Social Work & Society ••• E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

Emma Hollywood, Valerie Egdell, Ronald McQuaid, Dirk Michel-Schertges

1 Introduction

This paper outlines the methodological issues that were faced in carrying out in-depth qualitative case-studies across different countries, as part of the "WorkAble" project. The case studies formed a central part of WorkAble and aimed to enhance understandings of successful ways in which to support young people who encounter difficulties, or who fail, in the 'standard' routes of education and the transition towards employment by empowering their capabilities for learning and for work. Nine in-depth case studies (Germany, Poland, Italy, France, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Sweden) were undertaken as part of WorkAble which examined the transitions of (disadvantaged) young people from compulsory school to further education, from education/vocational training to the labour market, and from unemployment/outside the labour market to employment. The key target groups for the case studies were early school leavers; unemployed young people; those in upper secondary vocational school, who have not yet obtained their diploma and who suffer from low skills; those with no upper secondary education qualifications; and higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job. Each of the case studies differed in their approach and focus but had the common aim in operationalising the Capability Approach (CA) through their research. The results of each of the case studies are presented later in this volume, what we wish to discuss in this paper are the methodological challenges that were presented and addressed in operationalising the CA.

With the CA forming the central conceptual starting point of WorkAble, the integration of capabilities in the methodology in the case studies was seen as fundamental in our approach. However, implementing CA in the methodology raised a number of issues. A central concern was how to operationalise the CA in the methodology, in particular how to measure capabilities and which capabilities to measure (see for example Nussbaum 2000; Robeyns 2003, 2005a, 2006; Alkire 2007; Anand et al. 2009a, 2009b). A further question was how to conduct research that was comparable but also adaptable to the particular social and institutional contexts of the nine individual nations.

The remainder of this paper outlines how we addressed these two key issues. The following sections outline the broader debates on operationalising the CA; how a common methodological framework for the case studies was developed; an outline of the case studies; the methodological approaches used and how effective they were; and a discussion and conclusions section which reflects on the methodological approaches used in general and how effective they were in putting the CA into practice.

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

2 Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach

It has been widely stated that Sen has not outlined in detail how the CA might be applied in empirical research, with Robeyns (2008) arguing that it is *"radically underspecified"* (p. 3), while Zimmerman (2006) states Sen's concept of agency *"remains sociologically unspecified"* (p. 474). Within the literature, key debates have been around how to measure capability and which capabilities to measure. These issues do not however, mean that the CA has not been applied in empirical research. A wide range of studies in different disciplines have been carried out using the CA, many of which using quantitative and/or qualitative techniques (see for example, Anand et al. 2005, 2009a; Atzmüller 2009; Galster et al. 2009; Gascoigne and Whiteside 2009; Green and Orton 2009; Mah 2009; Monteleone and Mozzana 2009; Sztandar-Sztanderska 2009; Zimmerman 2006).

Core in the CA are a person's functionings (what they do) and their capabilities (their freedom to realise specific functionings) (Sen 1985; Robeyns 2005b, 2006). One of the key problems in applying the CA in empirical research is how to actually measure capabilities, rather than just the functionings. Miquel and Lopez (2011) state that there is the danger of looking solely at functionings (what people do) rather than directly observing capabilities – it is possible to observe outcomes of individuals but it is more difficult to observe the options and freedoms they have to make them. A further issue, and one that is identified by Zimmerman (2006), is how to make capabilities the object of inquiry and how to evaluate freedom and opportunity for choice. Therefore, in measuring capabilities we are looking at the opportunity to achieve something (such as work or education) rather than the actual outcome (for example a job or qualification).

As a result of this under-specification, questions can be asked differently depending on which way the CA has been applied and Robeyns (2006) argues that three theoretical specifications need to be made when using the CA: *"the choice of whether to focus on functionings, capabilities or both; the selection of the relevant capabilities; and the decision whether or not trade-offs and indexing are necessary, and if so how to determine the weights"* (p. 373). When choosing whether to focus on functionings or capabilities, or both, consideration needs to be paid to whether one is imposing ideas about what people have reason to value when focusing on functionings, but large datasets may not have much information on capabilities sets (Robeyns 2006). Anand et al. (2005) address these issues by using the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) to identify questions they see as representing both capabilities and functionings.

It is however, Robeyns' (2006) second specification of selecting relevant capabilities that is of particular significance here. There have been debates within the CA literature dealing on the one side with the question about whether to have a basic list of central human capabilities that a just society would support, or on the other side to have a public debate about the most important capabilities, i.e. not to specify a particular list of capabilities. Nussbaum (2000) proposed a list of ten core capabilities: life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination, and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; and control over one's environment. This list has been used by many to address a wide range of topics: Anand et al. (2005) operationalise the list using the British Household Panel Survey; Pyles and Banerjee (2010) apply the list to examine the experiences of low-income women survivors of gender-based violence; Andresen and Fegter (2011) engage with Nussbaum's list in a study on how children living in poverty define a 'good life'; and Lloyd-Sherlock (2002)

Social Work & Society   ▪▪▪   E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

uses Nussbaum's approach when examining the condition of older people in developing countries.

Nussbaum (2003) argues for the need to define a set of capabilities which are most important to social justice, as Sen is too vague in this perspective. While this list is open ended, and therefore abstract, to leave room for interpretation, it provides something to benchmark against As a point of departure it may make sense to start with that list and to configure it according to the purpose of the research question and thus the subject of the actual research. Or to put it in Nussbaum's (2011) words: *"Much depends on our purpose. On the one hand, if our intention is simply comparative, all sorts of capabilities suggest interesting comparisons across nations and regions, and there is no reason to prescribe in advance: new problems may suggest new comparisons"* (p. 29). By contrast, Sen has maintained that a set of core capabilities need not be defined, rather that capabilities should be selected in reference to the purpose of the study. Robeyns (2003, 2005a) suggests that the disjuncture between Sen and Nussbaum regarding a list of central capabilities is a result of Sen viewing the CA as a general framework whereas Nussbaum aims at normative theory building. As such Alkire (2007) argues against the production of a single list of dimensions as analysis is context specific. In emphasising the lack of need for a list of core capabilities, Robeyns (2005a) also highlights that the CA is used for different goals; it is impossible to understand what all people in the world have reason to value; and the process by which the capabilities list is selected needs to be legitimate and biases addressed.

