

Workshop Technology and Human Capabilities, 1-12-08, Delft

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Introductory remarks

1. Joy of recognition: familiar questions and interests:
 - a. Search for a more adequate concept and approach of development, as part of the struggle for a more equitable world order
 - i. Need for *poor-centered development*
 - ii. Solving the tension between the need for more development and the boundaries of sustainability
 - b. Search for a responsible approach to technology development: *inclusive development, integral design*
 - c. Stimulating attention for and reflection on the role of technology within development:
 - i. survey on behalf of Rathenau Institute
 - ii. I4D-network: some successful symposia; on energy technology and on ICT
2. Stimulating environment for venturing into these questions in depth
3. Impressed:
 - a. understanding of the CA
 - b. links with sociology of technology, development thinking (Sen, BoP), design etc.
 - c. new insights into BoP: poor as producers, poverty broader than income poverty, role for NGOs, ...
4. Need for better communication and cooperation between academia and development policy and practice; Oikos, I4D-network.

Challenges

5. Technology barely an issue in development policy and practice. Two stances, connected to two visions on development:
 - a. Technology taken for granted, as logical element of modern, industrial development and growth; here development as growth is central
 - b. Technology discarded, because it exemplifies and is said to amplify western dominance, force developing countries into the process of globalisation, enlarge all kind of ecological problems and endanger existing social and cultural patterns; here development as ameliorating social and cultural quality of society is centralCould the CA of technology for development bridge these differences and thereby stimulate a constructive dialogue on the role of technology?
6. Need for poor-centered development. Development where the poor are the main authors of development, not just the receivers:
 - a. Participation and empowerment: not too successful
 - b. CA as solution?
 - c. But then, what capabilities can or does technology address? Capacities and states, more than skills, mental states, character traits, virtues, views
 - d. Technology demands, enforces or presupposes certain skills and mental states of views that will be typically western
 - e. Where does this leave existing – if you want traditional – skills, views and social and cultural patterns, as far as these are valued by people?
 - f. Exactly *existing* skills, views and social-cultural patterns of people in the South are the starting point – not the end point though - in poor-centered development

- g. Where does this leave the role for our, western technological expertise?
 - h. Problem of 'adaptive preferences' (Sen) or the false conscience (Marx), as opposed to the problem of paternalism.
 - i. Cf. Appropriate Technology. To be sure: not only about starting at existing skills and values in the field of design for appropriate the use of technology, but about choosing the right kind of (technological) solution and even choosing the right problem. What has CA have to offer here?
7. Oikos' workfield with two opposing challenges:
- a. Underdevelopment and poverty in the South: here technological development seems to be needed (but often is also problematic)
 - b. Unsustainability, mainly due to material overconsumption and inefficient production in the North: here technology may be part of the solution, but it certainly also is part of the problem: ecological impacts, connection to material production and consumption growth.
- Could the CA here offer an elegant escape because it does not steer development into the direction of material resources and assets, but in the direction of capabilities, that are not material per se? But then, how does technology fit in here?

To summarize and conclude:

- 8. Welcome research because it may stimulate a constructive dialogue on the role of technology in sustainable development, both in the development field and in the environmental field.
- 9. Interested in connecting.
- 10. Anxious to see contribution of CA. My starting technology – using the CA for an appropriate approach to technology – rather than CA – including technology in more complete CA.
- 11. Design best entry point, or rather innovation?
- 12. CA solution to the 'adaptive preference – paternalism' problem, or the agency – well being freedom problem'?