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Conceptual paper

The capabilities approach and values of sustainability: Towards an inclusive Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Different models of development have a different impact on sustainability. In this paper, we contrast the development model as growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), dominant in economic theories, with the model of human development or capabilities. The objective is to show the development of capabilities as a theoretical-practical perspective to guide education towards sustainability, a goal assigned by UNESCO. The method used is hermeneutic. The conclusions are: the capabilities approach defends the values required for sustainability and this approach convincingly argues for the political principles and good practices that should govern education.

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Perspective and aims of the article

In a global context in which uncertainty makes itself felt, questions resurface that go to the root of things; questions such as: to what end and how must citizens be education? Our times asks us questions about education that need to be rethought from a philosophical perspective.

Practical philosophies (García, Gozálvez, Vázquez, & Escámez, 2011) follow a tradition in Western philosophy that began with Aristotle until today. For Aristotle, practical wisdom (legal, ethical, political and educational) have a common aim: not consideration or detailed knowledge of the rules, but rather to be conscious of them to apply them well. Specifically, in *Política* (book V, ch. I), he states that knowledge about education – pedagogic rationality – has the priority function of clarifying both the purposes of education and how to address them in practice.

In more recent times, this approach has been followed by philosophers of education such as Dewey who, in his work *Democracy and Education. An introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1916) argues that the cultivation of philosophy leads ineluctably to talking of the philosophy of education, since philosophical reflection has a pragmatic and educational undercurrent for solving social problems as they are experience at a specific historical moment. From Dewey's perspective, philosophy that neglects education is, simply, bad philosophy, since it conceives that philosophy is the theory of education as a deliberately directed practice (Dewey, 1916).

In Nussbaum's scientific production, education is constantly present, and some of his works are specifically dedicated it, such as: *Cultivating Humanity. A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (1997) and *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (2010). In this last work, she addressed a key problem in current centres of higher education: to educate for profit or to educate for democracy? As Ruth O'Brien states in the Preface to the mentioned book, inspired by the Indian thinker Tagore and also in Dewey, among others, Nussbaum creates a model of education for human development, which is presented as an indispensable element for democracy and for the cultivation of a civic global guidance. The reason behind the general aim of our article is to show that the model of development, proposed in its capabilities approach, arises from a humanist view of education that does marginalise or exclude any person, but which acts as a guide to address the transformation of the serves as a guide to dealing with the transformation of the global learning landscape, one in which the role of teachers and other educators continues as central to facilitating learning for the sustainable development of all (UNESCO, 2015).

To achieve the mentioned aims, over the course of the article, we set ourselves the following aims: first, to present two models of

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development: Economic Growth per Capita (GDP) and the capabilities approach, discussing their consequences for the quality of life of each person, of the various countries and for the sustainability of the plant; second, to analyse the influences from which Nussbaum incessantly constructs and reconstructs her capabilities approach; third, to interpret the philosophical-political keys of her thought about capabilities, especially her original contribution of the ten basic capabilities that must be cultivated in everybody; and fourth, to analyse the main values of the capabilities approach and to show that those values correspond to the values for which we must educate to address the sustainability of the planet, as the purpose to which learning must be dedicated in the 21st century.

Two models of development: the Economic Growth per Capita and the capabilities approach

Modern societies have articulated four core ideas that have progressively expanded and deepened to the point that, without paying the attention to them, the important situations and events that happened are not understood. These core ides: the economy; public opinion, the political sovereignty of citizens or democracy and direct access of individuals to national and international institutions and to other people (Taylor, 2007).

In the 18th century, Smith (2009) indicated the most prominent of those core ideas when he argued that individual prosperity affects the general welfare. In other words, human beings are immersed in an exchange of services. We call the fundamental model of that exchange *economy*. Such a conception was evident in Locke's formulation (1966) of his theory of *natural law*, in which the economy acquires primordial importance when it establishes security and prosperity as the two main aims of a well-organised society. Trades are animated by the motive of personal profit, but the good policies of governors can lead that (selfish and short-sighted) situation to the common welfare to secure life and the means of life of all the individuals in the society.