It is against this background that guidance has been provided to produce capabilities lists that are context specific. Alkire (2007), with reference to research on chronic poverty, suggests a mixed methods approach, combining fixed core dimensions and participatory methods to assess their relevance to research subjects, should be used when selecting capabilities. Vizard and Burchardt have set out a methodological framework for developing a capability list to monitor and report on the equality and human rights position of individuals and groups in England, Scotland and Wales (Vizard and Burchardt 2007; Vizard 2010). This framework involves: (1) derivation of a core capability list from the international human rights framework; and (2) supplementation and refinement of the core list through democratic deliberation and debate (Vizard and Burchardt 2007; Vizard, 2010). Robeyns (2003) also proposes a five stage methodology to select capabilities appropriate for different uses of the CA: (1) the list needs to be explicit, discussed, and defended; (2) the method used to generate the list needs to be justified; (3) the list should be context specific/sensitive to the context; (4) lists to be applied empirically or used to drive policy should be generated in two stages: drawing up an 'ideal' list and then a more 'pragmatic' list; and (5) lists should include all important elements. In reflecting on how lists are drawn up these proposed methods highlight some of the biases that may be present. For example, it has been argued that policies and programmes guided by a CA always promote a certain perfectionist ideal of human good i.e. certain capabilities such as health are innately good (Deneulin 2002). As such there is a need to be reflexive in one's approach.

Quantitative applications of the CA have often been used (Zimmerman 2006). The main analytical techniques have been, as Robeyns (2008) outlines, descriptive statistics, fuzzy sets theory, factor analysis, principal component analysis and structural equation modelling. There is also a tradition of qualitative empirical research using CA and it has been widely suggested that the use of qualitative methods add value to the CA as an analytical method. For example, Zimmermann (2006) argues that qualitative approaches have much to contribute

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

when examining the complexity of social issues and uncovering individual assumptions and expectations, and that a qualitative development of the CA could help realise the full analytical potential of Sen's work. Furthermore, in placing the individual at the centre of his approach Sen emphasises the role of individual agency (Sen 1993). This focus on the individual suggests a strong role for qualitative approaches that are most suitable for uncovering individual motivations, attitudes and deeper levels of understanding. Indeed, Carpenter (2009) states that the CA places the individual or 'whole person' at the centre of social analysis thus suggesting the utility of a qualitative approach, that can be ideally suited to providing the depth of information necessary for identifying the contexts for action and forming choices (Miquel and Lopez 2011). However, it must be noted that while some have criticised the CA for being individualistic (Dean 2009) others have highlighted that it does take into account the wider context, and that capabilities are interdependent (Iversen 2003). As such the CA is seen to be ethically individualistic (each person is taken into account), but not ontologically individualistic as it acknowledges that capabilities and functionings are not independent of others (Robeyns, 2003). As such the experiences of individuals are embedded within wider contexts.

The case studies presented here primarily use qualitative methods as they are most suitable for revealing the complex and in-depth issues that young people face in making transitions from school that may not be captured from the analysis of secondary data sets. The CA has been previously used in qualitative studies of employment and unemployment. The 'Activation policies and organisational innovation in the capability perspective' special issue of the International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy (Volume 29, Issue 11/12) presents a wide range of papers all from a capability perspective: employment policies in the UK between 1870-1914 (Mah 2009), as well as more recent policies (Green and Orton 2009); labour market re-activation in major shipyards in Sweden (Gascoigne and Whiteside 2009); local institution building in active labour market policies in Austria (Atzmüller 2009); activation of the unemployed in Poland (Sztandar-Sztanderska 2009); Swiss integrated employment policies (Galster et al. 2009); and integrated employment policies for disabled people in Italy (Monteleone and Mozzana 2009). Elsewhere, the CA has also previously been used to analyse active labour market policies and social integration policies for marginalised young people (Bonvin and Moachon 2008). Although we strongly advocate a qualitative approach for the WorkAble case studies that does not mean we do not recognise the value of quantitative approaches in operationalising the CA. Quantitative studies seek to answer different questions, such as the effects and associations of different factors across the population of young people as a whole, which our case studies cannot fully answer.

3 Common methodological framework

The aim of the case studies was to capture the wide range of capabilities and functioning that a young person may have in making their transitions (while acknowledging that in practice it is often easier to capture functionings than to reveal an individual's capabilities). Therefore the case studies not only seek to understand the skills, qualifications and educational and work experiences of the young person, but also aimed to identify the full range of capabilities and functionings the young person has. We therefore used the CA as a broad analytical framework for the design and analysis of our case studies; following the statement by Robeyns that *"the capability approach is not a theory that can explain poverty, inequality or well-being; instead, it provides concepts and a framework that can help to conceptualize and evaluate these phenomena"* (Robeyns 2008, p. 3). Consequently when using the CA the

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

supplementation of additional social theories is often required as the CA cannot explain inequality but does provide a way in which to understand it (Robeyns 2005b, 2006).

Carrying out the research across nine different countries presented the issue of how to conduct case studies that were comparable but also adaptable to the particular social and institutional contexts of the individual nations. This was addressed by the development of a 'common question framework', which provided the means of implementing the CA in the methodology and a way of producing results that were meaningful and comparable.

3.1 Common question framework

The aim of the common framework was to provide a robust means of carrying out a cross country analysis of the various programmes covered by the research, and to highlight how the CA could be used to conceptualise the barriers faced by young people in making the transition to work and or education and training, as well as providing a consistent framework that could be used to identify those skills and competencies they need to lead the life that they have reason to value.

