This paper poses a question: to what extent can instrumental freedoms – with which the greater part of human development and indeed the enterprise of many countries is concerned – be linked to the ‘ends’ of development, if these are conceived as human capabilities.

If Afghanistan, through its turmoil and struggles, succeeds in containing its drug trade, and cultivating a sound or even vibrant economy through concrete measures such as opening new markets, improving contract enforcement, extending the rule of law and building access roads, this will rightly merit praise and admiration. If the Afghani people also attain freedom from undernourishment – something which reportedly 70% of Afghans did not enjoy in 20041 – this will also undoubtedly generate warm acclaim. The question is how these freedoms – for both may be called that – relate to one another? How do the intrinsically valued human freedoms: being nourished, being educated, being loved, being healthy, doing good work – relate to instrumental freedoms such as financial transparency, economic opportunity, political freedom, and protective security?

This is a central question to human development, for much of development is more visibly linked with the expansion of instrumental freedoms than with the expansion of individual capabilities. It is not a question that belongs entirely within development ethics, for many of the connections require empirical scrutiny. However development ethics – or at least what Des Gasper calls the “ethics of development”2 – would seem required to pay sustained and coherent attention to this normative question. This is especially the case since many policies (upon which it would be nice to have an ethical view) advance instrumental freedoms – or indeed entail a trade-off between various sets of instrumental and human freedoms.3

Examples of the disjunction between instrumental freedoms and human capabilities are not hard to come by. In fact, examples fall particularly thick and fast when we consider the topics of this morning’s session: the economy and the environment. While we may be able to measure the carbon particles in the atmosphere, or the depth of the ozone layer, and while we may be able to relate this directly to an instrumental freedom such as ecological security4, we cannot cash out the value of carbons emissions regulations in terms of expanded human capabilities with breathtaking directness. There are many barriers to a neat conversion factor. The people affected may continue to be born for centuries; the chain of causality may run through fish, through vegetables, through water, or other parts of the ecosystem; and of course the dizzying task of generating an accurate prediction may seem child’s play in comparison with the hurrying challenge of proscribing the counterfactual.

Similar disjunctions might pertain to changes in the global economy. How many human capabilities are expanded or undermined by the setting up of a hedge fund? By raising

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1 Human Development Report 2004
2 Gasper, Des Ethics of Development.
3 Of course economics is not only concerned with normative issues: description and prediction are also part of its methodology, and the accuracy of descriptive and predictive matters will influence the normative exercise. On this see Sen, Amartya. 1989. “Economic Methodology: Heterogeneity and Relevance.” Social Research 56:299.
4 Exploring the Links UNEP 2004 adds this instrumental freedom to Sen’s list.
interest rates? By reducing the days it takes to register a new business? By a tax law reform? By undertaking fundamental research on genetics or nanotechnology?

It is because these links are so vexing and difficult to make at more than a superficial level, and indeed perhaps cannot be comprehensively made without seeming excessively contrived and artificial, that many have found Sen’s capability approach to add scant value when it comes to issues of the environment, or of technology and basic scientific research, of institution-building and long-range planning, or indeed of many fields of economics. Yet the practical value of the capability approach – and indeed of other avenues of development ethics – rests, to a significant degree, on the degree to which these links can be strengthened.

This paper opens up these issues for further discussion. A leopard that has eaten on the previous day but is bored this afternoon may stalk far more deer than it intends to attack, and so create broad havoc without downing any prey. So too this paper will cavalierly scare up many more questions than it will capture and deal with. The intent, however, is to challenge scholars at MSU to do better than we have done to date, in orienting development processes to advance the freedoms people value. I honestly believe there are questions we have not addressed that could be addressed, perhaps for the first time in history, because of our ability to work across disciplines, and our technological ability to access and process more data and information than ever before.

This paper proceeds as follows. First, it takes a step back, to review the terms I’ve just launched at you: capabilities, instrumental freedoms, and human development. Second, it analyses how Sen makes some connections between instrumental freedoms and human capabilities in his own development research. Third, it articulates the ‘problem’ and disjunction again – this time with respect to measurement issues. Fourth, it closes by identifying the avenues by which the capability approach in practice may look rather different than many suppose.

