Sen

## Introduction

In the 1960s, a group of Latin American social scientists named the development model adopted by Latin American countries unjust. Justice required that Latin American economies broke their dependence ties to Western economies. However, with the collapse of import-substitution policies in the early 1980s after the turmoil of the oil and debt crisis, the intellectual revolution of dependency theory within development studies was short-lived, and 'justice' disappeared from the development vocabulary to make room for the 'pro-poor growth', 'participation', 'community-driven development', 'empowerment', 'social capital' and all the many other buzzwords that have inhabited development discourses since then.

In the 1990s, justice became again a major concern for development studies, but the language of justice shifted away from the structural analysis of dependency theory to a focus on individual rights and freedoms. Justice is no longer the product of just structural relations between economies but the product of just outcomes between individuals. While not linked with human rights as such, the Millennium Development Goals and their targets of achieving

gender equality in education, reducing child and maternal mortality, exemplify a partial and imperfect attempt to bring concerns for justice for individuals to the heart of development processes.

Amartya Sen's *Idea of Justice* situates itself within that liberal tradition of integrating justice and development. At first glance, *The Idea of Justice* does not appear to add any new insight to what is already in the Amartya Sen corpus. Like the central argument of *Development as Freedom*, it holds that the development process should be about providing opportunities for people to live the kind of lives they have reason to value. It is about expanding valuable freedoms, such as freedoms to read and write, to be healthy, to live in peaceful and secure environments, to participate in the life of the community, to appear in public without shame, etc. At a second glance however, *The Idea of Justice* goes much further than *Development as Freedom*. It presents the expansion of valuable freedoms as a matter of justice. That 4,000 children die each day in the world as a result of diarrhoea, while the means to easily prevent it through oral re-hydration therapy exist, is unjust. That child malnutrition persists in India despite a decade of high levels of economic growth is unjust. These situations of injustice require urgent remedial action.

In this sense, Sen's *Idea of Justice* constitutes a significant intellectual revolution for development studies. In policy discourses dominated by a language which uses development as synonymous to poverty reduction, *The Idea of Justice* advances the bold argument that development should be synonymous to making the world less unjust, for poverty reduction and reduction of injustices do not necessarily go together. *The Idea of Justice* might therefore change development studies drastically, taking it away from its concern for poverty reduction towards justice. But how far does *The Idea of Justice* pass the test of doing what it set out to do: to diagnose concrete cases of injustice and offer insights to make the world less unjust?

This review article starts by examining how *The Idea of Justice* links development with justice through two core ideas: freedom and reasoning. It then tests how these two ideas can help us analyze concrete unjust situations. By doing so, the article underlines some of the limits of a freedom and reasoning-based idea of justice. It concludes that, for Sen's idea of justice to be translated into remedial action, it needs to be structural and not individual, and be based more explicitly on reasoning about the good life and the good society.

### **Justice: Freedom and reasoning**

The thrust of the argument of *The Idea of Justice* is that the question 'What is a just society?', is not a good starting point for thinking about justice. What is needed is a comparative, not transcendental, approach to justice, which Rawls's *Theory of Justice* is. One does not need to know what a perfectly just society is, and what constitutes just institutional arrangements, e.g. whether collective ownership of capital by the workers is more just or unjust than a handful of shareholders owning a company, in order to identify injustices and seek remedial action. A comparative framework, which enables people to evaluate states of affairs and judge whether one is better or worse than another, is sufficient, according to *The Idea of Justice*, to address injustice.

Sen has long made the case for 'capabilities', or freedoms, as a more appropriate space for assessing wellbeing than the utility space, and as a more appropriate informational basis for justice than Rawls's primary goods.<sup>2</sup> One state of affairs is more just if people enjoy more freedoms to live a life they have reason to value, and it suffices to compare various institutional arrangements according to their consequences for people's freedoms.