Following extensive discussion between partners, the question framework was thus constructed around the four inter-related factors of resources; empowerment; individual conversion factors and external conversion factors which were identified as contributing to a young person's capabilities and functionings. This 'framework' of common questions was used by each partner as a starting point in carrying out their individual case studies. This meant that there was some basis of comparison even though the case studies were very different. It was acknowledged that in order to make comparisons between case studies, similarities and differences between countries need to be embedded in the social, cultural and historical context as transitions between education and work, for example, may vary because of this (Jobert, 1996; Corden, 2001). In addition it was decided through group discussion between partners at a workshop that the research should focus on the development of three capabilities in particular: voice, work and education. These capabilities were selected as most relevant to the wider purposes of the study.

Outlined below in Table 1 are the types of information that the common framework sought to identify. The common question framework (Table 1) was not purely instrumental rather the aim was to embrace the CA by seeking to identify the range of capabilities that the case study programmes sought to enhance. Therefore, the aim was to examine the process for the individual, their freedoms or opportunities, rather than only focusing on observed choices, outcomes or achieved functionings.

Table 1: Common Question Framework

Resources: Here we wanted to identify what resources were available for the programmes; if there were enough resources for the programmes to enable beneficiaries to have the capacity to act; and what resources do individual beneficiaries bring with them to the programme. For this part of the framework we wanted to take into account that people require different amounts of resources to achieve the same goal, and that there is often more than one approach to deal with problems. Furthermore, we sought to acknowledge that individuals with the same capabilities sets are likely to have different functionings as they will have different conceptions of what they have reason to value (Robeyns 2005b).

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

Empowerment: The CA focuses on the freedom of individuals to make choices (Sen, 1985, 1998) and as such we wanted to examine whether the young people were sufficiently empowered to have autonomy and a voice in the delivery and implementation of the programme and how much choice do they have in this process and in the selection of alternatives. This recognises that in order for young people to realise their capabilities they need to be empowered to make informed choices that are right for them. Therefore they should be adequately empowered to achieve their capabilities and lead the life they choose to live. For example young people could be constrained by having to comply with administrative expectations of a programme, or a wider benefits regime. As such young people are not empowered if they are coerced to participate (Bonvin and Moachon, 2008).

Individual conversion factors: Here the case studies sought to identify whether young people have the necessary conversion factors to transform resources into capabilities (Robeyns 2005b; Bonvin and Moachon, 2008); identify the range of individual capabilities/functionings (such as skills and knowledge) that young people are able to achieve; and in particular to identify the individual characteristics that make it possible (or not) to convert resources into capabilities/functionings, such as health, gender, education, family, individual/household social status, training, qualifications etc.

External conversion factors: Here the case studies sought to identify the role of external, social and structural factors that may affect the conversion of resources into capabilities/functionings (Robeyns 2005b) such as social stratification, geography, labour market conditions, labour market segregation, discrimination and the legal framework (including welfare legislation) as well as "workfare policies" in general and the possibilities/restrictions that are related to the (specific) programmes dealing with the target group of this research in particular. As such it is recognised that individuals are affected by the institutions that surround them (Bonvin and Orton, 2009).

4 The case studies

The aim of the case studies were to enhance understanding of successful initiatives for supporting young people who fail in the standard routes of education and the transition towards employment by empowering their capabilities for education, for voice and for work. The case studies focus on both the following transitions: from compulsory school to further education, from education/vocational training to the labour market, and from unemployment/outside the labour market to employment.

The main criterion for selection was those programmes that used new or innovative approaches in addressing the issues faced by young people making the transition from education or unemployment to work or further training; although the transitions of young people with less favourable labour market opportunities who are not involved in any specific kind of programme were also studied. Different groups of young people were considered (although it must be noted that these groups often overlap): early school leavers; unemployed young people; those in upper secondary vocational school, who have not yet obtained their diploma and who suffer from low skills; those with no upper secondary education

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

qualifications; and those higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job (see Table 2). In analysing both those young people who lack qualifications and higher education graduates, the case studies consider the uncertainty about which skills are needed for young people to be able to flourish and become capable citizens who are able to choose the life that they have reason to value.

Table 2: Case study descriptions

Topic	Country	Case Study Description
Early school leavers	France	Two state regional action plans: 'Regional plan against school dropout' (Rhône-Alpes) and 'Local networks for school perseverance' (Aquitaine).
	Switzerland	FORJAD (formation pour les jeunes adultes en difficulté/training for struggling young adults) programme set up by the cantonal department of Social Affairs, together with the departments of Education and Employment. FORJAD gets marginalized youth out of welfare programmes and offers them the possibility to achieve a vocational training.
	Italy	'Trespassing Project' operated in Naples by a community development agency. The project provides personalised paths towards labour market for young people not in employment, education or training.
Unemployed	UK	Two third sector programmes in Scotland that help disadvantaged young people aged 16-25 make the transitions from unemployment to employment by providing work placements and work experience opportunities.
	Denmark	Basic Vocational Education and Training Programme (EGU) at the local municipality level for young people who have failed their earlier schooling (e.g. early school leavers, or students of technical schools that have given up their education).
Those in upper secondary vocational school who suffer from low skills	Poland	Implementation of programme 'We empower you to learn' (programme of cooperation between education and the power industry) in one of Warsaw's upper-secondary vocational schools.
No upper secondary education qualifications	Austria	The 'Youth at Work' (Jugend am Werk) programme which offers supra-company training places for a range of apprenticeships in craft, industry and service sector professions. The supra-company apprenticeship training is seen as a "safety net" for those young people not able to find apprenticeship training on the labour market.
	Germany	Two contrasting programmes within a local transition management institution were chosen to represent the spectrum of interventions available there: Kompetenzagentur (Agency of competence) and KSoB (Courses for pupils without vocational qualification contract).
Higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job	Sweden	Young people with an individually composed bachelor's degree in one of the disadvantaged academic fields/subjects.

