

IDEA at North American Society for Social Philosophy

This is a pre-conference workshop of the 33rd International Conference on Social Philosophy held by the North American Society for Social Philosophy, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, July 21-23

<http://www.northamericansocietyforsocialphilosophy.org/category/annual-conference/>.

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

Carleton University, River Building 3228, organized by the International Development Ethics Association

10:00-11:00 Holly Longair (Carleton University)

“The Deliberative Perfectionist Approach to Adaptive Preferences: Is David Crocker’s Deliberative Participation an Appropriate Framework?”

Abstract

In her book *Adaptive Preferences and Women's Empowerment*, Serene Khader argues for a deliberative perfectionist approach to inappropriately adaptive preferences (IAP). In order to ensure a context sensitive and cross-culturally appropriate application, she emphasises the use of deliberation in both attempts to uncover IAPs and attempts to address them. However, what her concept of deliberation entails is given minimal explanation, and relies heavily on David Crocker's concept of deliberative participation. This paper will explore whether or not the use of Crocker's concept is appropriate in the context of Khader's deliberative perfectionist approach. Although it appears to be the best of the options presented by Crocker, further development of the concept in the context of IAPs is needed in order to make Khader's approach effective and appropriate.

11:15-12:15 Susan Murphy (Trinity College Dublin, University of Dublin)

“Challenging Hidden Hegemonies: Exploring the Links between Education, Gender Justice, and Sustainable Development Practice”

Abstract

It is widely accepted that formal education is a critical foundation supporting the pathway to sustainable development. As a central pillar on the international development agenda for many decades, it remains a core goal in the 2030 framework for sustainable development. However, in spite of substantial funding and attention from national and international agencies, delivering this basic good to all has proved to be problematic, in particular for girls in rural areas in the lowest income least developed locations. In this paper we unpack the complex drivers of educational exclusion and non-progression of girls and female adolescents in rural Tanzania. Despite targeted government policies, donor funding, and multiple development interventions, this area has witnessed declining rates of academic progression for young girls over the past decade. From a practical perspective, this contribution provides critical insights into the range factors that influence educational attainments in a rural, developing country context. These include structural and agent-based, gendered and non-gendered factors, both inside and outside of the classroom.

From a theoretical perspective, an examination of this case sheds light on the interconnection between educational attainment, gender justice and sustainable development practices. It points to the need for a more expansive account of gender justice that includes consideration of principles of epistemic inclusion in addition to the traditional focus on matters of distribution. The case explores not only the range of positional harms that can emerge through educational exclusion and non-progression, but also the non-positional benefits that can emerge through academic development and epistemic inclusion and empowerment. Using this expansive account to evaluate the 2030 education framework for action highlights both gaps and opportunities for progress towards the shared vision of transforming lives through education (*Education 2030 Incheon Declaration*) and ensuring no one is left behind (*2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*).

1:30-2:30 Arielle Stirling (Carleton University)

“Development as Racism: An Analysis of the Discourse of Global Poverty”

Abstract

Postdevelopment ideology levels critiques against many aspects of development theory, including questioning the motives of development from a historical perspective. Notions of poverty and underdevelopment were constructed in a post-World War II global system heavily shaped by power imbalance and assumptions of a prescribed path to improvement: industrialization, modernization, urbanization, and capitalism. However, within these constructions and assumptions lie similarities with the far more sinister and damaging discourse of race. Though development discourse has never functioned as a monolithic force of subjugation, it is crucial to recognize both the historical assumptions that ground the discourse and the legacy that these assumptions leave in current incarnations of development practice. Making reference to Pablo Escobar’s archaeology of development discourse and using Sally Haslanger, Marilyn Frye, and Michel Foucault’s discussions of race, I argue that development thinking resembles racism because it marks people for a certain type of treatment and fosters a corresponding perception of their abilities and place in the world.

2:45-3:45 Jennifer Caseldine-Bracht (Manchester University)

“Applied Environmental Ethics: The Role of Community Engagement in Social Democracy and Environmental Sustainability”

Abstract

In this paper, I will examine the work of Jane Addams and Iris Marion Young and their approach to ethics. For instance, Dr. Young argued that if we shift our focus from blame to responsibility then we will more likely provide motivation for people to work towards environmental sustainability. We may still be responsible for the environment even if we are not individually blameworthy for the problematic institutions and processes which contribute to environmental degradation and environmental injustices. Jane Addams asks us to work in areas that already interest people. She reminds us that we should never work to do good ‘for’ others, rather we should work to do good ‘with’ them. Environmental sustainability is a notoriously wicked problem. People are often pursuing their own private economic self-interest and collective environmental problems are simply ignored or pushed to the wayside. Many people are often suspicious of government regulation and it is not clear that there are individual solutions to some major environmental policy problems. It is sometimes difficult to know where to start. Perhaps, by

following the lead of sympathetic understanding and democratic action proposed by Jane Addams, along with a responsibility approach to environmental sustainability endorsed by Young, we can find a path beyond the traditional classroom to engage with issues of environmental sustainability. I recently became a Purdue certified master gardener through an extension program. I was told that I was the first philosopher that ever joined that particular program. The Master Gardener Program is an extension program through land grant colleges which helps gardeners by providing them with a few months of intensive training in horticultural principles. The class is research based. Students are admitted to the class for free, except for the cost of materials (which can be waived in some circumstances). Students learn about plant science, plant nutrition, soil science, how to care for trees, flowers and vegetable gardens. They also learn about critter control and integrative pest management, along with principles of sustainability. Once students meet the requirements and pass a test, they become official “Certified Master Gardeners” who then volunteer in their community to retain their master gardener status. These certified master gardeners may volunteer in different ways. They can answer gardening questions at the extension office, or provide gardening seminars at home and garden shows or neighborhood association meetings. They often assist teachers with school gardening programs, teach children how to plant trees, or grow their own school gardens, or work in community gardens. This provides a unique opportunity for environmental ethicists to engage with their community. Some people may join the program simply because they want to learn how to keep their hydrangea plants alive. Environmental ethicists may join to learn sustainability techniques. This is a space where conversations (along with actions) can occur, which may spur a paradigm shift in the ways communities think about their environment.

4:00-5:00 Jay Drydyk (Carleton University)

“Sufficiency—What is Enough?”

Abstract

A paradox surrounds the idea of sufficiency – enough for all – as a goal or requirement of justice. What is attractive about the idea is its ability to mobilize widespread support on its own, not just as a stepping stone towards some more robust form of equality. There is no other distributive norm that enjoys support from a wider range of otherwise divergent perspectives, from high theories to religions to folk moralities. More demanding ideas of equality do not enjoy such widespread support.

However, attempts to isolate sufficiency from equality may be self-defeating. When we demand enough for all, what shall we say is enough? One approach is subjective: ‘enough’ means enough that we are not dissatisfied with what we have. This approach is fraught with inconsistencies, due to expensive tastes and adaptive preferences. The alternative proposed by Martha Nussbaum is that ‘enough’ means enough for a life compatible with equal human dignity. However, the most capability-friendly interpretation of ‘equal human dignity’ does not condone any inequality in valuable capabilities. Thus, in attempting to unpack ‘enough’ we find that nothing is enough, short of equality.

The solution I propose starts from an idea of *social capability*. (1) Within each society, nothing is enough, short of capability levels that could be produced *for everyone* by the social capability of that society. (2) Global justice requires equalizing (upward) the social capabilities of different societies. (3) Consideration must also be given to efficiency, to future generations, to human empowerment, and to other species.