In Locke's theory of *natural law*, it is the basis of what is now called the ethics of everyday life and business ethics (Cortina, 2013), which have had a strong formative effect on current civilization and about the central place it has given to economics in our lives and in the structure of social relationships. Taylor (2007) sees the economy as a system an achievement of the theory of the 18th century with the physiocrats and Adam Smith; but to consider the purpose and the most important agenda of the society as a collaboration and an economic exchange is a tendency of our social imagination that begins in that period and continues until today.

The importance that the economy has acquired is showed in social conviction, which is generally shared, that the progress of national must be measured in terms of growth of the Gross Domestic Product. For years, most specialists in development economics worldwide use that index of national advance as a representative standard of the quality of life in a country. According to that model, the goal of any nation must be economic growth and the greatest efforts of national policies must be dedicated to it. In the same way, it must be the purpose of international relations to facilitate *Free Trade Treaties* in the belief that economic growth will result in the improvement of health, of education, to the reduction in social inequalities within a country and among countries, in the vigour of the democratic life of citizens.

Two fundamental consequences are derived from the model set out: (1) the need for an educational system that promotes national and international development conceived as economic growth; (2) the consideration of economic growth as an end in itself, undervaluing the perverse effects that it generates for the sustainability of the Planet. With respect to the first of them, it is happening in various regions of the world, as is the case of Europe, where political leaders are reformulating the educational system, in part of Secondary education and in all of University education, investigating the contribution that each of the university qualifications, disciplines and researchers makes to the economy. A good example of that is the normalisation of higher education in the European Union, imposed by the Bologna Process and, above all, the demand to demonstrate the *impact* of research projects on the economic aims of the member countries or of the Union itself, if one wants to access the financial resources budgeted for by the Commission and approved by the Parliament.

Regarding the second consequence, economic growth and the creation of wealth have reduced global poverty rates, but vulnerability, inequality, exclusion and violence have increased within and across societies throughout the world. Unsustainable patterns of economic production and consumption contribute to global warming, environmental degradation and an upsurge in natural disasters (UNESCO, 2015). The defenders of the model neglect that only economic growth does not generate societies with more democracy, or healthier, or better educated in which people of all social classes have more opportunities to have an acceptable quality of life and in which each person lives according to worthwhile values.

In contrast to the previous development model, since the 1980s, a new approach has emerged on development that considers economic growth as an element of sensible public policy, but that is no more than a part and an instrument of it. In the final analysis, it is people who matter; profits contribute only instrumental means for human lives. The purpose of global development, like the purpose of a good policy at the national level, consists of making it possible for people to have full and creative lives, develop their potential and an existence in accordance with the equal human dignity of all individuals. In other words, the real purpose of development is the growth of human capabilities.

This capabilities approach is committed to the equal dignity of all humans; it is sensitive to the distribution of resources and it is particularly focused on the struggles and efforts to achieve them by traditionally excluded and marginalised groups; and they pay attention to the complexity and the qualitative diversity of the goals that people pursue. It also takes into account that people may need different quantities of resources to achieve the same level of capacity to choose and act, above all if they station from different social positions. The approach is presented as another defender of basic social justice within nations and among them. It is not conceived as a totally developed model, and less as a comprehensive system for the functioning of society, but rather as a theoretical and practical contribution that is subjected to rational, national and international debate, to give arguments and receive criticisms and, if it resists the test of argumentative debate against other theories or focuses, it invites to be put into practice.

The capabilities approach argues against the consideration of the growth of the Gross Domestic Product as the unique indicator of the quality of life of countries and individuals: also of their consideration as a goal to which national and international policies must be subordinated. On the contrary, it argues that just societies are those which pursue the good of its population in a broad variety of goals that include, as well as basic economic welfare, health, education, political rights and freedoms, environmental quality and other basic human capabilities for all people, understanding that each of them is an end in himself/herself and that none of them constitutes a simple means for the aims or purposes of the others, not even for the aggregate (or average) aggregate of the population in general.

Philosophical influences on Nussbaum

Nussbaum's capabilities approach is a constant reassessment of the answer to the question: *Of what does the prosperity of a nation*

or region of the work and the quality of life of its inhabitants consist? (Nussbaum, 1993). Adequately to answer the question we need to know not only the money they have or which they lack, but also how they are capable of leading their lives, we need to know about their health, their education, their work. It is necessary to know that legal and political privileges they enjoy, what freedoms they have to conduct their personal and social relationships, how family and gender relations are structured. Moreover, it is necessary to know the way in which the society allows people to imagine, to wonder, to feel emotions such as love and gratitude, which assume that life is more than a set of commercial relationships.

