

## Summaries

Theo Rauch

### From Basic Needs to MDGs – Four Decades of Poverty Reduction Debates and No Progress to be Seen

MDGs and Poverty Reduction Strategies are new international efforts aimed towards the eradication of mass poverty. Some developmentalists are pleased to see the issue of poverty back on the agenda after a long period in which the neoliberal stability paradigm dominated the development debate. However, the new poverty debate does not address the root causes of mass poverty, nor is it related to the lessons learnt from perviously unsuccessful poverty reduction policies and strategies. Describing the manifold approaches during the past four decades, and the reasons for their non-acceptance or failure, the article argues that poverty cannot be reduced on a global scale, by local or national efforts within poor countries, as long as global economic trends tend to exclude a considerable share of the global labour-force. Furthermore, as long as the poor continue to have weak political voices within their countries, global poverty can not be reduced by pro-poor regulations of global economic relations. Successful poverty reduction requires a multi-level and multi-dimensional approach, one in which employment generating global trade regimes, social investment spending and political empowerment of the poor, through grass-root level interventions, would work to supplement one another.

Séverine Deneulin

### Beyond individual freedom and agency: Structures of living together in the capability approach to development

The thrust of Sen's capability approach to development suggests that development should be judged in terms of the expansion of individual freedoms, such as the freedom to read and write, to live in a clean environment, to live long and healthy lives, and to participate in the life of the community. Although Sen's capability approach has shifted the evaluation criteria of quality of life assessments from income to the realm of capability, the paper argues that assessing development achievements in terms of individual freedoms contains serious limitations, especially when the capability approach to development becomes a guiding theory for development practice. There is a strong rationale for extending the evaluative space of development to non-individual or collective capabilities, what the paper calls 'structures of living together'. Through

the example of Costa Rica, the paper illustrates why assessing development in regards to public, or non-individual, space, in addition to individual freedoms, is crucial.

**Sanjay G. Reddy**

### **Counting the Poor: The Truth about World Poverty Statistics**

The World Bank's widely cited estimates of global income poverty are not anchored in an adequate conception of the real requirements of human beings. As a result, both the international poverty lines of US\$1/day and US\$2/day and their supposed national currency equivalents are meaningless. A new approach to global poverty estimation is needed. Such an approach should be based on establishing national poverty lines which possess a meaningful common interpretation, grounded in the real requirements of human beings. The alternative is feasible but requires adequate resources and institutional commitment.

**Stefan Kühl**

### **Who counts, what and how: the power games about economic indicators in the field of development**

This article addresses how power games are imbued in economic indicators used in the field of development. Thus, it draws on the assumption of economic theory that suggests that accounting has the ability to reduce power games within organizations. Using examples of negotiations between different national and multinational organizations in the field of development, the article shows, how identical economic key number can be calculated very differently. In that case, if different organizations draw on economic key number during negotiations, the result is often a complicated power game over the proper key number. However, although the economic key figure can have strong effects on power games in the field of development aid, focussing on such figures can also have the function of creating a „pseudo-understanding“, and thus a continuation of the cooperation process.