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Debates related to the CA

- Which capabilities matter and who (how, when) is to decide about this
- How to expand human capabilities
- How to measure the results

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Applications of the CA

1. General *assessments* of development of countries
2. Assessing small-scale development projects
3. *Identifying* the poor in developing countries
4. Poverty/well-being *assessment* advanced economies
5. *Assessing* deprivation of disabled people
6. *Assessing* gender inequalities
7. Debating policies
8. Critiquing/assessing social norms, practices & discourses
9. Concepts in non-normative research

(Robeyns, 2006)

Increasingly:
Prospective application

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Technical artifacts & capabilities

Sequence:

- commodity (a bike) →
- characteristics (transportation) →
- **capability to function** (ability to move) →
- utility (pleasure from moving)

(Sen, 1983)

Robeyns (2005):
"these characteristics of a good enable a functioning". Yet:
"we are not interested in a bicycle because it is an object made from certain materials with a specific shape and color"

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Some examples of applying the CA to technology

ICT in developing countries:

- Laptops
- Mobile phones
- Etc.

What it enables people to do and be

Tissue engineered hearth valves:

- Tissue engineers often have limited conception of functionality, try to mimic nature
- Should be more concerned with impact on people's capabilities to play sports, going through pregnancy, etc.

(Derksen, 2008)

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Technology & human development

- Those aiming for reduction of global poverty should strive to better deploy technology for expanding the capabilities of the poor
- Those responsible for the design and introduction of technology for developing countries should be aware of the way technology affects capabilities of people