STATEC INVITATION

Measuring Progress: STATEC Well-being Seminar Series

17:00 CET (11:00 AM Eastern) – 18:00 CET (12:00 PM Eastern)

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The (in)feasibility of wellbeing-centered socio-economic development: It's about responsibility, not feasibility

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Abstract: An important strand of wellbeing economics suggests that affluent societies would benefit from some major socio-economics changes such as reducing private consumption and strengthening social capital. At the same time, many scholars and policy makers claim that these are hopelessly idealistic goals the pursuit of which would be infeasible in modern capitalist societies. I will argue that this "realist" view is based on the problematic premise of social determinism whose claims of mechanistic cause-and-effect interactions crowd out almost any analysis of responsibilities for desirable or undesirable outcomes. It also leads to a minimalist view of possible futures and perhaps to a self-fulfilling prophecy of underambition. Within this paradigm, economic scholarship is largely reduced to fatalist damage control. Instead of letting a cynical world view set the limits of academic inquiry, economists and other social scientists should explore the full range of possible desirable outcomes and identify the conditions for their realization in order to nurture a productive public discourse on the possibilities of, and responsibilities for, socio-economic development.

Professor Johannes Hirata is a professor of economics at Osnabrueck University of Applied Sciences (Germany). His main area of interest is at the intersection of ethics and economics, where he works on questions of good socio-economic development. He has published on happiness economics, philosophical aspects of happiness research and happiness policies, economic ethics, sustainable development and on economic growth and degrowth.

The webinar will be held in English via Cisco Webex and recorded.

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