Despite Sen's critique of Rawls, his capability view of justice remains strongly rooted in liberalism. To Rawls's objection that situating the informational basis of justice in the space of capabilities and not primary goods would lead to a comprehensive view of the good

which goes against a political conception of justice (it would require making a judgement about the nature of the good and judging which freedoms are worthwhile pursuing), Sen reaffirms the liberal foundations of his idea of justice, in the sense that respect for individual freedom is its backbone.<sup>3</sup> He asserts that his ‘capability-based assessment of justice’ rests on ‘the freedoms they actually enjoy to choose between different ways of living that they can have reason to value’,<sup>4</sup> and not in what they achieve. This is why a capability-view of justice does not assume a comprehensive view of the good life: ‘Capability reflects a person’s *freedom* to choose between alternative lives (functioning combinations), and its value need not be derived from one particular “comprehensive doctrine” demanding one specific way of living’.<sup>5</sup> Thus, consistent with the fundamental idea of liberalism, people have different conceptions of what it means to live well and the government may not advance a specific conception of the good. It has to be neutral and provide the conditions for the freedom of every individual to live a life of his or her own choosing.

This freedom-based conception of justice does not only have an opportunity aspect in the capability sense, it has also a process aspect in the agency sense, expressed through public reasoning.<sup>6</sup> The opportunities that people have to live the kinds of lives they have reason to value are not to be provided by a benevolent dictator who knows what is good but by the people themselves, through processes of collective reasoning and decision-making. Public reasoning is the exercise of democracy *par excellence*.

*The Idea of Justice* is replete with references to the importance of reasoning for thinking about justice. To cite a few: ‘Reasoning is central to the understanding of justice’; ‘The role of unrestricted public reasoning is quite central to democratic politics in general and to the pursuit of social justice in particular’; ‘Public reasoning is so critically important for the practice of justice’; ‘Open-minded engagement in public reasoning is quite central to the pursuit of justice’; ‘When we try to determine how justice can be advanced, there is a basic

need for public reasoning, involving arguments coming from different quarters and divergent perspectives'.<sup>7</sup>

*The Idea of Justice* does not sideline the prevalence of disagreement and 'unreason' in public reasoning processes. When people come together to discuss matters of collective concerns and try to reach a decision about these, it is sensible to expect diversity of opinions and considerable opposition to one's views. The suffragettes had to encounter a lot of 'unreason' from men, who had their own 'reasons' to keep women outside the economic, social and political sphere. Nonetheless, by persistent reasoning, Sen argues, men's 'unreason' was finally overcome by reason and the case for women's rights eventually won.

The reality of clashing reasons does not rule out the possibility of people changing their views on the basis of accepting others' reasons. This can be because the reason for holding certain views are often based on prejudices that do not withstand critical scrutiny: 'Actual disagreements that exist may be removed through reasoning, helped by questioning established prejudices, vested interests and unexamined preconceptions'.<sup>8</sup> Thus, according to *The Idea of Justice*, through reason, 'good' reasoning can overcome 'bad' reasoning:

The pervasiveness of unreason presents good grounds for scepticism about the practical effectiveness of reasoned discussion of confused social subjects. [...] This particular scepticism of the reach of reasoning does not yield any ground for not using reason to the extent one can, in pursuing the idea of justice [...] Unreason is mostly not the practice of doing without reasoning altogether, but of relying on a very primitive and very defective reasoning. There is hope in this since bad reasoning can be confronted by better reasoning.<sup>9</sup>

Justice does not always require involve complete agreement on an issue, as Sen insists repeatedly: 'An engagement with contrary arguments does not, however, imply that we must expect to be able to settle the conflicting reasons in all cases and arrive at agreed positions on every issue'; 'If the importance of public reasoning has been one of the major concerns of this book, so has been the need to accept the plurality of reasons that may be sensibly

accommodated in an exercise of evaluation’; ‘Judgements about justice have to take on board the task of accommodating different kinds of reasons and evaluative concerns’.<sup>10</sup> In many cases, Sen argues, it is sufficient to stop at a partial ranking without having to look for complete agreement over all rankings. Thus reasoned partial agreement that one state of affairs is more just than another is all what is needed to start making the world less unjust. We do not need knowledge of what a just state of affairs is or what just institutions are.

With its rejection of a transcendental approach to justice, *The Idea of Justice* has been heralded as a theory of justice ‘for an imperfect world’.<sup>11</sup> But despite its dual ambition of putting political philosophy in touch with the reality of people’s lives and bringing concerns for justice to the heart of development thinking, *The Idea of Justice* does not do much to show that it has the reach to enable remedying injustice ‘in the real world’, beyond generic references to famines, gender injustice or malnutrition. The next section examines how Sen’s freedom and reasoning-based idea of justice offers insights to make unjust situations more just.