A word on limitations: This paper examines the relationship between instrumental freedoms and Sen’s capability approach as an evaluative framework. In so doing it neglects alternative evaluative frameworks, which might give deep and intrinsic value to aspects of the ecosystem, for example, or evaluate economic advancement differently. Despite this and other limitations of this paper, it may have a positive externality. For humans work not only for economic and social advancement but also, at times, to satisfy their own moral sentiments and quest for meaning; indeed some seek meaningful work that is of genuine social value.5 A clearer assessment of the extent to which various instrumental works advance others’ human freedoms may thus be of personal interest to those who create hedge funds, set interest rates, register businesses, or study development ethics (for example) as well as of analytical value.

Capabilities, Instrumental Freedoms, and Human Development
I presume this group is well-versed in the capability approach so will only rehearse the terms briefly.

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5 This disjuncture has been the inspiration for at least one book on economics and values. The preface describes the reasoning as follows: “A few years ago, we participated in a conference in which core issues in the economics of institutions and organizations were discussed by academic economists. We noticed… that in casual conversations over meals, we found ourselves talking about problems such as crime, drug abuse, our declining sense of community, family instability, and the moral culture confronting our children, problems that seemed to be of great importance to our lives but that had little intersection with our economic analyses, though these purported to deal with the most basic institutional structures of society.” Economics, Values and Organizations. Avner Ben-Ner and Louis Putterman, Eds. Cambridge Univ Press 1998.
The capability approach is a normative proposition. The proposition is this: that social arrangements should be primarily evaluated according to the extent of freedom people have to promote or achieve functionings they value. Put simply, progress, or development, or poverty reduction, occurs when people have greater freedoms.

The capability approach has evolved, and its terminology has done likewise. In Development as Freedom, capabilities are sometimes called real freedoms or, simply freedoms. What does Sen mean by capability or real freedom? Sen’s formulations capability have two parts: freedom and valuable beings and doings (functionings). I begin with the latter.

‘Functionings’ is an umbrella term for the resources and activities and attitudes people recognize as constitutive of well-being – such as a healthy body, poise, knowledge, a warm friendship, an educated mind, a good job. What is centrally important varies in different times and places and among different people. Thus Sen argues that there cannot be a ‘canonical’ list of functionings; the set of focal functionings or capabilities will have to be set and re-set again and again in different ways.

Capability “refers to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for her to achieve. Capability is thus a kind of freedom: the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations (or, less formally put, the freedom to achieve various lifestyles).”6 Another way of describing capability is ‘opportunity freedom’, a term Sen also uses. This kind of freedom resembles that described by TH Green, who wrote, “We do not mean merely freedom from restraint or compulsion … when we speak of freedom as something to be so highly prized, we mean a positive power or capacity of doing or enjoying something worth doing or enjoying.”7

The next concept is instrumental freedom. Sen takes great pains to distinguish the ends and the means of development, pointing out that these have often been jumbled together in unhelpful ways. Furthermore he argues that the importance of many aspects of human development is that they have intrinsic and instrumental value at the same time. For example, education is both valuable in itself and a wonderful means by which to advance child spacing, family health and nutrition, and the education of the next generation.

Many freedoms have instrumental as well as intrinsic value. Sen argues that freedom “is not only the ultimate end of development; it is also a crucially effective means.”8 Of particular importance, he goes on to argue that these means can be empirically discerned: “This acknowledgement [of freedom as a crucially effective means] can be based on empirical analysis of the consequences of - and the interconnections between - freedoms of distinct kinds, and on extensive empirical evidence that indicates that freedoms of different types typically help to sustain each other.”9

In Development as Freedom Sen identifies five ‘instrumental freedoms’ that, he claims, “tend to contribute to the general capability of a person to live more freely.” They are:

1) political freedoms, e.g. democracy, the freedom to scrutinize and criticize authorities, to enjoy a free press and multi-party elections.