Nussbaum has invested formidable effort on field research, various publications and activities to comprehend and explain what *people can be and do*, building an argumentative edifice in dialogue, which is passionate and critical, with first-order thinkers. The most important sources of Nussbaum's capabilities approach are works from Ancient Greece and Rome, though Smith, Kant, Mill and Marx have also perceptibly influenced her formulations. The work of John Rawls has been of great importance for her thesis; above all, in relation to his conception of political liberalism (Nussbaum, 2011).

Among the Greek and Roman classics, her favourites are Socrates, Aristotle and the Stoics. From Socrates she receives (Nussbaum, 1997): (a) an interest in investigating the rationality of traditions to subject them to a critical assessment and to form one's own thought; (b) the consideration of human beings as capable to follow arguments instead of irrational traditions based on authority; (c) the conception of education as a process that considers the student as an individual in full development of his/her faculties of from which an active and creative contribution to the debates that arise; and (d) the primacy of education for the citizenship centred on critical thought, the capacity of argue and the active participation of learners as valuable members for democracy. Such a view of education propelled her to a passionate defence of the presence of the humanities in university education (Nussbaum, 1997, 2010).

From the works of Aristotle, Nussbaum (1993) outlines a view of the person, of his/her needs and possibilities according to the historical and cultural circumstances in which he/she lives: (a) we are born with bodies whose basic capabilities and vulnerabilities are present in all societies and cultures; (b) the *vulnerability* of humans, which is especially manifest in the fact of death, obliges governors to address practical matters (from the purity of waters to education for young people) to mitigate it. Aristotle was aware that some cities compensated better for human weakness than other; depending on whether the governors' political planning was good or bad, and such a conception influences Nussbaum.

The author considers the post-Aristotelian school of Stoicism as the most influential of all time in the tradition of Western thought; specifically, the consideration of the equal dignity of each person, due to which he/she deserves respect and reverence. Equality of respect for humanity in general is one of the fundamental elements of so-called *natural law*, which should guide us in all circumstances and greatly influence the modern founders of international law. The idea of human dignity and of its unlimited and equal value for all people is the main contribution of Stoicism to the capabilities approach (Nussbaum, 2011). Equal dignity may be realised in different ways, but it sustains the attachment to liberal democracy with universal suffrage; the renunciation of sexism and racism; respect for the autonomy of individuals against the pressures of the State or of the majorities to impose on them their conception of what is good; the notion of human rights that is at the heart of political liberal and education in the values of global citizenship (Nussbaum, 1996).

The idea about *natural law* in the 17th and 18th centuries married the Stoic conceptions about the equal value of all human beings and Aristotelian concept of human vulnerability. The fascination with equal human dignity influenced the republican thinkers of the 18th century on both sides of the Atlantic: the task of governments went from being understood as the protection of certain essential human faculties so that they could be developed and realised (Nussbaum, 2011). One of the authors in whom that influence is manifested is Adam Smith when, in the last part of *The Wealth of Nations*, he broadly described a specific plan for compulsory education. Smith was able to intuit something that forms an essential part of the capabilities approach, namely that human faculties reach the world in an incipient or under-evolved state and require the support of the environment – including support for physical health and, especially in this case, mental development – so that they mature in a way that is worthy of human dignity (Nussbaum, 2011).

The author, in *The Frontiers of Justice* (2006), considers that a decent society corresponds with one or another form of political liberalism and that, as such, the political principles that govern it must not be based on a specific comprehensive doctrine, whether religious or secular, about the meaning and purpose of life. As a consequence, equality of respect for all people, based on equal dignity, prevents governmental imposition or sponsorship of a religious or ethical view above the rest that may give rise to the formation of included and excluded, first and second class, groups of citizens. The careful neutrality that a liberal State must maintain in the area of religion and comprehensive doctrines requires that it ask citizens to reach agreements, in a shared political space, about fundamental rights and constitutional ideals. Despite that, the liberal State is not neutral about the basis of its own conception of justice such as the equal value of all citizens, the importance of certain fundamental rights and the rejection of discrimination and exclusion.