### **The empirical reality test of *The Idea of Justice***

*The Idea of Justice* gives very few concrete examples of how its theory translates into practice. The hypothetical situation of three children quarrelling over the use of a flute is the closest the book comes to when discussing the details of a real life dilemma of justice. The issue is about the allocation of a flute to one of three children who have distinctive attributes: one who plays the flute, one who made it, and one who has no toy. How to allocate the flute justly? *The Idea of Justice* does not say whom should be given the flute or what a just allocation would be. It concludes instead that there are competing moral frameworks and that there are disagreements about what constitutes a just distribution of resources. It is the nature

of justice to engage in collective reasoning processes and to seek partial agreements on ranking of social arrangements.

In collaborative work with Jean Drèze, Sen is more detailed about the political economy of how a capability-view of justice can help reduce malnutrition and advance the cause of justice. In their analysis of the state of democracy and development in India, they describe the food policy of the Indian government of supporting a minimum price for food producers, which has led to grain stocks being left to rot because the government had to buy surplus food to maintain prices.<sup>12</sup> Assessing the situation from a capability perspective, they give evidence that this food policy takes place in a context of widespread malnutrition, with a large proportion of children being born below average weight and women suffering from anaemia. The cause for such policy lies in the disproportionate power of large-scale farmers over subsistence farmers and rural labourers, the former being better organised politically. Justice requires the political empowerment of the latter group so that they can participate in the public reasoning process and overcome the unreason of the large-scale farmers.

To sum up how *The Idea of Justice* works in practice: first, justice demands an evaluation of the state of affairs in the capability space – in the above, the evaluation makes the judgement that a situation where more people are adequately nourished is more just; second, justice demands inclusive reasoning processes which allow all parties to be heard and to reach a collective decision about what should be done to enable more people to enjoy more valuable freedoms – in the above, justice is addressed by making a convincing argument that it is absurd to have large food stocks in a context of widespread child malnutrition. Drèze and Sen highlight especially the role of intellectuals in speaking on behalf of the marginalised, advancing their cause through analysis, and the role of the political empowerment of the marginalised through political organizations so they can counteract the ‘bad’ reasoning of the most powerful who make policy decisions that harm them.



In contrast to its political economy works with Jean Drèze, *The Idea of Justice* is economical with actual details on how its argument works in practice. One of the major injustices in the world today, climate change, receives little detailed attention. The argument presented is for sustainable development to be conceived in terms of freedoms and not needs, and for the close connection between capability expansion and environmental protection – greater female education leads to lower fertility rate, greater education leads to greater environmental awareness. Consistent with itself, *The Idea of Justice* emphasises the importance of reasoning about values for ensuring sustainability:

Consider another subject, [...] the neglect and deterioration of the natural environment. It is, as is increasingly clear, a hugely serious problem and one that is closely linked with the negative effects of human behaviour, but the problem does not arise from any desire of people today to hurt those yet to be born, or even to be deliberately callous about the future generations' interests. And yet, through lack of reasoned engagement and action, we do still fail to take adequate care of the environment around us and the sustainability of the requirements of good life. To prevent catastrophes caused by human negligence or callous obduracy, we need critical scrutiny, not just goodwill towards others.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, according to Sen, more in-depth collective reasoning is the best route to secure greater inter- and intra-generational justice. In that context, the Copenhagen Summit in December 2009 illustrates how *The Idea of Justice* works in practice. Governments, international organizations, non-governmental and civil society organizations reasoned together about how to judge different states of affairs, often using competing moral frameworks in a way that is reminiscent of Sen's flute example – utilitarianism, social contract theory, virtue ethics, anthropocentrism, ecofeminism, etc. Despite these fundamental disagreements about a 'just' resource allocation in the context of climate change, there is partial agreement about the ranking that a world with less carbon emissions is better than the current one, even if there is no binding agreement on how much exactly carbon emissions should be reduced. However, even if the Copenhagen agreement was based on reasoning and

reached a partial agreement, the comparative judgement reached does not provide the conditions for future generations (or indeed this generation) to live well or, to paraphrase Sen, to live a life they have reason to value. The next section goes on to examine some limits of *The Idea of Justice* which become apparent when it is confronted with the nitty-gritty details of injustice.