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6 1999: 75
7Green 1881:370 – italic Sen’s
8 iadb p 10
9 iadb p 10-11; the footnote reads: ‘the evidence is discussed in Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom’
What is interesting to focus in upon is Sen’s claim regarding these freedoms: that they “tend to contribute to the general capability of a person to live more freely.” It is this claim I would like to probe more fully, and in particular the avenues by which this and similar claims can be sustained, elaborated, or challenged.

Development, thus, is to be oriented such that it expands people’s worthwhile freedoms. Human Development – the school of thought advances human beings as the “end” of development – describes human development as “a process of enlarging people's choices.”

“So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as means only.” This familiar sentence from Immanuel Kant’s paper “Development as Capability Expansion” which is reprinted in Sakiko Fukuda-Parr and Shiv Kumar’s Reader on Human Development. The status of human beings as “ends” of development must be reiterated because human beings “also happen to be – directly or indirectly—the primary means of all production”. In fact, the dominant approach to economic development regarded people to be means to production, prosperity, and economic growth.

To wrest the orientation of development away from income and economic growth and toward human well-being and freedom might seem an elementary conceptual move. Indeed the Human Development Reports, which have been published since 1990, have made this pattern of thought seem a natural and convenient perspective from which to analyse a number of applied policy topics ranging from gender and the environment to technology, globalization, and cultural liberty. However, the task of compiling and analysing even existing information is complex, and is an area, this paper argues, in which further research could add tremendous value.

**Capability Comparison and Rationality**

As is visible from the description thus far, Sen’s capability approach has changed the terms of the utilitarian calculus, while retaining its underlying consequentialism. To caricature this position, what is required in order to put the capability approach into practice is to switch from an income/utility metric to a capability metric. In this case, the task of development ethics is to identify the marginal human capabilities that are expanded – or undermined – by alternative courses of action. If a single action can be identified that yields the richest field of
capability expansion – the largest capability “budget set” if you will\(^\text{14}\) – it will dominate the alternative courses of action. Of course there will be much incompleteness and partial ordering of actions, and the incommensurability between alternative capability sets is expected to be quite substantial. However, as the Human Development Reports demonstrate, penetrating analyses can be advanced and debated, even given these constraints.

That caricature is very telegraphic and incomplete, but not so distorted as to be unrecognisable. When Sen addresses evaluative reasoning at length, the framework advanced is indeed a nuanced and even meticulous form of consequentialist reasoning – which can among other things incorporate human rights,\(^\text{15}\) situated responsibility,\(^\text{16}\) imperfect obligations, and other ethical considerations as well as features such as interconnections and uncertainty. The aim is to build up a picture not only of “culmination outcomes” (that is, only final outcomes without taking any note of the process of getting there, including the exercise of freedom) but also of “comprehensive outcomes” (taking note of the processes through which the culmination outcomes come about).\(^\text{17}\)

Consequentialism, thus described, is a “discipline of responsible choice based on the chooser’s evaluation of states of affairs, including consideration of all the relevant consequences viewed in light of the exact circumstances of that choice.”\(^\text{18}\)

The logic of human development as the maximization of human freedoms consequent to development policies and activities, suitably qualified by other considerations, emerges clearly as the ethical shape of Sen’s approach.

“Maximization does not...demand that all alternatives be comparable, and does not even require that a best alternative be identifiable. It only requires that we do not choose an alternative that is worse than another that can be chosen instead...”\(^\text{19}\)

Note that instrumental freedoms are embedded in the logic, but their value is tethered to their connection to and impact on intrinsically valued human freedoms – they cannot be evaluated in isolation from these connections.

This has a number of implications, each of which affect how we can understand the ‘capability approach in practice.”

**Challenges and Dangers**

The first is the obvious - but not therefore simple - challenge of tracing the consequences. As Sen points out, human freedoms are not like ripe plums that are visible from afar and come racing down as soon as you nudge a tree of instrumental freedoms, almost begging to be


\(^{19}\) Ibid. see

gathered, sorted, and weighed.\textsuperscript{20} When consequential reasoning is difficult, how should the hedge fund manager, the management consultant in a developing country transport industry, the software technician of a statistics bureau, identify the capability expansions that will be unveiled by alternative courses of action open to them and thus make ethical choices? If in fact it is not possible to undertake consequentialist reasoning in these situations – reasoning that may be incomplete but may be better than other forms of evaluative reasoning – then the capability approach indeed does not add value.