In addition the case studies cover a broad range of European countries, both geographically and in terms of different welfare, education and employment traditions: the social-democratic

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

(Sweden, Denmark); liberal (Switzerland, UK); conservative (Germany, France, Austria); Mediterranean (Italy); and transitional (Poland) welfare regimes[1]. The countries also cover a range of educational regimes: strong focus on vocational pathways (Austria, Germany, Switzerland); focus on a strong public based system of education that tries to impart general as well as vocational skills (Denmark and Sweden); strong focus on general (academic) skills and firm-based skill strategies (France, Italy and UK); education systems in transition states (Poland). The programmes/initiatives of concern in the case studies are provided by organisations across the public, private and third sectors that focus on the implementation of national policies aiming to overcome common European problems of youth unemployment. The rationale for considering case studies from a range of different contexts is in order to assess whether the skills needed in national labour markets, and the problems connected to a 'skills mismatch' between young peoples' and employers' expectations, are associated with different educational and welfare regimes. This approach opens up the opportunity to learn from each other at the local and regional levels within different countries.

5 The methodological approaches

Central to the operationalisation of the CA in the case studies was drawing out the perspectives of the young people in order to take their choice of pathways into account. While focusing on individual accounts, the aim of the case studies was to consider how these perspectives, preferences and orientations are influenced, constrained or enabled not only by economic and cultural environments but also, and in particular, by institutional factors which translate central policy into local practices. Therefore an aim of the case studies was to take a bottom-up perspective of the development of capabilities at different levels:

- Micro level: the subjective, professional and interactive level.

- Meso level: the interactive, institutional and conceptual level.

- Macro level: the political and societal level.

5.1 Overview of methodological approaches

The case studies were addressed primarily with research interviews (group and individual) with young people and other stakeholders (e.g. programme managers and staff; policy makers) to gauge a wide variety of individual insights and perceptions, and gain understandings of complex relationships. Partners also used other methods to add depth and other insights to their case studies: participant observation; and documentary analysis as well as statistical analysis. In terms of data analysis a thematic content/coding analysis of the data were most commonly used.

Table 3: Overview of the methodological approaches

---

[1] With respect to the welfare regimes one has to add that one side effect of this study could be to show how far the welfare regimes (and therefore especially the educational sphere) have already changed due to common European policy recommendations, i.e. to focus on work and economic matters rather than to concentrate on social issues.

Social Work & Society ••• E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

CASE STUDY	Germany	Poland	Switzerland	Sweden	Austria	Italy	Denmark	France	UK
Methods adopted									
Interviews	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Documentary analysis	X		X	X		X	X	X	
Group interviews					X	X	X	X	X
Focus group					X				
Participant observation						X			
Statistical analysis		X							
Triangulation	X	X				X	X		
Participants									
Policy makers		X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Employment Service				X					
Programme workers /deliverers	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Programme beneficiaries/ young people	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Other		X		X					

Details of the methodological approaches adopted by each case study are outlined below (and are summarised in Table 4 in the appendix).

Germany: The case study collected data through: problem centred interviews with young persons; expert interviews with case managers; and documentary analysis. The analysis was based on the assumptions of Grounded Theory. Sequential analysis (word by word, line by line) and a broader case and field-oriented perspective were used with a 'coding paradigm' of conditions, context, strategies (action/interaction) and consequences. The CA was used as a permanent evaluative background although, as Grounded Theory demands, the focus was on to first accurately describe the data as closely as possible to the original phrasing and to develop theory based on the data instead of forcing this into predefined categories.

Poland: The case study draws on: documentary and statistical data analysis to provide context; and semi-structured in-depth interviews. Three pronged coding was used to analyse the data: descriptive coding (information about gender, exact or approximate age of the

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

speaker and his/her role in the programme); topic coding (passages from the interviews were ordered according to specific topics brought up by the interviewees); and analytical coding (how the interviewee addresses a particular topic).

Italy: Interviews and group interviews with policy makers, project leaders, social workers and beneficiaries; as well as participant observation in various phases of the project activities and documentary analysis were used to collect data in this case study. The data was analysed using the common questions as a framework. In particular conversion factors and the link between resources and rights and capabilities, i.e. the freedom to choose the life one has reason to value, were focused upon. Moreover, attention was paid to the relationship between institutional and the individual dimension.

France: The method used for the case studies is based on documentary analysis and a series of semi-structured interviews with regional public authorities (regional council, regional representatives of the ministry of education, etc.); local operators (head teachers/ heads of school, teachers, guidance counsellors); and pupils/students (individual face to face, small groups of 3-5 pupils, larger class group >10). The case study takes a comparative approach in studying two regional action plans concerning school dropout. Coding, using the capabilities for voice, education and work as a framework, was used to analyse the data.

Denmark: A mixed method design was adopted to face the different perspectives resulting from the different participants within the process of four Basic Vocational Education and Training Programmes (EGU) located in different parts of Denmark, in terms of geography and urbanisation. Interviews with young adults, counsellors/teachers, managers and one internship-teacher were conducted in order to give data on the realisation of capabilities with respect to the common framework of capabilities for voice, education and work within the everyday education and working life. These interviews have been contextualized related to the outcome of documentary analysis. The framework of the CA not only helped to learn about the different dimensions of voice, education and work but also to identify an order between these dimensions according to (inter)national education and labour policies: thus emphasising the relation between the individual and the socio-economic order.

Austria: Explorative and expert interviews were carried out with the managers at the case study programme as well as with trainers and social pedagogues. Two group discussions with the apprentices took place (containing role plays, small group discussion, brainstorming rounds and associative methods using pin boards and prompt cards). Based on the results of the group discussions, a guideline for the semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the apprentices was designed. The data was analysed using the common question framework with a focus on the capabilities for: work and education, choice and voice and how they are formed and restricted or supported.

Switzerland: Documentary analysis to provide context and semi-directed in-depth interviews with policy-makers, field social workers and young people (both before entering the programme and during its implementation) involved in the programme were used in this case study. The data was analysed with a focus on the young people's capability for voice as a condition to the enhancement of their capability for work and education. Specific attention was paid to three dimensions of the capability for voice: the topics of the voice (subjects voiced - or not); the resources of the voice (resources needed for the young people to use their voice); the modalities of the voice (loyalty, negotiation, conflict, apathy, etc.).