Among the 20th century authors that influence Nussbaum, apart from Sen, is Rawls because in his *A Theory of Justice* is the most powerful and convincing of the tradition, largely as a result of the greater moral wealth of its original election situation (and of the moral situations that this situation embodies) (Nussbaum, 2006). Moreover, she appreciates the revisions that he made to this work in *Political Liberalism*, when the expression *a cooperative project aimed at mutual benefit* is replaced by *society as an equitable system over time*, without any mention of mutual benefit.

Before finishing the section, let us refer to the author's argumentative strategy, which consists of contrasting the aspirations defended in the capabilities approach with the proposed legislation and programmes of action of the New Deal in the USA, European social democracies and the aspirations set out in the Indian Constitution, when they address the question: What capabilities or areas of freedom are so basic that a just political order has to guarantee to every person because their suppression makes that the *life lived* does not agree with the human dignity?

Presentation of the capabilities approach

Capabilities approach is the expression that Sen proposes in his political-economic programme and Nussbaum proposes in her philosophical-political programme. We shall only set out our author's view. It may be described as a particular approach to the assessment of quality of life and theorisation about basic social justice referring to each person. The key question is *what is each person capable of doing and being?* The approach is characterised by four points: (a) *centred on liberty*, since it argues that a priority good that societies must promote for their citizens, the set of opportunities (or spheres of freedom) that they may or may not put into practice; (b) *pluralist*, since people's capabilities are different from each other, one cannot be replaced by another and they have a specific nature; (c) *it concerns itself with injustice and with deep-rooted social inequalities*, which are due to the presence of discrimination, marginalisation or exclusion; and (d) *it assigns to the*

State and to public policies the improvement of the quality of life of each individual.

As is known, Nussbaum's concept of capabilities is complex, so that it is convenient to review it, even if it has been addressed by other authors (García Amilburu, 2015; Robeyns, 2005). She distinguishes *innate* capabilities, or structural equipment, by means of which a person, on being born, is distinguished from any other human being, from *internal* capabilities, which are rather features and trained and developed aptitudes, in many case, in interaction with the social, family and political environment (Nussbaum, 2011); these internal capabilities are called the basic capabilities of a person that a just society has to develop through education or other means. In turn, it distinguishes basic capabilities from *combined capabilities* that she describes as the sum of the internal capabilities and the social/political/economic conditions in which their functioning can really be chosen. The distinction between basic (internal) and combined capabilities is not clear, since a person acquires an internal capacity thanks to a certain form of functioning and can lose it if he/she lacks the opportunity to function. The concept of basic capabilities must be treated with caution, since the attitude of peoples and governments towards the basic capabilities is frequently based on the presumption of merit; that happens, for example, when it is thought that a person with a higher intelligence quotient deserves greater educational attention; on the contrary, those who need most help to pass a minimum, or more than sufficient, threshold of basic capabilities are those who have to receive greater educational attention.

Functioning is actively realising one or more capabilities. The functionings are *beings and doings* which, in turn, are the products or materialisations of the capabilities. When differentiating among capabilities and functionings, it is necessary to take into account that capacity means the opportunity to choose, even if no choice is actually made. The example proposed by Sen is illustrative: a person who is hungry and another who fasts have the same type of functioning with respect to their nutrition, but they do not have the same capacity since the person who fasts can not fast, while the person is hungry does not have a choice. To promote capabilities is to promote areas of freedom, which is not the same as making people function in a certain sense. Therefore, the capabilities approach is separate from an entire tradition in economics that measures the real value of a set of options according to the best use of them; on the contrary, the capabilities approach considers the options as freedoms and freedom has an intrinsic value. There is an enormous moral difference between a policy that promotes health and another that promotes capabilities for health; the second (not the first) is that which truly respects the person's lifestyle. The preference for capabilities is linked to the question of respect for a plurality of different religious and secular visions of life, that is, to the idea of political liberalism.

What are the most important capabilities? The question is fundamental, given that, in the end, normative law and public policies will have to take a position regarding the answer to that question by stating that some capabilities are important and others less so. If we assess the question further and we do so about the basic capabilities, which of them are indispensable according to human dignity? Human beings come into the world with sufficient equipment for multiples *doings and beings* and some of them are so valuable that they require to be developed in the form of mature capabilities. If the aim of capabilities approach consists of establishing political principles that serve as the basis for constitutional law and the public policies of a nation that aspires to social justice, the selection of demandable capabilities acquires crucial importance.