### **The limits of *The Idea of Justice***

*The Idea of Justice* contends that individuals are the concerns of justice because reasoning is only carried out by individuals and not by groups:

There is indeed no particular analytical reason why group capabilities must be excluded a priori from the discourse on justice and injustice. The case for not going that way lies in the nature of the reasoning that would be involved. [...] Ultimately, it is individual evaluation on which we would have to draw, while recognizing the profound interdependence of the valuation of individuals who interact with each other. [...] In valuing a person's ability to take part in the life of society, there is an implicit valuation of the life of the society itself, and that is an important enough aspect of the capability perspective.<sup>14</sup>

Humans may be the only living beings capable of reason but is their capacity for reasoning a property of only individuals? Is an unjust situation usually the result of bad reasoning between individuals? Let us consider the case of two individuals, a Maasai pastoralist whose livelihood is increasingly endangered by the reality of climate change, and a financial trader in Wall Street. Both seek to live lives they value, the Maasai pastoralist a life of livestock grazing in the community in which he was born, and the trader a life of high stimulation in a big city. The injustice between these two individuals is that climate change, with its changes of rain patterns, increasingly prevents the Maasai pastoralist from living the life he has reason to choose and value. However, injustice in this case is not a matter of different individual attributes – one person enjoying fewer individual freedoms than another. The trader, through his profession, contributes to the existence of an economic system which prioritises profits

over environmental protection and encourages reckless risk-taking and wasteful consumption. Joined by multiple other similar actions and decisions, the behaviour of the trader creates a *structure* which is self-reinforcing and which destroys the environment that supports the life the Maasai pastoralist values.<sup>15</sup>

The political philosopher Hannah Arendt identified three fundamental kinds of structure:<sup>16</sup> those belonging to the cultural sphere which enable a human being to become a human person, with a specific language, set of behavioural norms and practices; those belonging to the economic sphere which enable people's needs to be met, through production, distribution and consumption; and those belonging to the political sphere which enable humans to act and shape their destiny through their own free action.

What *The Idea of Justice* fails to recognise is that injustice is more than a comparative reasoning exercise between individuals; it is quintessentially structural at two levels. First, structures are the very support of individual reasoning. When people reason about what they should value or should do, they must rely on a collective framework of meanings that give their actions and decisions significance; they must rely on structures which belong to the cultural sphere in order to make these choices. The person who chooses to be a financial trader does so because this is what makes sense and seems worthwhile to him given the collective framework of meanings on which he draws and which is supported by the relationships he engages with. Similarly the Maasai pastoralist relies on his own collective framework of meanings when he decides that a semi-nomadic life of livestock grazing with strong community bonds is more meaningful than farming with cattle enclosures in a way that prioritises economic returns over community bonding. This does not subtract from the importance of individual choices. The trader could decide to resign and become a teacher because on account of another collective framework of meaning he finds that activity more meaningful. The Maasai pastoralist could become an agricultural entrepreneur, breaking the

bonds with his community because he finds that activity more meaningful than semi-nomadic communal lifestyle.

The second level in which justice is structural is that the cause of injustice lies not as much in individual actions as in the structures in which these actions take place. Taking up the above example of hunger amidst plenty in India, the unjust situation of high levels of malnutrition together with surplus food supply is the result of a failure of the democratic structure, of subsistence farmers not having equal voice to that of large-scale farmers who are more organised to have their own interests represented when policy decisions are made, such as deciding a minimum food price for producers.

By emphasising the importance of public reasoning for reducing injustice, *The Idea of Justice* implicitly situates the subject of justice in the quality of the democratic structure. However, it views democracy as instrumental to individual wellbeing and not a good as such in itself, which can be perverted and become 'bad', as was the case of the democratic political structure of Germany in the 1930s. This omission has far-reaching consequences, for it ignores the reality that structures can be perverted in such way that individuals who act within that unjust structure may even have a sense of acting justly.<sup>17</sup>

Central to Arendt's political thought is recognition that each of the kinds of structures she identified, cultural, economic and political, can be corrupted. Nazism, slavery, apartheid regime in South Africa, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories are all cases where the structures of life in common have become perverted to such a high degree that the conditions for human living for a large group of people have become severely undermined. The unjust situation of a group being denied access to resources (e.g. untouchables in India being denied access to a well) is a clear manifestation of structural injustice, of the perversion of the cultural and political structures which are not oriented to providing the conditions for human flourishing. Injustice is not about an individual having more or less of a good than another

person (whether resources, freedoms or rights), but about structures being corrupted and deviated from the good they serve. Injustice is structural.