A second challenge is time and the need for a dynamic evaluative framework. To actually map capability expansions requires one to extrapolate capability expansion down through time – this is trying enough with respect to income and the computing of net present value; with respect to a plural vector of capabilities the challenge deepens.

A third challenge is the need to impute uncertainty – to keep track of the ambiguities that we are faced with and not to be more precise than the evidence allows us to be. This is a principle Sen does not tire of commending. However again, the technicalities of aggregating uncertainty coefficients in complex multidimensional analyses are quite deep. It would require separate new research to calculate capability uncertainty coefficients. Of course there are many other challenges.

If we are unable to map the net human capability consequences of actions then, for very good reasons, evaluative logic may turn on sharpening the instrumental freedoms within their own terms of efficiency and output. In most cases this reasoning is useful. In many cases it may be sufficient – a transport industry that builds and maintains roads seems evidently superior to a transport industry of absentee workers who must walk to their secondary place of employment because the roads are so terrible. In other situations however, this reasoning, which Sen refers to as technical or engineering reasoning, may fall short. Many will recall that Sen describes one who only engages in this form of reasoning as “a decision expert whose response to seeing a man engaged in slicing his toes with a blunt knife is to rush to advise him that he should use a sharper knife to better serve his evident objective.”\textsuperscript{21} Unfortunately, the situations in which technical reasoning is misguided are not invariably so apparent as the toe-slicing example might seem to suggest.

A good example of the challenge is the poverty impacts of alternative macroeconomic policies. Interest rate regimes are not so far removed as one might think from the lived experience of the wage labourer or the small farmer, but the grounds upon which these are most commonly fixed focus on financial or technical criteria precisely because the poverty impacts are difficult and tedious to trace. This is a challenge to which, I would suggest, development ethics should contribute, by tracing the connections and identifying some particularly salient relationships.

The five freedoms presented in \textit{Development as Freedom} are quite interesting, for they suggest that consequential reasoning is practical/feasible. Indeed Sen’s work seems seeped in this conviction. Still, the empirical evidence that justifies justify the five freedoms is indeed rather patchy. This is not inappropriate in a popular book. But it does suggest that further research needs to go beyond Sen’s writing and explore in depth the possible empirical interconnections.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. section IV
\textsuperscript{21} “Rationality and Social Choice” 1995: 16
The need for stronger empirical foundations is important. For if Development as Freedom’s five freedoms are advanced as representing ‘the capability approach in practice’ - as indeed they already are - they may be advanced on the basis of prestige, authority, imitation, or haste. The opportunity to deepen and enrich or challenge the empirically suggested connections may be overlooked. Sitting with one’s thumb on one’s jowl and one’s chin cradled in one’s hand is not necessarily the same thing as sitting and thinking, and it is the latter process that may prove the more fruitful with respect to the choice, defence, and cultivation of instrumental freedoms.

I would argue, therefore, for a more vigorous, more bumptious, more insistent engagement of development ethics in trying to make Sen’s comprehensive consequential reasoning easier for others to handle. One could do worse than to start by re-examining the rationale for advancing Sen’s five instrumental freedoms. This will entail empirical as well as ethical insights. It could be accomplished by research that synthesised existing studies and data related to a concrete problem, and analysed it using the normative framework that is the capability approach. Indeed this might open a rich field of research.

**Valued Capabilities:**

Thus far we have examined the challenge of cashing out the human consequences of alternative development policies or activities - of shaking down the red-ripe plums. As useful as that caricature may be it is now time to expand it, because it suggests that the consequences, the plums, the capabilities of interest, are visible from afar, and easily recognised. This is decidedly not the case.