Human dignity is a close cousin of basic capabilities: something that is inherent to the person that demands to be developed. Even if there is room to debate whether innate potential differs among people, human dignity is equal in all of them and each capacity deserves equal respect from laws and social institutions. If people are considered as citizens, all of them have equal rights. From that perspective, equality occupies a primary place in the capabilities approach, which is centred on the protection of spheres of liberty so crucial that their suppression cause the life of an individual not to be worthy of human dignity.

Considering the various areas of human life in which individuals move and act, what do they need for their life to be worthy of human dignity? The minimum and essential need is that they pass a more than sufficient threshold of the ten basic capabilities that Nussbaum describes for us in her work *Creating Capabilities* (2011, 53–55): to be able to live; to be able to have health and physical integrity; to be able to exercise the senses, imagination and thought; to be able to feel and express emotions; to be able to form a conception of good and to reflect critically on the planning of life (practical reason); to be able to live with and for others and to have the necessary social basis to have a close and respectful relationship with animals, plants and the natural world (affiliation); to be able to laugh, play and enjoy recreational activities; to be able to control one's own political, material and employment environment.

In summary: (a) the list of basic capabilities is the product of a process of argumentation and debate centred around the notion of human dignity; (b) the components of the list are described generically to allow to deliberate for citizens themselves, their parliaments and their legal systems; (c) the list was introduced explicitly for exclusively political purposes, that is, that may give rise to an interwoven consensus among people who have different comprehensive views of the good or religious life; (d) the true work of government is to lift up all the citizens of a State (and the immigrant population) above the minimum threshold in the ten capabilities; and (e) the list includes the main freedoms that protect political liberalism.

The values of the capabilities approach and education in the values of sustainability

Following the Report *Rethinking education: towards a global common good?* by UNESCO (2015), we take sustainability to be the responsible action of individuals and societies with a view to a better future for all, both locally and globally, that is, the socioeconomic development that meets the imperatives of social justice and environmental management. Sustainability is a conceptual, ethical and political view that transcends respect for the quality of the environment inasmuch as it includes: the disappearance of poverty through its progressive reduction, the equality of the sexes, the promotion of health, rural transformation, human rights, cultural understanding and peace, responsible production and consumption, respect for cultural diversity and access, with equal opportunities to Information and Communication Technologies. Sustainability contains three great interrelated arenas: economic development, social justice and care for the environment. According to the mentioned Report, the values that a sustainable planet are: respect for life and human dignity, equal rights and social justice, cultural and social diversity, solidarity and share responsibility for our common future.

There are several studies that have been carried out about education and capabilities (Bernal, 2014; Guichot-Reina, 2015; Hinchliffe and Terzi, 2009), but we want to explore the values of Nussbaum's capabilities approach with the aim of showing that they agree with the values that are postulated for education about the sustainability of the planet; a matter that has not been sufficiently argued due to the fact that sustainability as an objective of education had not been raised with urgent necessity until the abovementioned UNESCO *Report*. In the same connection, United Nations actions and programmes have been postulated in recent

decades. Global citizen commitment was recently requested in order to give effect to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015) according to the *Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development* (UN, 2015). For the United Nations, they are *universally applicable goals*, since in the next 15 years countries will have to intensify efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms, reduce inequality and fight against climate change, guaranteeing that nobody falls behind.

The fundamental value, of both sustainability and the capabilities approach, is *dignity*. What does dignity mean? Kant, in his work *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (2002), distinguishes between two types of beings: those that have value in themselves and those that are valid for something distinct from themselves. People are valuable in themselves. It cannot be said of them that, when they lose a certain characteristic, they may be discarded because their value is rooted in themselves and, therefore, they cannot lose it. They have an absolute value, not a relative value for another thing for which they may serve. According to this conception, a person has dignity and not a price. He/she deserves respect, in at least double sense: nobody may legitimately do him/her physical or moral damage and, moreover, we may take seriously the aims that are set in life and help him/her to meet them. We find the expression *dignity* as what deserves to be respected and helped. For Kant, a person has dignity because: (a) he/she possesses rationality, especially argumentative rationality; and (b) he/she may lead his/her life according to his/her projects; he centres his conception of dignity in argumentative rationality and in autonomy.

