perhaps, those recommended by Brock. His insight that this creates an irresolvable moral tragedy, given current global economic circumstances, is apt. Blake does not ask, however, whether this provides good reason to reconsider how the requirements of liberalism are understood. Arguments that point to liberal abstractions in the face of the severe deprivation of the world's poorest people are hard to accord the weight Blake's conclusion requires. If a doctrine of political morality blocks the best or only options for significantly reducing these deprivations, or leads us to conclude, against proposals that might alleviate such deprivation, that "even a day's delay is an injustice" (112), then perhaps we should rethink how we understand that doctrine instead of rejecting the proposals.

These remarks are meant to convey that *Debating Brain Drain* is a highly engaging book. Brock and Blake deserve praise for the seriousness and sensitivity with which they approach the controversial and underexplored topic of restrictions on emigration. In virtue not only of this but also its provocative arguments, *Debating Brain Drain* ought to be regarded as an important contribution to the development of a new direction in the study of the normative dimensions of global migration.

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Holland, Breena. *Allocating the Earth: A Distributional Framework for Protecting Capabilities in Environmental Law and Policy.*
New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 245. $80.00 (cloth).

How much should we be willing to spend on improving the quality of the air we breathe? How should the emissions of pollutants harming the atmosphere's ozone layer be regulated? Should the extraction of natural gas using new "hydrofracking" technologies be permitted? These are all questions of environmental policies and regulation. Behind these practical questions are many normative and philosophical questions that need to be addressed. An important normative question is why we should have such environmental protection policies in the first place: because they maximize preference satisfaction, because they are the outcome of deliberative democratic processes, or some other reason?

Allocating the Earth is about this set of questions about the normative decisions involved in the design and evaluation of environmental protection policies. Breena Holland offers a critique of the current systems of valuation and assessment in environmental protection policy in the United States and develops her own alternative theory. It is an ambitious project, that, although self-identifying as a work in "applied political theory" (vii), also covers debates in economic philosophy, political philosophy, and environmental and ecological studies.

What is Holland's critique of current systems of valuation and assessment in environmental protection policies in the United States? These systems are basically of two kinds: either they are based in economics, or they use deliberative democratic procedures to make decisions related to environmental evaluation and policy making. The economic methods are all variants of cost-benefit analysis, to which Holland reviews a number of well-known ethical objections. In essence, cost-benefit analysis evaluates policies and policy proposals based on

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whether the total social benefits that a policy produces or is expected to produce outweighs its total costs. While there may or may not be a limited form of compensation offered from those who are net beneficiaries of the policy to those who lose, cost-benefit analysis will always violate the separateness of persons, given its aggregative logic. More generally, "what fairness and equality requires often is not what monetary penalties and/or compensation do and can achieve" (140). Another problem with cost-benefit analysis is that it conceptualizes the environment as an object of individual choice. Cost-benefit analysis assumes that when people state the monetary value they are willing to pay for the use or protection of an environmental resource, this indicates how much that environmental resource serves their well-being. One of the problems with this preference-based approach to valuing is that it disregards the fact that the environment has a value as a basis or a precondition for a person's being able to make meaningful choices. Moving to more sophisticated preference-based techniques of environmental-resource valuation doesn't take away the fundamental question of how to conceptualize those environmental resources in the first place. In other words, the preference-based approach to environmental evaluation fails to conceptualize the environment (or, more precisely, the services that ecosystems offer to human beings) as *preconditions* for a variety of important capabilities that make up the well-being that people can achieve. The claim that ecosystems are a precondition of well-being and freedom is an objective claim: whether or not people accept this claim, whether or not they understand it, or whether its recognition is revealed in their willingness to pay, doesn't have any effect on the strength and the objective nature of the claim.

Sometimes critics of economic approaches to public policy-making support an approach that is based on deliberation and democratic decision making. On the basis of her analysis of the practice of environmental regulation policies, Holland is also critical of these democratic approaches. Under idealized conditions the theory looks attractive, but in practice it looks different. As Holland puts it, "in the idealized deliberative context, the strength of reasons would prevail" (55), but in practice the deliberative methods that are used do not guarantee procedural fairness or equitable outcomes. While Holland appreciates the strengths that each of the existing methods of environmental evaluation and policy making bring, she believes we should try to search harder for an alternative that recognizes ecosystem-services as being of objective instrumental value to human well-being and freedom, while at the same time trying to align with the ideal of political equality that is embedded in democratic policy-making approaches.