Recall that Sen defines capabilities as valuable beings and doings. He does so knowing fully well that people are diverse, and reasonably consider different beings and doings to be of value, and that the social or political choice of capabilities to pursue must negotiate in some manner this diversity of values and priorities. Sen argues that public debate should influence the capabilities upon which to focus, the distribution of capabilities across a population, and the selection of other principles by which to evaluate comprehensive outcomes. He writes,

> public participation in these valuational debates—in explicit or implicit forms—is a crucial part of the exercise of democracy and responsible social choice... In a freedom-oriented approach, the participatory freedoms cannot but be central to public policy analysis.”

This complicates the picture in a number of different ways, of which I will mention two. First, there is the evident analytical complication. If one is trying to maximize income, it is challenging enough. It is difficult to estimate shadow prices, to set the social discount ranges, and identify and price indirect effects. But at least the maximand is clear. In the human development framework, the maximand itself is and should be a separate topic for discussion, it should be a creative and moving target.

Second, there is the difficulty of communication: even if it looks very good in theory, the practical questions quickly emerge. As Dasgupta, Sen and Marglin wrote regarding a similar issue: “We are roughly in the position of the mice of Aesop’s fable who found their ingenious

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David Crocker’s pathbreaking work has shown the extensive connections between the intention of deliberative democracy and Sen’s capability approach. It has also argued that the challenges of creating deep deliberative moments that affect public policy is not to be underestimated. One challenge is that of identifying the alternative capability sets; another is communicating feasible alternatives in a way that is interesting and accessible to diverse publics; another is managing the power differentials between different geographical regions, between men and women, young and old, different racial and religious groups within the same public; another is forging working agreements across conflicts of interests and values, which will be politically feasible to implement.

So the capability approach is a two-ring, rather than a one-ring circus. The first ring concerns the comprehensive evaluation of alternative courses of action – the link between instrumental freedoms and human outcomes upon which this paper focuses. In this ring various alternative situations, or courses of action, might be evaluated by multiple judges and technical advisors, according to multiple categories, and thus their potential links to human freedoms are clarified. In the second ring people discuss their own values and priorities, argue, modify, and improve their articulation of their values. On the basis of this discussion they either select a course of action or, at very least, give input into the categories of evaluation. The two rings thus are interlinked, not independent, one from another.

Measurement: Advances and Limitations

Let us consider the implications thus far for one practical application of the capability approach, which is to issues of measurement. As you may know, the measurement of capabilities has developed, over the last 15 years, into a subfield with some energy about it. That is, researchers have searched for empirical and technical tools by which to measure human capabilities in ways that resonate directly with Sen’s description of them. I am sure that you are familiar with much of this work but let me just review an incomplete cross-section of the findings:

**Fuzzy poverty** measures empirically capture the insight that the border between a poor and non-poor person with respect to any one variable - whether it be income or years of schooling or nutritional status - may not be crisp and clear and it would be arbitrary to make them so. Still, it may be possible to say with certainty that certain persons are poor, and possible to say with certainty that others are not, but a borderland of ambiguity exists between them. Fuzzy poverty measures basically are able to represent, mathematically, that field of ambiguity.

**Dominance Comparisons** with respect to multidimensional poverty build on Sen’s observation that if certain functionings/capabilities are identified as valuable, then even if there is substantial disagreement as to the relative weights of the various capabilities, it is evident that, having more of each of them would be an improvement. Through this...

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‘dominance partial ordering,’ Sen suggests, substantial agreement might be reached on issues without requiring any agreement on relative weights of variables. In a paper by Duclos Sahn and Younger which takes up this work they write,

Rather than asking, “Is poverty lower for A than for B over all reasonable poverty frontiers?” we ask, “What is the area of poverty frontiers over which we can be sure that poverty is lower for A than for B?” This approach provides one useful way to get around the need to make an arbitrary choice of “reasonable” limits for the range of admissible poverty frontiers.

Tony Atkinson commends dominance comparisons because they “identify the circumstances under which we can make a statement of the form that “multidimensional deprivation in country A is lower than in country B” for all deprivation measures satisfying certain general properties.” In other words, some situations can be compared even in the absence of clearly fixed deliberative priorities.