For Nussbaum, the Kantian conception of *dignity*, is insufficient for her capabilities approach. Starting from the Aristotelian view of the human being as a creature that needs a plurality of vital activities, she maintains a unified conception of rationality and animality; rationality is an aspect of the human animal and not the only one that defines his/her functioning as a human. In general terms, the capabilities approach considers that there are many types of animal dignity and all deserve respect. It is true that specifically human dignity is characterised by a certain type of rationality, but the rationality is not contrasted with animality. As well as rationality, sociability is equally fundamental and equally general in the conception of the human. And bodily needs, including the need for assistance, are part of both rationality and sociability; and they are aspects of dignity, not something that must be set against it (Nussbaum, 2006). This entails introducing into the political dimension of the person, from which basic political principles are derived, a recognition that we are temporary and needy; we are born depending and we frequently end our lives with varied forms of dependence that need to be met.

The meaning of the value of dignity is outlined in relation to another two values: *respect and equality*. Respect is a close and important cousin of dignity; if respect is taken to be personal dignity, political institutions must provide the conditions that make their life possible according to that dignity since, as is known, there are conditions that facilitate and others that impede reaching a standard of living adequate for human dignity. True respect for the dignity of each person consists of the interest of understanding his/her capabilities and helping him/her to fulfil his/her life plans.

All the nuances of the values of equality (before the law, of opportunities, of social provision) trace their roots to equal dignity, due to which they deserve the same consideration. Political institutions are required to protect what have been called political rights of participation and expression and, above all, of second-generation human rights or economic, social and cultural rights: to education, to healthcare, to work, to housing, to unemployment, to assistance when vulnerable. . .all those rights that allow each person to life the type of life that is worthwhile.

The equal dignity of all people raises difficult questions such as whether the list of basic capabilities for the mentally deficient has to be different from that of the rest of the citizens. Regarding this matter, in Nussbaum's judgement, the best strategy is to remain steadfast with a single list of basic capabilities for everybody, as a set on non-negotiable social rights, and to work so that people reach the same capacity thresholds, even if the treatments and programmes are bespoke. As a political aim, it is reasonable to insist on the importance of the basic capabilities for all citizens and that achieving them justified the spending that must be done for people with unusual disabilities. Nevertheless, the insistence on a single list is not only for strategic or political but rather fundamentally normative reasons: the respect that we owe to all people with mental deficiencies as citizens with the same rights as everybody else, capable of leading a good life in human terms.

In the works of Sen and Nussbaum, the capabilities approach addresses the actual inequality of women: (a) they suffer inequality in many fields and throughout the world, and that entails an enormous problem in the sphere of justice; and (b) it is also a problem of economic development, since the denial of opportunities to women checks the advance of the productivity of many nations.

The author dedicated an interesting book, *Women and Human Development. The Capabilities Approach* (Nussbaum, 2000), to sketching the inequality of women and the solutions to the dilemmas that it entails. What is notable is that the outrages that millions of women suffer day after day (hunger, domestic violence, sexual abuse, child marriage, inequality before the law, poverty, the non-recognition of their dignity, low self-esteem,. . .) are not seen uniformly by the international community, as something scandalous and contrary to human rights.

Nussbaum maintains that they are not considered ends in themselves, deserving of respect by laws and institutions, but rather as instruments for others' purposes: reproducers, responsible for caregiving, sexual discharge points, agents of the family's prosperity, etc. When poverty is combined with the inequality of rights depending on sex, the result is an acute lack of basic capabilities. In sum, women lack institutional support to lead a fully human life; that lack of support is often due to the mere fact of their being women. Even when they live in a constitutional democracy, in which they enjoy theoretical equal rights, in reality they are second class citizens.

The quality of the environment occupies an important place in the capabilities approach, though the subject has not been addressed exhaustively enough. It is evident that the quality of the natural environment and the health of ecosystems are crucial for human welfare, above all if include commitments to future generations. Regarding the issues of environmental quality and sustainability, the capabilities approach has a series of well-defined advantages over other perspectives that are especially prominent in the current environmental economy (Nussbaum, 2011).

The capabilities approach and their realisation in the ten basic capabilities has always been centred on the question of elucidating the minimum acceptable *social justice* and on determining the legal and political structures for their effective implementation. The ten capabilities are aims to be achieved, which correspond to the prepolitical rights of people and, at the national level, they become a task for the political powers (legislative, judicial and executive) to guarantee them if they want to be even minimally just.