Holland spends the second half of her book developing an alternative normative theoretical framework for environmental protection policy. Her theoretical framework has three important features.

First, it is an environmental political theory of distributive justice claiming that social institutions and policies ought to protect and expand people's capabilities—people's beings and doings that they have reason to value. Holland adopts Martha Nussbaum's capabilities theory, since it is a specific partial theory of political justice claiming that everyone should be entitled to a threshold level of central human capabilities, rather than the vaguer and more general framework for normative evaluation that Amartya Sen's capability approach offers. Importantly, Holland rightly stresses that we should not focus on capabilities alone

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but also on the enabling conditions of those capabilities. And in this respect, the environment has a crucial role to play. Holland argues that the role of the environment in making capabilities possible is so important and central that we should conceptualize environmental ecological functioning (i.e., the ecosystem services that the environment offers to human beings) as a *meta-capability* that underlies all other capabilities. "The environment's ecological functioning is a meta-capability in the sense that it is a precondition of all the capabilities that Nussbaum defines as necessary for living a good human life" (112).

A strong aspect of Holland's analysis is that it drives home the point that protecting the ecosystem is not just one way among many possible ways to contribute to human well-being; rather, it is a crucial and nonsubstitutable precondition for living. Yet one could question whether conceptualizing it as a "meta-capability" is correct (even if in some policy contexts it may turn out to be helpful in arguing for the change that is needed). I would argue that the environment is not a capability, since capabilities are real opportunities for various dimensions of human beings (such as being healthy, being educated, being safe) and for things we can do (working, caring for dependents, undertaking leisure activities). The environment and the services that its ecosystems give to human beings are absolutely necessary for human life to be possible in the first place, but that doesn't warrant giving it the conceptual status of a 'capability'. As an interdisciplinary language used in many different disciplines, the capability approach already suffers from sloppy use of terms and we should avoid contributing to this conceptual confusion. It would have been better, in my view, to introduce a term showing that there are substitutable and nonsubstitutable preconditions for each capability, and that there are absolutely necessary (or crucial) versus less central preconditions. An environment that is able to deliver a minimal level of ecosystem services to life on our planet is both a nonsubstitutable as well as an absolutely necessary precondition for human well-being understood in terms of capabilities. There are many other preconditions for human well-being, but sustainable ecosystem services is one of the very few, perhaps even the only one, that is both nonsubstitutable and absolutely necessary.

The second feature of Holland's theoretical framework is the role she gives to democratic politics in the design and implementation of environmental policies. Holland aims to avoid the weaknesses of participatory rule making, yet at the same time acknowledges the legitimate reasons for deliberative approaches to rule making, in particular the goal of bringing ordinary citizens back into the rule-making process, as well as endorsing the ideal of an inclusive and egalitarian form of democracy. Yet, as Holland argues, genuine democratic participation requires the protection of threshold levels of some capabilities. Environmental policy making should therefore commit to the standard of rejecting policies that fail to protect the environmental preconditions of those capabilities-thresholds. Holland's model of environmental decision making and implementation is thus committed to participatory politics, on the understanding that this requires the necessary substantive preconditions for such politics to be met. Procedural justice is thus constrained by a minimal account of substantive justice.

Third, Holland endorses Nussbaum's view that policies should protect each person's capabilities at a threshold level. Noneconomic approaches to policy evaluation are facing a difficult challenge, namely, the problem of trade-offs

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between dimensions: how should we resolve the conflicts that arise between the positive and negative impacts that public policies have on the different dimensions of various people? Holland introduces the notion of *capability ceilings*, which are "limitations on the choice to pursue certain individual actions that are justifiable when those actions can have or significantly contribute to the effect of undermining another person's minimum threshold of capability provision and protection" (142). For example, if we agree that having access to high-quality water and not living in an environment with severely polluted water are included in capability thresholds, then extracting gas by means of fracking may not be permitted in case fracking will contaminate local hydro-ecosystems. Holland insists that protecting the environmental preconditions for capability thresholds, and introducing the notion of capability ceilings as a means to solve trade-offs between some people's increased capabilities at the expense of some others', should be beyond the reach of political choices. Here Holland follows Nussbaum, who defends her well-known list of ten capabilities that should be met at threshold level as a matter of constitutional entitlement.