The tragedy of structural injustice is that it may generate a sense of powerlessness, with a risk of alienation.<sup>18</sup> Even if people disapprove of an unjust structure, there is nothing each individual alone can do about it. They have to submit to the logic of a structure they disapprove of but from which they cannot escape. Structural injustice may therefore also generate a sense of alienation. People might become blind to the injustice (e.g. it was very difficult for people within the slavery system to see slavery as unjust). This is why structural injustice can only be overcome through collective action, while, in the short run, there may seem to be no other possibility than maintaining structural injustice.

It is therefore not a coincidence that in his writings, Sen emphasises the importance of collective action to overcome injustice but it is odd that, at the anthropological level, *The Idea of Justice* continues to treat structures insofar as they promote justice for individuals, i.e. the expansion of individual freedoms, and not as themselves manifestation of injustice: ‘We have to seek institutions that *promote* justice, rather than treating the institutions as themselves manifestations of injustice’.<sup>19</sup> Limiting the idea of justice to comparative judgements about individual lives does not give due attention to the structural nature of human life. To be effective, the idea of justice must include a judgement of the nature of structures, whether they are ‘just’ or ‘good’, whether they provide the conditions for people to live flourishing human lives. The question of ‘just institutions’ so central to Rawls’s *Theory of Justice* is thus not redundant, as Sen contends. The difference with Rawls in this case is that the justice of these institutions does not lie in their respect of principles but in their orientation to the human good.

Despite its liberal aspirations, a reasoning approach to justice cannot do away with addressing explicitly questions of the good life and the extent to which structures are

consistent with the aim of the good life. The ability of each person to live a life s/he has reason to value is constituted by structures which may, or may not, be conducive to the good. This is why an idea of justice for the 'real world' *has to* incorporate an analysis of the just or unjust nature of economic, cultural and political structures, whether they constitute the structuring conditions of a good life in common or whether they are perverted from that aim.

*The Idea of Justice* emphasises the importance of 'reason overcoming unreason' but it falls short of acknowledging that the activity of reasoning is done for the sake of an end, namely the good that we seek to pursue. Public reasoning is about reflecting on the nature of the good life and the kind of society one wants to create and live in. When the suffragettes confronted the 'bad' reasoning of men and argued that women had the same rights as men, their reasoning was about the nature of the 'good' society, whether the cultural, economic and political structures of the time were consistent with the good life in common for all, including women, or whether they were perverted from that aim.

*The Idea of Justice* requires explicit acknowledgment of the nature of the aim that reasoning pursues. Justice does not consist of freedom and reasoning alone, but of 'reasoning together about the good life'.<sup>20</sup> Questions about justice cannot be separated from questions about the good society and the nature of the kind of lives that people live. Confronting *The Idea of Justice* with concrete situations of lack of freedoms leads to the conclusion, following Sandel, that 'it may not be possible to say what's just without arguing about the nature of the good life', for '[t]hinking about justice seems inescapably to engage us in thinking about the best way to live'.<sup>21</sup> Even if unanimous agreement cannot be reached, as Sen rightly pointed out, judgments about the good cannot be escaped, for they are central to justice. The idea of justice is about the idea of the good society. But this good society requires 'good' people who act in such a way as to create a good society, and it requires 'good' structures for people to be 'good'. If people live in a context of structural racism, their actions are not likely to be

inclusive of other races. If people live in an environmentally destructive economic system, their actions are not likely to be environmentally friendly.