Social Work & Society   ▪▪▪   E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

UK: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers (including policy makers for the organisations), project workers and young people in two case study organisations. A 'thematic content analysis' approach was taken to analyse the transcripts using an analysis framework loosely based on Grounded Theory approach to uncover core categories in the data. Using these core categories the capabilities framework, as developed in the common questions, was then applied as a means of further analysing the data to understand how the programmes can be understood from a capabilities perspective.

Sweden: Data was collected using unstructured in-depth interviews with: a group of young graduates with weak labour market attachment; university employees at management and faculty level, a careers advisor; employers; union representatives; and staff at the employment office; and analysis of policy and documents concerned with enhancing young graduates' abilities to find work. Data was analysed using coding with the categorisation based on voice, education and work. An important aim of the study was to explore possible constraints in the transition between education and work. Consequently, the subsequent analytic process following upon the first categorisation was to create sub-headings under each category defining the absence or presence of different conversion factors.

5.2   Reflections on methodological approaches

The WorkAble partners were asked to reflect on their methodological approaches and the issues they had in applying them. Issues raised concerned themes about conducting qualitative research in general but also about applying the CA in practice.

Access:

The level of access afforded to data and participants was an issue for some of the partners. For the Polish case study methodological and data triangulation was difficult due to a refusal to grant access to information (e.g. financial aid for poor families, data on the budget of the programme). In the Danish case study there was a time delay caused by the required official approval process concerning research in educational institutions. Research in Denmark has to be accepted by Datatilsynet (National Supervision of Data Collection, Storing and Using). The application took two months to process and during that period no data collection could take place.

For other partners access sometimes became an issue because of the conditions placed on the researcher by the gatekeepers (i.e. the case study organisations). As the Austrian team noted they depended a lot on the cooperation with the case study organisations, although at times the conditions placed on them in terms of the timing of the interviews, presented difficulties. The young people started work at 7.15am and therefore found it difficult to concentrate in interviews which were timetabled by the case study organisation to be held late in the working day.

In the UK case study, for some of the interviews with the young people, programme staff asked that audio recordings were not taken and that a staff member was present while the interview was taking place. This made it hard to accurately record all that the young people said and there is an issue as to whether the presence of a staff member might have made the young people less willing to be open up with the researchers (although alternatively it might also have made some feel more comfortable as there was someone present that they knew). The Swedish team highlighted that central for achieving rich data is active listening and

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

therefore they took audio recordings so to give full attention to the respondent and the situation. They note that the use of a recorder is not favoured by everyone and might inhibit individuals (May 1997). However, they provide the opportunity for exact reproductions of the interview, which helps with analysis and the drawing of conclusions.

Engaging the young people:

Some partners outlined the issues they faced when engaging with the young people during data collection. There is a need for reflexivity to consider the role of the researcher in the voice young people had during the interviews. For example, gender can affect the information disclosed (England, 1994) and the importance of commonality has also been highlighted with the argument that similar experiences opens up for trust and dialogue (Finch 1984, 1993; Oakley 1990). In the research we therefore needed to consider whether the young people felt unable to put forward their ideas because they were intimidated by the research process or because they could not relate to the researcher? The Swedish team highlighted that they felt that their common experiences in terms of educational background with the young people was an asset.

Problems were encountered if the young people perceived the researchers as part of the 'establishment'. The Austrian team outlined how it was not easy to develop a common language and trust between the young people and themselves, exacerbated by the times constraints of the research. Similarly, the UK team considered issues such as clothing and dress to help develop trust with the young people. A service manager in one of the UK case study organisations mentioned that they considered their dress to be important when engaging with the young people as they could find people dressed very formally to be intimidating:

> *"I say to the [project workers] don't wear suits if you are with the young people because there's a time and a place for when you need to be dressed appropriately but there's also a time and a place for working with young people that it's about us making them feel comfortable with the situation"* (Service manager, UK case study)

Young people's voice:

It was sometimes difficult to have prolonged discussions and gain in-depth insights from the young people. The Austrian team found that during group interviews that strong group dynamics regularly limited the discussion and it was difficult for quieter individuals to participate. The concept of voice was also sometimes too abstract for the young people to grasp and they were not used to being asked what they would like to change about their lives. The Italian team also found that young people were not used to having voice and therefore it was difficult to engage them in the interview process. Young people in the German case study found it difficult to respond to open questions and it was difficult to get access to young people's set of relevancies (i.e. what they value). The German team reflected that the institutional focus is on the functioning for work (in terms of the labour market). Voice does not play a major role, either in terms of a functioning (what do you want now), or in terms of a capability (how do we secure the individual and social conditions of making your voice count). Likewise, education is mainly conceived in 'narrow' functionalistic terms, by the professionals as well as by the young people themselves.

Experiences from the UK case study found that the young people were often shy, especially at the start of the programmes, when compared to those who were interviewed some months later at the end of the programmes. The interviews were sometimes used by the programme

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

staff as a way in which to help develop the confidence of the young people (although the young people's participation was voluntary). This highlights issues about the lack of voice because of low confidence etc. that young people might have and how the UK case study organisations, in this instance, enabled young people to overcome this barrier. Equally this reluctance to engage fully in the interviews can also be interpreted as an articulation of voice, with the young people not wanting to discuss the difficulties they face in their life with a stranger. This raises questions as to whether it would have been better to have tried to have spent time before the interviews with the young people in order to build trust, rather than conducting 'one off' interviews.