The idea of ceilings as part of a sufficientarian account of justice is very interesting. Yet it certainly deserves further exploration and analysis, since Holland's account leaves several issues unaddressed. One concern is whether the idea of ceilings is sufficiently spelled out in *Allocating the Earth*. Holland writes that capability ceilings should be established, "but only to the degree that they threaten other people's capability thresholds" (147). She gives the example of SUVs, which burn large amounts of gasoline per mile traveled compared to other cars (147–48). The government could establish a ceiling by means of a registration tax on SUVs, and use this tax revenue to subsidize public transport, which is more often used by those who cannot afford SUVs. Yet, analytically speaking, there are two separate points here. One issue is whether some type of action (driving an SUV) damages the ecosystem and thereby damages the preconditions for other people's capabilities (breathing high-quality air or, for future people, living with a stable atmosphere). Another issue is whether we should tax those with high levels of capabilities in order to raise tax revenues to meet the urgent capability needs of others. The first case is a case of harm being done, while this cannot be said for the second case. The first concern could be met by simply making the possession and use of SUVs illegal. The second case needs to be argued for in terms of a full-blown theory of distributive justice and will require not merely endorsing Nussbaum's account but also defending it against those who argue that she must either put the thresholds very low, or else defend her theory against charges (by libertarians and responsibility-sensitive egalitarians) that it is too redistributive.

A second concern is that Holland does not engage in much detail with the objections that philosophers have made in recent years against threshold views of justice; instead, her argument presupposes that we accept that environmental justice entails a sufficiency view. Yet opting for a sufficiency view may push under the carpet some problems that the capability approach faces if it wants to fully compete with established social cost-benefit methods. The capability approach can only be a real alternative if we solve the issue of how to trade-off different dimensions. By arguing that the only thing that matters from the point of view of justice is that people have minimal levels of capabilities, we have not developed a sufficiently powerful tool to deal with all issues of environmental regulation.

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Suppose the government has a financial windfall and wants to raise the capabilities of some of the most disadvantaged. Where should it allocate its money? To more and better mental-health care for drug addicts or people with mental illness or disorders? To better food and shelter for the economically worst off? To destigmatization campaigns for some of the most stigmatized groups in society? To reducing CO_2 emissions in order to protect the basic capabilities of future generations? At present, one major weakness of the capability approach to justice is that it does not provide an answer to these questions of trade-offs, which are central to policy making. Whereas Holland's theory gives an account of why some transfers from the capability rich to the capability poor may be justified (namely, in those cases where the actions of the capability rich *harm* the capabilities of the capability poor), it does not give all the answers that a capability approach needs to give if it wants to replace cost-benefit analysis or deliberative participation as methods for policy decision making.

Allocating the Earth is a fascinating book, for at least two reasons. First, there are theoretical strengths to the book. Holland convincingly criticizes the ethical basis of economic methods for environmental evaluation for being narrow and contested. But she is equally critical of deliberative methods, which may be fine in theory but in practice do not meet some of the idealized conditions that are needed for deliberative methods of collective valuation and decision making to produce legitimate results. These critiques are particularly interesting given that they are at the same time theoretically solid but also based on observations of how these normative frameworks work in practice.

The second reason has to do with the type of theory Breena Holland is developing and the audiences that she addresses. Holland aims at something difficult, which is to speak to both administrators and policy makers engaged in environmental policy regulation, as well as at political philosophers and theorists interested in theory development. This is very hard to do, since these two groups have different epistemic backgrounds and assumptions, and, importantly, expect and judge academic work with very different standards. They want something different from a theory, and hence the (often implicit) evaluative criteria they apply are also different. Holland (ix) is right when she writes that "scholarship like this, which endeavors to work back and forth between theory and practice, runs the risk of pleasing neither theoreticians nor practitioners." Hence the challenge that Holland has taken on is not merely her diverse audience, but also the nature of the work she is producing. The political theory that she develops is grounded in practice, and has a strong applied and interdisciplinary character. Unfortunately, in most academic institutions around the world, the conditions for doing high-quality applied theoretical and interdisciplinary work are not favorable, for a variety of reasons related to both the discipline-based structure of academia as well as the status it awards to cutting-edge mono-disciplinary versus explorative interdisciplinary work. Against this unfavorable background, *Allocating the Earth* is a laudable project, which may also serve as an example for others working on applied theoretical and interdisciplinary projects.

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