**Agency Measures** Many of the empirical applications of the capability approach in fact measure functionings rather than capabilities. In fact Politeia’s 1996 measurement conference in Sen’s honour was entitled “Environment and society in a changing world: the perspective of functioning theory.” This is because the measurement of opportunity freedom requires a counterfactual account of opportunities that existed but were not selected. I have argued, however, that it is both possible and important to measure agency or process freedom - and indeed without some attention to the measurement of freedom, our approaches lose the signal insight of Sen’s own work. In fact agency freedom can be measured with respect to different domains Richard Ryan and Ed Deci’s work on self determination seems particularly convincing in this regard although others may take other views.

**Q-Squared** A further question is how and whether to ascertain that the dimension or functionings under measurement and scrutiny are indeed valuable, and what their relative value or weighting is (this is the second ring of the two-ring circus). Of course in many instances, we may not know and indeed reflection upon measures may be a key input into a deliberative discussion. Furthermore, for comparative purposes it may sometimes be important to gather data irrespective of the local population’s priorities and activities. However, when indeed it is appropriate to do so, economists who build surveys are able to integrate the development and testing of a survey with the analyses of anthropologists, sociologists, and field staff who, through participation, facilitate analysis and the identification of key variables at the local or sub-local level. The title of Ravi Kanbur’s book *Q-Squared* refers to the benefits gained by aligning qualitative and quantitative methods for many reasons - one of which relates to the need to ascertain vales and priorities.

**Cost Benefit Reconsidered** Thus far, the measurement advances I have described all focus on honing our ability to track advances in human freedoms. Yet the measurement of human freedom is not the only area in which we have improved or - arguably - should improve - the scope of measurement.

Consider for example the tasks of ‘capacity building’ and ‘institutional strengthening’. In many development activities, capacity building is viewed as an objective, an ‘outcome’ or an ‘end’ (and rightly, in my view). Yet from the capability perspective, of course, this is conceptually difficult. The value of strengthening an institution, or building people’s own
capacity as workers and leaders, depends ultimately upon the contribution that institution makes to human capabilities. Yet it is difficult to isolate and predict the stream of capability expansions that might ensue from, for example, teaching a local community based organization how to keep accounts, how to save, how to set up a central revolving fund, and so on. But the attention precisely to this connection is, I argue, not as insistent as perhaps it might be and is one concrete example of the problem this paper addresses.

Let me give you an elementary example. Last month I visited a solid community development activity in a township of Capetown, South Africa. In this activity, a group of women made beaded brooches, which were sold cooperatively to foreign groups, through the mediation of a local NGO, and by this means earned a living wage. The women enjoyed the friendship and support that the group provided to them, which was particularly strong since they were each living with HIV/AIDS and so shared some serious concerns as well as some parallel challenges. They liked the beading – one of the women called Monica who was particularly creative would make the designs, and teach them to others; another monitored the quality of the products. They bought the thread and beads cooperatively to reduce costs.

In this example, which is one of millions of small scale development activities, but not unrelated either to many larger scale initiatives, the capability expansion at one point in time, and the related values of functioning institutions, are both evident.

On the one hand, the women’s capabilities expanded directly: the goods they were able to purchase with the income and the security it gave them, the friendship and support of their co-workers, the satisfaction of having made a high quality pin for others to enjoy.

On the other hand, the women’s capabilities were partly expanded indirectly, by technical and institutional processes. These included their capacity to buy supplies and sell their products cooperatively; their capacity to access a high- value niche market through the NGO; the technical assistance the NGO gave them as to the patterns and quality of product that would sell, their ability to keep accounts, divide gains fairly, and monitor quality - and so on. Reciprocally, the NGO, being able to bring visitors to this site, consolidated its own funding basis and thus increased its ability to spawn other such activities in the future. Also, the NGO in turn relied on people in the global North who had become, to use Nigel Dower’s term, ‘global citizens’ and so provided a stable market and extra support. Furthermore, because of tragic death rates, the existence of an ongoing income generating institution in this neighbourhood benefited a succession of woman over time. And if we look wider, the transaction was also influenced indirectly by the setting – in a country with the rule of law where the equipment was not stolen, where the society permitted women to do this type of work, where there was enough light to see by, where it was safe enough and close enough for an NGO to work easily, and so on. As if this is not complex enough, chance and circumstance also played a role.