The choice of the research methods used in the case studies can also make it difficult for young people to have voice in the research process. For the Swiss team it was difficult for some young people to give a linear and chronologic description of their scholar/familial/professional trajectory and thus, it was sometimes hard to identify clear causalities and to reconstruct their trajectories. The use of Calendar and Time Diary methods could have been useful in order to reconstruct the young people's trajectories. The Danish team outlined that they had to rethink their research design when they discovered the young people participating in their case study had difficulties in reading, understanding and answering the questionnaire due to dyslexia, learning difficulties, etc. In some cases staff were able to help the young people by reading the questions aloud, discussing possible answers etc., although in others there were no the staff available to help with this. This raises the question about choosing research methods that accommodate different response/communication modes, thus increasing the opportunity for young people to have voice. The Danish team found it hard to carry out pure autobiographical interviews especially because of the severe concentration problems of some of the young people.

While the case studies employed some innovative methods with the young people (e.g. the Austrian team designed their group discussions interactively with role plays, small group discussions, brainstorming rounds and associative methods) in the main they employed traditional one-to-one or group discussion techniques. Hazel (1995) and Punch (2002) suggest some innovative techniques to use when engaging young people in research such as using vignettes and photographs to encourage discussion. The Austrian team also outlined that in future more time and/or participatory methods could help to get more and a better access to youngsters' aspirations and their daily way of dealing with (institutional) requirements. The CA seeks to explore the individuals' aspirations, personal situation, into everyday practices of developing capabilities and as such may be more suited to participatory methods.

Applying the CA:
Some partners commented on issues about applying the CA in practice. The Swedish case study was retrospective since it was based on what the respondents said on being invited to look back at their past. They found that the CA is difficult to apply if the study is aimed at covering experiences during a quite long period of time as what people have reason to value changes over time and the change is perhaps especially pronounced during early adulthood. Capturing the whole phase and the change would require a longitudinal approach, which was not possible within the framework of the study. The Polish case study also looked at young people's experiences over time, but because of the timing of the project were not be able to gather data when students graduated from the programme. They have thus been forced to search for indications of what might provoke difficulties in future. Therefore they concentrate

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

on the factors which work in favour of creation of capabilities without being able to uncover this in practice.

For the French team the main difficulty came out from their own capacity to catch precisely what is really meant by the capability for voice, education and work. It is certainly not a coincidence if the capability for voice, the more often described and in some way evident capability, was the easiest one to question. They were able to describe some indicators of the presence/absence of this capability or the overlapping content of different capabilities like voice and education dealing both in a broad sense with education and human development. It was more difficult to do the same exercise for the two other capabilities. In fact they would say that giving priority to an inductive methodology – i.e. trying to define more precisely what is intended by these three capabilities on the basis of empirical material – resulted in some difficulties in organising their analysis and building integrated conclusions on the three capabilities and their relationships. On reflection they felt that it would have been easier to interpret their empirical material if they had disaggregated each of the capabilities in a series of indicators instead of trying to identify them afterwards. In other words, it is more a question of operationalising the CA than a matter of the CA in itself.

6   Conclusion and lessons for future applications of the CApability approach

What then does our research tell us about applying the Capabilities Approach? Alkire (2008) states that it can be difficult to assess if research using the CA, is a more effective methodology in addressing social problems than research using other methods. The case studies might not provide a 'blue print' for effective CA methods, but they do highlight where this approach can work to provide useful insights and how it might be improved.

This paper has examined in detail some of the methodological issues involved in applying the CA across nine case study countries in the EU. Implementing the CA in the research raised a number of methodological issues namely, how to operationalise the CA in empirical research and how to develop a research framework that allows for comparison across the case studies. In terms of operationalising the CA we identified from the literature some of the key issues such as the lack of specification from Sen on how to carry out empirical research using the CA (Zimmerman 2006; Robeyns 2008); debates around which capabilities to use (and whether there should be a definitive list of capabilities) (Nussbaum 2000; Robeyns 2003, 2005a; Alkire 2007); and importance of understanding the differences between measuring capabilities and functionings (Robeyns 2005b, 2006; Miquel and Lopez 2011). In the case of our research rather than using a prescribed list we chose to focus on those capabilities that were relevant to the purpose of the study – namely the capability for voice, work and education. In addition, our aim for the methodology was to find a way of identifying capabilities, that is the freedom or opportunity to achieve something rather than focusing on the outcome itself.

As a starting point for this process a common question framework was designed that was informed by the theoretical underpinnings of the CA and also provided a means of carrying out cross country, comparative, case study research. The case studies themselves varied in their aims and scope with some looking at early school leavers, others the young unemployed, and in one case young university graduates. A range of qualitative methods were employed including in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation and documentary analysis. In reflecting on our methodological approaches a number of important messages were identified in relation to carrying out research using the CA. There were practical issues

such as getting access to young people, which proved difficult in some cases. This highlights a more general issue in gaining access to vulnerable groups for research purposes. One of the key strengths of the CA is in understanding and identifying the issues faced by vulnerable groups in society and thus suggests that in applying the CA empirically consideration should be given to how easy it will be gather data on such groups. In relation to this issue, it was also difficult in some cases to engage with the young people themselves as there was a potential lack of trust with the researchers.

It is difficult to make firm conclusions as to the extent the case studies have been able to capture the essential features of the CA. While the case studies have highlighted and examined the contexts (i.e. conversion factors) in which capabilities might be formed and realised, it is arguably more difficult to make definite conclusions as to the extent to which they have revealed the capabilities themselves. This draws attention to the difficulties that have been cited previously that while it is possible to observe functionings it is harder to appraise the options and freedoms available to an individual (Miquel and Lopez 2011). For example, it can be hard to assess through questioning what young people value if this is something they have never considered before, for instance, because they have never had the opportunity to voice this before.

Of particular relevance to the CA, was the issue of capturing the voice of young people. In the course of the case studies it was demonstrated that many young people did not have the confidence to 'voice' or articulate their opinions or experiences. In many cases this may have been due to a poor educational background – indeed some young people had difficulty reading or were dyslexic; and others were reluctant to go over painful or difficult experiences from their past. This highlights the need for researchers to consider in more detail their methodological approaches in relation to the particular group being studied and to fully assess the suitability of their research methods. More general issues were also raised in applying the CA such as the use of retrospective questions about past decisions since what individual have reason to value can change over time, especially for young people. In other case studies the short contact time with the young people meant that is was difficult to gauge the effectiveness and long-term impact of interventions on their capabilities.