The capabilities approach cultivates the value of *cultural and social diversity*, both from its origins with Sen and in the theoretical formulation made by Nussbaum: (a) the list of basic capabilities is the product of a process of argumentation and normative debate, centred around human dignity; (b) the formulation of the components allows for additional specification and deliberation the citizens of the States, their parliaments and judicial systems according to their customs and culture; (c) we make to this list as a *module* apt to obtain the backing of people that hold very different conceptions of the meaning and of the ultimate purpose of life, be they religious or secular; (d) the emphasis on conceiving capabilities as policies

protects ideological and cultural pluralism; (e) the central elements on the list capabilities (freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of conscience, accessibility and political opportunities) are essential aspects of cultural and religious pluralism.

As regards *solidarity and responsibility*, the capabilities approach plays a role similar to that of human rights: it provides a justification for fundamental rights, a country's constitutional thought and thought on international justice, since it argued based on the equal dignity of all people. The capabilities approach offers a series of ambitious aims for the world (Nussbaum, 2006): (1) responsibility in the national arena may never be avoided, (2) national sovereignty must always be respected within the limits of the promotion of human capabilities; (3) the prosperous national are responsible for giving substantial portion of their GDP to other, poorer nations; (4) large multinational companies have responsibilities when promoting human capabilities in the regions in which they operate; (5) the main structures of the world economic order must be designed such that they are just to poor and developing countries; (6) a low-key soft, decentralised but cogent global public sphere must be cultivated; (7) all institutions and (most) individuals show pay special attention to the problems of the disadvantages in each nation and in all nations; (8) the treatment of the ill, old people, children and the disable must constitute a prominent focus of action for the international community; (9) the family must be treated as a sphere of great value, both private and public; and (10) all institutions and all individuals are responsible for promoting education as key to giving opportunities to people who are currently disadvantaged.

Conclusions

Over the course of this paper, Nussbaum's thought in her main works has been analysed and interpreted and we may conclude, considering the specific aims, that we that we sought that the model of development as growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is not a reliable criterion to measure the quality of life of each individual or the countries. It is insufficient, since it does not consider other fundamental elements such as health, education, equality in social rights, political participation in public affairs and solidarity with the disadvantages, both fellow nationals and immigrants, and with poor or developing countries. It is causing serious imbalances in nature such as global warming, the disappearance of non-renewable resources and natural catastrophes. Moreover, it considers economic growth as an end in itself, ignoring the perverse consequences derived from it such as the instrumentation of people to serve it, social inequalities and the infringement of citizens' fundamental rights.

The capabilities approach considers that each person is an end in himself/herself and the quality of his/her life consists of the answer to the question *what can he/she be and do?* Is it that people what matters in the end and economic growth is the instrumental means for the flourishing of human lives. The purpose of global development, like that of any good national development policy, consists of promoting the growth of the capabilities of each individual.

Nussbaum does not present a liner thought process or hold fixed positions; the problems that concern her, both old and new, are reconsidered from different points of view in light of the political realities that are presented and with her readings of the findings of the social sciences. That is manifested in her occasional divergence from other researchers into the capabilities approach, especially Sen.

Though she explicitly confesses the philosophical influences of her favourite authors, she feels free to show her disagreements with them (as in the case of Rawls) or when she uses the Kantian term *dignity* attributed to Aristotle because she is more comfortable using Aristotelian anthropology to explain the dignity of people with mental disabilities.

Nussbaum's most original contribution has been to argue for the existence of ten areas of election of basic capabilities in people, which must be protected and promoted by the State so that their lives are worthy of human dignity. Using political philosophy, the author's aim consists of establishing the political principles that will be the basis for constitutional law and public policies in nations that aspire decency and social justice; and also for international law among nations.

It may be concluded that the main achievement of this paper that the values from which the capabilities approach is argued agrees with the values that are required for the sustainability of the planet, which is considered to be the purpose of education in the 21st century by UNESCO (2015). Therefore, Nussbaum's capabilities approach may be considered a powerful political philosophy, and with a secular tradition, to argue today for the principles and good practices of education that is needed for the sustainability of the planet. And this is the aim main that we had set ourselves.

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