What is needed, analytically, in order to connect instrumental interventions to ‘build institutional capacity at the micro, local, national and global levels’ with human capabilities is not hard to see. Its difficulties are likewise clear - which is why I chose this example. Comparisons need to be set up - whether as randomized experiments or as activities that are matched in other ways - and the impact of a range of capacity building exercises on present and future capability expansion, tracked and aggregated over time and at different levels: individual, local-institution, NGO, and wider. Concurrent to these comparisons, interacting
with them, and informed by them, need to be the deliberative processes by which people identify the freedoms they value and wish to advance at each point in time.

Social cost benefit analysis was a 1970s fad, concurrent with integrated rural development. It foundered precisely because of the difficulty of tracing the direct and indirect externalities, of imputing uncertainty, and of aggregating both the core variables as well as the uncertainty coefficients. Its own incompetence discredited its findings and the practice became more or less extinct. However if we take seriously the logic of Sen’s capability approach, to put it into practice will require precisely the development of careful, full, comparative, consequentialist studies, using sophisticated computing techniques and multi-level, multi-disciplinary research methods. Such an undertaking would have more than one role for development ethics; in fact it may be that this undertaking could describe one legitimate role of development ethics.

**Practice and Method**

The concerns raised above shape, to a great extent, the channels by which the capability approach can be put into practice. In the last section of this paper, I would like to trace the implications with respect to alternative approaches.

Development as it is already practiced trades on particular connections between instrumental freedoms and human freedoms (which may, in practice, be articulated as capabilities or in very different ways). So, building upon the work of von Hayek and Milton Friedman, Thatcherite economics advanced privatization and liberalization policies. The Washington Consensus argued that similar policies, taken together, best advanced economic growth and, they argued, human freedom (particularly defined). Robert Putnam and others argue that social capital has a higher marginal rate of return than certain other variables. New Growth theories insert human capital into the growth equations. Hernando de Soto advocates the establishment of property rights on the basis of the diverse values that accrue to the poor who enjoy these. Anti-globalization protesters argue that the demolition of the World Bank and IMF will halt the decay of human freedoms and promote equity. Alternative schools of development compete by advertising different connections.

The capability approach, in contrast, constitutes a framework for hearing and assessing various putatively enriching connections. Thus the tracing of claimed connections between actions (often to increase instrumental freedoms) and human freedoms, and the comparison of one set of claims with alternative claims constitutes the capability approach in practice. The capability approach in practice is not a particular set of policy options. This is a key point to grasp. It leaves the capability approach in many cases serenely above the fray, in the seat of judge not barrister. This creates a separate set of challenges.

For people do not only seek ethical grounds by which to judge development to be more humane, they wish, actually, for development to become more humane. Indeed a large part of the conversation regarding the capability approach ‘in practice’ appears to turn on whether or not it can identify and promote alternatives that turn out to be more equitable, more well-rounded, more multidimensional, more ‘human’. Indeed the identification and advocacy of such alternatives has been the aim of the *Human Development Reports* each year.

26 “The poor have accumulated trillions of dollars of real estate during the past forty years. What the poor lack is easy access to the property mechanisms that could legally fix the economic potential of their assets so that they could be used to produce, secure, or guarantee greater value in the expanded market.” In “The Mystery of Capital” by Hernando de Soto. *Finance and Development*. March 1st, 2001.
What many seek in the capability approach is a set of alternative policies that will generate a more humane economy, with greater human freedoms. While one hopes that such alternative policies will indeed arise, and while it seems clear that the capability approach could play a strong role in uncovering them and demonstrating their value-added if they do arise, the advocacy of alternative policies is a somewhat different enterprise. Why? Because the policies advocated are advocated because they are comparatively better. Their selection is contingent upon there being no superior at this time – a condition which might always change. The identification of more humane policies and their advocacy are both important activities. But they are distinct, and that distinction is rather important to grasp.