It has been shown that the case studies combined with the theoretical framework of the CA provide a tool that gives a deeper insight into the related societal dimensions of education, vocation, work and the striving for (further) human development. On the one hand this relatedness provides the opportunity to gain more understanding and new knowledge about intertwined processes within educational/vocational training programmes. On the other hand this high complex relationship makes it difficult to point out one methodological 'best way' of approaching these issues - partly due to socio-cultural, inter-national and national, as well as regional, differences that have to be brought down to the least common denominator. However, facing the common European challenges concerning unemployment of young adults, it seems to be an effective way of identifying and emphasising common problematic issues through carrying out in-depth studies that make it possible to put the results – not to say triangulate – together with data gathered by different research methods.

APPENDIX - Table 4: Case study methodologies

	Method	Rationale	Analysis
Germany	Problem centred interviews with young persons	How do young people experience, interpret and cope with the transition and the current measure	Grounded theory with the Capability Approach used as a permanent evaluative background
	Expert interviews with case managers	Knowledge and patterns of interpretation about the measures, every day practices, profiles and images of the clients	
	Documentary analysis (mainly political and professional concepts)	Context	
Poland	Documentary and statistical data analysis	Case selection and during the case study, documents and quantitative information were also used for the purpose of triangulation	Three-pronged coding: descriptive coding; topic coding; and analytical coding
	Semi-structured in-depth interviews with policy makers, programme deliverers, programme beneficiaries etc.	Understand the complex relationships between actors and to take into account cognitive dimension, which is crucial for improvement of capabilities of participants	
Italy	Interviews with policy makers, project leaders, social workers and beneficiaries	Understand the level of the organisational processes and the one of the interactions; as well as focusing on beneficiaries' points of view	Using the common questions as a framework
	Group interviews with policy makers, project leaders, social workers and beneficiaries		
	Participant observation		
	Documentary analysis		
France	Documentary analysis	Comprehensive analysis of the impact of the public action in terms of capability enhancement. It aims at understanding the effects of policy implementation on the student's behaviour, the practices of teachers and the cognitive resources framing the policy maker's ability to cooperate.	Coding, using the capabilities for voice, education and work as a framework
	Semi structured interviews with regional public authorities; and with local operators		
	Individual face-to-face interviews with Pupils / students and small group interviews of 3-5 Pupils / students		
	Class group interviews >10 Pupils / students		
Denmark	Documentary and analysis	These methodological approaches have been adopted to contextualize the interviews.	Analytical coding and using the common framework for the capabilities for voice, education and work
	Semi-structured, theme-oriented interviews were conducted with policy makers, managers, teachers; EGU pupils and one internship-teacher. Two interviews (pupil; teacher) developed into group interviews	To understand the different perspectives deriving from different participation levels. To see to what extent institutional processes, frameworks and policy involvement shape a possible arena of action and especially the development or the hindrance for the capabilities of voice, education and work.	
	Explorative and expert interviews: management,	Gain insight into the logic, philosophy and self-conception of the	Content analysis using the common

	trainers and social pedagogues	(training) institution and its executives in handling and forming the youngsters' transition	questions as a framework
	Group discussions with the apprentices	Overview; evidence on how the youngsters interact; guideline for the semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the apprentices was designed.	
	Semi-structured face-to-face interviews with apprentices	Insights into individual strategies of capability formation, its limits, room for individual manoeuvre as well as into incisive internal and external conversion factors to lead a life the youngsters have reason to value.	
Switzerland	Documentary survey	Political and economical context	Focus on the young people's capability for voice as a condition to the enhancement of their capability for work and education
	Semi-directed in-depth interviews with young people on the programme	Insight into young people's experiences during the preparatory stage and implementation	
UK	Semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers, project workers and young people in the two case study organisations.	This method was selected in order to capture individual experiences.	A 'thematic content analysis' approach; using an analysis framework loosely based on Grounded Theory
Sweden	Unstructured in-depth interviews with young graduates with weak labor market attachment	Understand how young graduates with difficulties in finding a relevant job perceive their experiences of education and work in terms of capabilities for voice, education and work	Coding with the categorisation based on voice, education and work
	Interviews with employees at the university	Questions about student's influence to voice their opinion and to make it count within public policy process; how policy documents, texts and accounts are used in practice	
	Scientific studies and public discussions in the press	Resources enabling students and graduates to voice their opinion; the possibility to voice for the individual during the training period and in the transition from education to employment	
	Policy documents, texts and accounts	Comprehensive statement of the actual formal rights to education and the actual availability of measures for enhancing young graduates possibilities to get a job, provided by the higher education system	
	Interviews with employers, union representatives and employment office	Labor market perspective on young graduates and the value of their education	

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

References

Alkire S (2007) Choosing dimensions: the capability approach and multidimensional poverty. Chronic Poverty Research Centre. CPRC Working Paper 88.

Anand P, Hunter G, Carter I, Dowding K & van Hees M (2009a) The development of capability indicators, in: Journal of Human Development and Capabilities, 10, pp 125-52.

Anand, P, Santos C & Smith R (2009b). The Measurement of Capabilities, in: Basu K and Kanbur R (eds) Arguments for a better world. Essays in Honour of Amartya Sen, Vol. 1, Ethics, Welfare and Measurement, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp 283-310.

Anand P, Hunter G & Smith R (2005) Capabilities and well-being: evidence based on the Sen–Nussbaum approach to welfare, in: Social Indicators Research, 79, pp 9-55.

Andresen S & Fegter S (2011) Children growing up in poverty and their ideas on what constitutes a good life: Childhood Studies in Germany, in: Child Indicators Research, 4, 1, pp 1-19.

