

## A Note on Capability Comparison and Social Evaluation

**Reiko Gotoh<sup>†</sup>**

May 8, 2008

Graduate School of Core Ethics and Frontier Sciences, Ritsumeikan University

603-8577 56-1 Kitamachi, Tojiin, Kitaku, Kyoto-shi, Kyoto-fu, Japan

Tel: 81-(0)75-465-1111 (3705), Fax:81-(0)75-465-8364

[rgt22008@ce.ritsumei.ac.jp](mailto:rgt22008@ce.ritsumei.ac.jp) [r-gotoh@jcom.home.ne.jp](mailto:r-gotoh@jcom.home.ne.jp)

### Abstract

This paper is concerned with the evaluation of alternative social policies in relation to the compensation which is necessary to achieve basic well-being for various disadvantaged individuals. Yet the brief philosophical inquiry indicates that a complete comparison of capabilities between different disadvantaged groups might be impossible because of the incommensurability of the conceptions of justice which correspond to these various disadvantages. The purpose of this paper is to inquire into a social aggregation procedure which, for any n-tuples of individual capability appraisals and for any profile of several group evaluations, specifies a *social evaluation* over alternative social states, and which satisfies not only reflectivity and transitivity but also normative conditions which embody the social aim “to secure basic capability for all against injustice”. In the result, this paper shows that a social choice procedure that satisfies these conditions can be constructed given several assumptions.

---

<sup>†</sup>This paper is a revised version of a paper prepared for Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI), Dept of International Development, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, June, 2007. I would like to thank the organizers and participants as well as Professor Amartya Sen who opens the splendid vistas expounded in this paper. I am most grateful to Professor Presanta Pattanaik who gave me excellent comments on the entire paper and to Professor James Foster for his significant indications. I also wish to thank Professors Paul Dumouchel, Naoki Yoshihara and Dr. Norihito Sakamoto for their illuminating discussions and advices. Needless to say, all the remaining deficiencies of the present draft are my sole responsibility. For research support I am indebted to the Japanese Science Promotion Society.