

Project DFF Sapere Aude Postdoc Project: Capability Sufficiency: On the Ideal of Distributive Justice.

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Project Summary

This project is a study of the political philosophical principle of sufficiency – that the requirements of distributive justice are fulfilled when everyone has enough.¹ So far this doctrine has only been fully developed and defended from the viewpoint of either resourcism, arguing that the requirements of justice are fulfilled when everyone possess a sufficient amount of resources², or from the viewpoint of welfarism, arguing that justice requires that everyone is sufficiently well off in terms of welfare.³ Despite the fact that existing attempts to defend the doctrine of sufficiency have strengthened the position as an alternative to other distributive theories such as egalitarianism⁴ or prioritarianism⁵, the doctrine still face serious problems: (i) threshold-fetishism⁶; (ii) ignorance of inequalities above the threshold⁷; (iii) theoretical groundlessness⁸. This project argues that by restating the doctrine of sufficiency within the framework of the capability approach⁹ as opposed to resourcism and welfarism, the doctrine of sufficiency can be provided the necessary theoretical ground and therefore be further strengthened and bolstered to cope with the objections with which it is faced. The project therefore asks the following three research questions:

- (I) *How should sufficiency be understood if build upon key elements of capability theory?*
- (II) *Why is capability-sufficiency more theoretical plausible than alternative versions?*
- (III) *Why is capability-sufficiency a better distributive ideal than equality and priority?*

Project Research Publications

Nielsen, L forthcoming, “Sufficiency and Satisfiable Values” Accepted for Publication, *Journal of Applied Philosophy* (Impact factor 1,018, BFI: 2).

Nielsen, L 2019, “What is wrong with Sufficiency?”, *Res Publica* 25 (1): 21-38 (BFI: 2).

¹ Frankfurt 1987.

² Shue 1996; Miller 2007.

³ Frankfurt 1987; 1997; Crisp 2003; Huseby 2010.

⁴ See Nagel 2002; Temkin 2002.

⁵ See Parfit 1997; Holtug 2007.

⁶ Arneson 1989.

⁷ Casal 2007.

⁸ Segall 2014.

⁹ Originally developed by Amartya Sen 1979; 1985; 1992; 1993.

Nielsen, L 2018, "What is our Real Concern with Real Inequality?", *Policy Studies Journal* 46 (3): 553-572 (Impact Factor: 2.83, BFI: 2).

Nielsen, L 2018, "Why Daniels Needs the Capabilities Approach". *Ethical Perspectives* 25 (2): 233-256. (BFI: 1).

Nielsen, L & Axelsen, DV 2017, "Capabilitarian Sufficiency: Capabilities and Social Justice", *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 18 (1): 46-59, (Impact Factor: 0.758; BFI: 1).

Nielsen, L 2017, "Shielding Sufficiency from Shields' Shift", *Law, Ethics and Philosophy* 5: 142-153.

Nielsen, L 2017, "Tilstrækkelighed og retfærdig fordeling". *Statsvetenskaplig Tidsskrift* 199 (4): 767-780. (BFI: 1).

Nielsen, L 2016, "Sufficiency Grounded as Sufficiently Free: A Reply to Shlomi Segall". *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 33 (2):202-216, (Impact Factor: 1.018, BFI: 2).

Axelsen, DV & Nielsen, L 2016, "Essentially Enough: Elements of a Plausible Account of Sufficientarianism". In Fourie, C. & Rid, A. (eds.). *How much is enough? Sufficiency and thresholds in health care*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Axelsen, DV & Nielsen, L 2015, "Sufficiency as Freedom from Duress". *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 23 (4): 406-426, (Impact Factor: 2.362; BFI: 2).