Atzmüller R (2009) Institution building and active labour market policies in Vienna since the 1990s, in: International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 29, 11/12, pp 599-611

Bonvin J-M & Moachon E (2008) Social integration policies for young marginalised: a capability approach, in: Social Work and Society, 6, pp 296-305.

Bonvin J-M & Orton M (2009) Activation policies and organisational innovation: the added value of the capability approach, in: International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 29, 11, pp 565–574.

Carpenter M (2009) The capabilities approach and critical social policy: Lessons from the majority world, in: Critical Social Policy, 29, 3, pp 351-373.

Corden A (2001) Comparing child maintenance systems: conceptual and methodological issues, in: International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 4, 4, pp 287-300.

Dean H (2009) Critiquing capabilities: the distractions of a beguiling concept, in: Critical social policy, 29, 2, pp 261-273.

Deneulin S (2002) Perfectionism, paternalism and liberalism in Sen and Nussbaum's Capability Approach, in: Review of Political Economy, 14, 4, pp 497-518.

England KVL (1994) Getting personal - reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research, in: Professional Geographer, 46, 1, pp 80-89.

Finch J (1984) "It's great to have someone to talk to": The ethics and politics of interviewing women, in: Bell C & Roberts H (eds.), Social Researching. London: Routledge.

Finch J (1993) "It's great to have someone to talk to": ethic and politics of interviewing women, in: Hammersley M (ed), Social research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice London: Sage Publications, pp. 166-180.

Galster D, Rosenstein E & Bonvin J-M (2009) Assessing integrated employment policies against the capability approach: A Swiss case study, in: International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 29, 11/12, pp 637-648.

Gascoigne S & Whiteside N (2009) The promotion of capabilities in Sweden: a case study of the contraction of shipbuilding in Gothenburg, in: International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 29, 11/12, pp 587-598.

Green AE & Orton M (2009) The integration of activation policy at sub-national level: A case study of the City Strategy initiative in an English sub-region, in: International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 29, 11/12, pp 612-623.

Hazel N (1995) Elicitation techniques with young people, in: Social Research Update. http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU12.html

Social Work & Society ▪▪▪ E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

Iversen, V (2003). Intra-household inequality: a challenge for the capability approach? in: Feminist Economics, 9, 2-3, pp 93-115.

Jobert A (1996) Comparing education, training and employment in Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy, in: Hantrais L & Mangen S (eds). Cross-national Research Methods in the Social Sciences. London: Pinter.

Lloyd-Sherlock P (2002) Nussbaum, capabilities and older people, in: Journal of International Development, 14, pp 1163–1173.

Mah A (2009) Moral judgements and employment policies in Birmingham (1870-1914): multiplying the categories and treatments of the "undeserving", in: International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 29, 11/12, pp 575–586.

May T (1997) Social Research – Issues, methods and process. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Miquel J & Lopez M (2011) The rewards of a qualitiative approach to life-course research. The example of effects of social protection policies on career paths, in: Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 12, 3.

Monteleone R & Mozzana C (2009) Integrated employment policies for disabled people: Organisational innovation between obstacles and opportunities, in: International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 29, 11/12, pp 649-661.

Nussbaum M (2000) Women and Human Development: the Capabilities Approach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nussbaum M (2003) Capabilities as fundamental entitlements: sen and social justice, in: Feminist Economics, 9, 2-3, pp 33-59.

Nussbaum M (2011) 'Creating Capabilities'. The Human Development Approach. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Oakley A (1990) Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms, in: Roberts H (ed.) Doing Feminist Research. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Punch S (2002) Interviewing strategies with young people: the 'secret box', stimulus material and task-based activities, in: Children & Society, 16: pp 45–56.

Pyles L & Banerjee MM (2010) Work experiences of women survivors: insights from the capabilities approach, in: Affilia, 25, pp 43-55.

Robeyns I (2003) Sen's capability approach and gender inequality: selecting relevant capabilities, in: Feminist Economics, 9, 2-3, pp 61-92.

Robeyns, I (2005a) Selecting capabilities for quality of life measurement, in: Social Indicators Research, 74, 1, pp 191-215.

Robeyns, I (2005b) The capability approach: a theoretical survey, in: Journal of Human Development, 6, 1, pp 93-117.

Robeyns I (2006) The capability approach in practice, in: Journal of Political Philosophy, 14, pp 351–376.

Robeyns I (2008) How has the Capability Approach been put into practice, in: E- Bulletin of the Human Development and Capability Association, Number 12.

Sen AK (1985) Commodities and capabilities. Elsevier: Amsterdam.

Sen AK (1993) Capability and Well-being, in: Nussbaum MC & Sen AK (eds.), The Quality of Life. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sen AK (1998) Development as freedom. Knopf Press: New York.

Social Work & Society ··· E. Hollywood, V. Egdell, R. McQuaid, D. Michel-Schertges:
Methodological Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach in Empirical Research: an Example
of Cross-Country Research on Youth Unemployment in the EU

Sztandar-Sztanderska K (2009) Activation of the unemployed in Poland: from policy design to policy implementation, in: International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 29, 11/12, pp 624-636.

Vizard P & Burchardt T (2007) Developing a capability list: final recommendations of the equalities review steering group on measurement. Paper No' CASE/121: http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cp/CASEpaper121.pdf

Vizard P (2010) Developing and agreeing a capability list in the British context: what can be learnt from social survey data on 'rights'? Paper No' CASE/1442: http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cp/CASEpaper142.pdf

Zimmermann B (2006) Pragmatism and the capability approach: challenges in social theory and empirical research, in: European Journal of Social Theory, 9, pp 467-484.

Authors´ Addresses:
Dr Emma Hollywood / Dr Valerie Egdell / Professor Ronald McQuaid
Edingburgh Napier University
Employment Research Institue
e.hollywood@napier.ac.uk
v.egdell@napier.ac.uk
r.mcquaid@napier.ac.uk

Dr Dirk Michel-Schertges
Aarhus University
Faculty of Arts, Department of Education
dimi@dpu.dk