## **Conclusion**

*The Idea of Justice* is a skilful mastery of embracing different, often opposing, positions into a seemingly consistent body of thought that pulls together major alternative ethical approaches. It embraces the liberal political thought tradition with its focus on individual freedom and its non-commitment to a conception of the good. It embraces consequentialism (a key feature of utilitarianism), with its comparative approach to justice and its assessment of states of affairs in terms of their consequences for people's wellbeing. It also embraces implicitly virtue ethics as the application of *The Idea of Justice* unavoidably leads to questions about the good life and the good society.<sup>22</sup>

This generous philosophical embrace is one of *The Idea of Justice*'s greatest strengths. It can criticise the Rawlsian position while remaining firmly rooted in liberalism. It can criticise utilitarianism while remaining allied to its consequentialism. It can criticise neo-classical economics while appealing to its claimed founder Adam Smith (especially in relation to Smith's impartial spectator which it proposes as an alternative to Rawls's original position). Responding to socialist critics, it can appeal to its Marxist roots and Marx's idea of human flourishing, while being careful not to engage in a critique of a capitalist mode of production. To the Aristotelian virtue ethicists, Sen affirms he is greatly indebted to Aristotle in his central concept of 'capability' while remaining careful not to advocate the 'good society' as the aim of public reasoning.

I have tried to show in this review article that such generous embrace becomes problematic when *The Idea of Justice* is to give insights for development studies in its task of seeking to remedy situations where people are denied the basic conditions to live well.

Assessing states of affairs in terms of individual freedoms and expecting that reasoning will lead to a better state is not enough. What is required is an analysis of the justice of the economic, social and political structures constitutive of a human life lived in common with fellow human beings and the environment. These structures are to be ‘good’, enabling people to live ‘good’ lives. Freedom and reasoning are certainly excellent starting points for thinking about justice but the journey needs to continue. The reality of environmental degradation and human suffering calls *The Idea of Justice* towards a more structural and comprehensive destination, which indeed would sit at odds with the liberalism of (Anglo-Saxon) Western political thought that currently dominates development thinking. Liberalism and the cause of reducing injustice in the real world might not be as reconcilable as *The Idea of Justice* would hope they would. Something will have to go.

---

<sup>1</sup> A longer version of this article can be read online in the Bath Papers in International Development series (BPD 13, February 2011) available at [www.bath.ac.uk/cds](http://www.bath.ac.uk/cds). I am grateful to Augusto Zampini for discussions on the topic, and Nick Townsend, Dana Bates, Graham Brown and Gustavo Pereira for critical comments on an earlier draft.

<sup>2</sup> See, among others, A Sen, ‘Equality of What?’, in S. McMurrin (ed), *Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980; ‘Well-Being Agency and Freedom’, *Journal of Philosophy* 82(4), 1985, pp 169–221; *Inequality Re-examined*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992; ‘Capability and Well-Being’, in M Nussbaum and A Sen (eds), *The Quality of Life*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> The exchange between Rawls and Sen is best summarized in A Sen, ‘Justice: Means versus Freedoms’, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 19(2), 1990, pp 111-121.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 118.

<sup>6</sup> A Sen, *Rationality and Freedom*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002, p 10.

<sup>7</sup> By order of quoting: A Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, London: Allen Lane, p xviii, p 44, p 328, p 390, p 392.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p 396.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p xvii-xviii.

<sup>10</sup> By order of quoting: *Ibid*, p 392, p 394, p 395.



- 
- <sup>11</sup> S Osmani, 'Theory of Justice for an Imperfect World', *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 11(4), 2010, pp 629-40.
- <sup>12</sup> J Drèze and A Sen, *India: Development and Participation*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp 336-40.
- <sup>13</sup> A Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, London: Allen Lane, p 48.
- <sup>14</sup> A Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, London: Allen Lane, p 246.
- <sup>15</sup> A structure is understood as something which emerges from interpersonal relations but which, over time, becomes irreducible to these relations and yet remains bound up with these. See my argument based on Charles Taylor and Paul Ricoeur's works: 'Beyond Individual Freedom and Agency: Structures of Living Together in Sen's Capability Approach to Development', in S. Alkire, F. Comim and M. Qizilbash (eds.), *The Capability Approach: Concepts, Measures and Application*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 105-124.
- <sup>16</sup> H Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- <sup>17</sup> H Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, London: Penguin, 1963.
- <sup>18</sup> S Deneulin, M Nebel and N Sagovsky (eds), *Transforming Unjust Structures*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2006.
- <sup>19</sup> A Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, London: Allen Lane, p 82.
- <sup>20</sup> M Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?*, London: Allen Lane, 2009, p 261.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p 207 and 10 respectively.
- <sup>22</sup> See my book review 'Michal Sandel's *Justice* and Amartya Sen's *Idea of Justice*', *Oxford Development Studies*, 38(3), 2010, pp. 383-8.