Conclusion
This paper focused on methodology. Let me close, by observing how the structure of research this paper has advocated – in which multidisciplinary collaborative teams wield their tools and data to trace connections between instrumental freedoms and human ends – will advance the intention that development become more humane. First, it will explore how to connect different levels of analysis more accurately. Second, a research programme can create incentives for maximizing social scientists to trump existing ‘best’ alternatives and identify new human development policies. Third, such research might uncover further empirically grounded connections between disparate variables (such as famine and free press, or property rights and capital). This may seem a crude use of ‘ethics’. Yet the contribution of a trained and clear mind, its ability to avoid muddle and keep track of the objective while at the same time considering regressions and precedents and institutional considerations, is not to be underestimated.

**INSTRUMENTAL FREEDOMS** [FROM DEVELOPMENT AS FREEDOM 1999]

…it may be convenient to identify five distinct types of freedom that may be particularly worth emphasizing in this instrumental perspective. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it may help to focus on some particular policy issues that demand special attention at this time… (1) political freedoms, (2) economic facilities, (3) social opportunities, (4) transparency guarantees and (5) protective security. These instrumental freedoms tend to contribute to the general capability of a person to live more freely, but they also serve to complement one another.”

*Political freedoms*, broadly conceived (including what are called civil rights), refer to the opportunities that people have to determine who should govern and on what principles, and also include the possibility to scrutinize and criticize authorities, to have freedom of political expression and an uncensored press, to enjoy the freedom to choose between different political parties, and so on. They include the political entitlements associated with democracies in the broadest sense (encompassing opportunities of political dialogue, dissent and critique as well as voting rights and participatory selection of legislators and executives).”

*Economic facilities* refer to the opportunities that individuals respectively enjoy to utilize economic resources for the purpose of consumption, or production, or exchange. The economic entitlements that a person has will depend on the resources owned or available for use as well as on conditions of exchange, such as relative prices and the working of the markets. Insofar as the process of economic development increases the income and wealth of a country, they are reflected in corresponding enhancement of economic entitlements of the population. It should be obvious that in the relation between national income and wealth, on the one hand, and the economic entitlements of individuals (or families), on the other, distributional considerations are important, in addition to aggregative ones. How the additional incomes generated are distributed will clearly make a difference.”

*Social opportunities* refer to the arrangements that society makes for education, health care and so on, which influence the individual’s substantive freedom to live better. These facilities are important not only for the conduct of private lives (such as living a healthy life...
and avoiding preventable morbidity and premature mortality), but also for more effective participation in economic and political activities. For example, illiteracy can be a major barrier to participation in economic activities that require production according to specification or demand strict quality control (as globalized trade increasingly does). Similarly, political participation may be hindered by the inability to read newspapers or to communicate in writing with others involved in political activities.” 39

“In social interactions, individuals deal with one another on the basis of some presumption of what they are being offered and what they can expect to get. In this sense, the society operates on some basic presumption of trust. Transparency guarantees deal with the need for openness that people can expect: the freedom to deal with one another under guarantees of disclosure and lucidity. When that trust is seriously violated, the lives of many people – both direct parties and third parties – may be adversely affected by the lack of openness. Transparency guarantees (including the right to disclosure) can thus be an important category of instrumental freedom. These guarantees have a clear instrumental role in preventing corruption, financial irresponsibility and underhand dealings.” 39-40

“Finally, no matter how well an economic system operates, some people can be typically on the verge of vulnerability and can actually succumb to great deprivation as a result of material changes that adversely affect their lives. Protective security is needed to provide a social safety net for preventing the affected population from being reduced to abject misery, and in some cases even starvation and death. The domain of protective security includes fixed institutional arrangements such as unemployment benefits and statutory income supplements to the indigent as well as ad hoc arrangements such as famine relief or emergency public employment to generate income for destitutes.” 40

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