



Royal Holloway
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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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ICT4What?

Using the Choice Framework to operationalise the Capability Approach to Development

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The paradox

ICTs and particularly the internet are widely regarded as groundbreaking inventions that have changed the way we live,

yet practitioners in the field of ICT and development often struggle to prove specific impacts of these technologies to funders.

The need for a different approach:

Linear



Systemic

Econocentric



Holistic

Top-down



Bottom-up

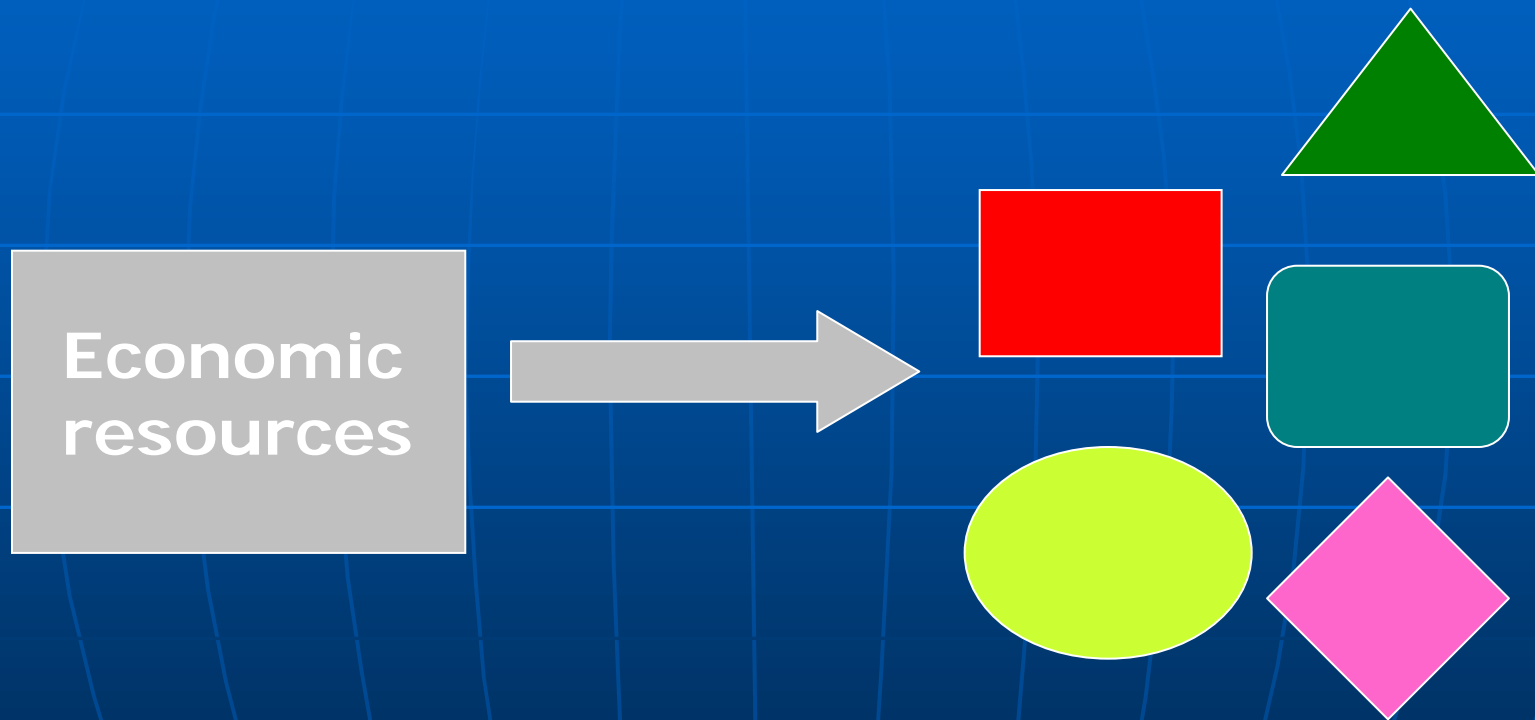
Supply-led



Choice-led

Thought Experiment

Means vs. ends



Amartya Sen's capability approach

Development can be seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. [...] Focusing particularly on people's capability to choose the lives they have reason to value

(Sen 1999)



Increasing choice

Operationalising Sen's approach

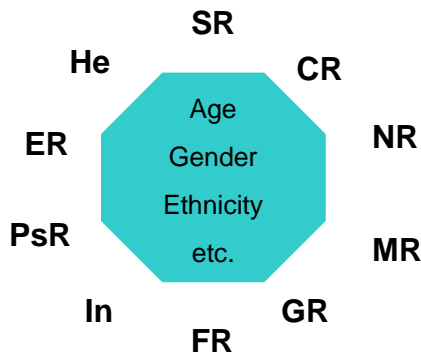
The Choice Framework

STRUCTURE

- institutions and organisations
- discourses
- policies and programmes
- formal and informal laws including:
 - Norms on usage of space
 - Norms on usage of time
- access to ICTs
 - availability of ICTs
 - affordability of ICTs
 - capabilities needed for ICTs



AGENCY



Key:
 ER = Educational Resources SR = Social Resources
 PsR = Psychological Resources NR = Natural Resources
 In = Information MR = Material Resources
 FR = Financial Resources GR = Geographical Resources
 CR = Cultural Resources He = Health

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

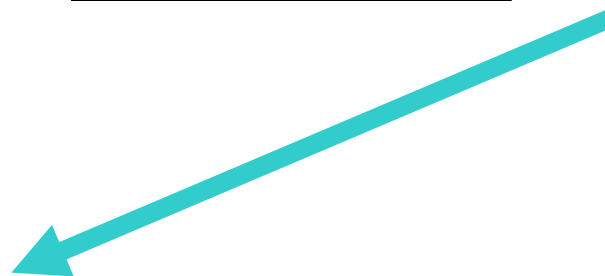
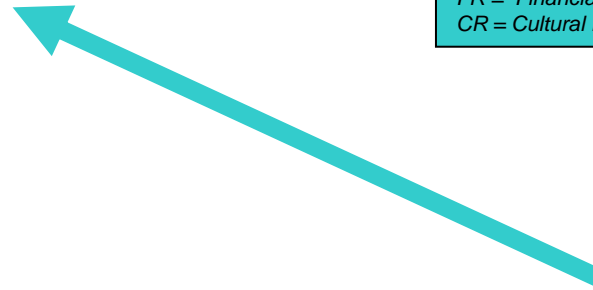
Principal: Choice

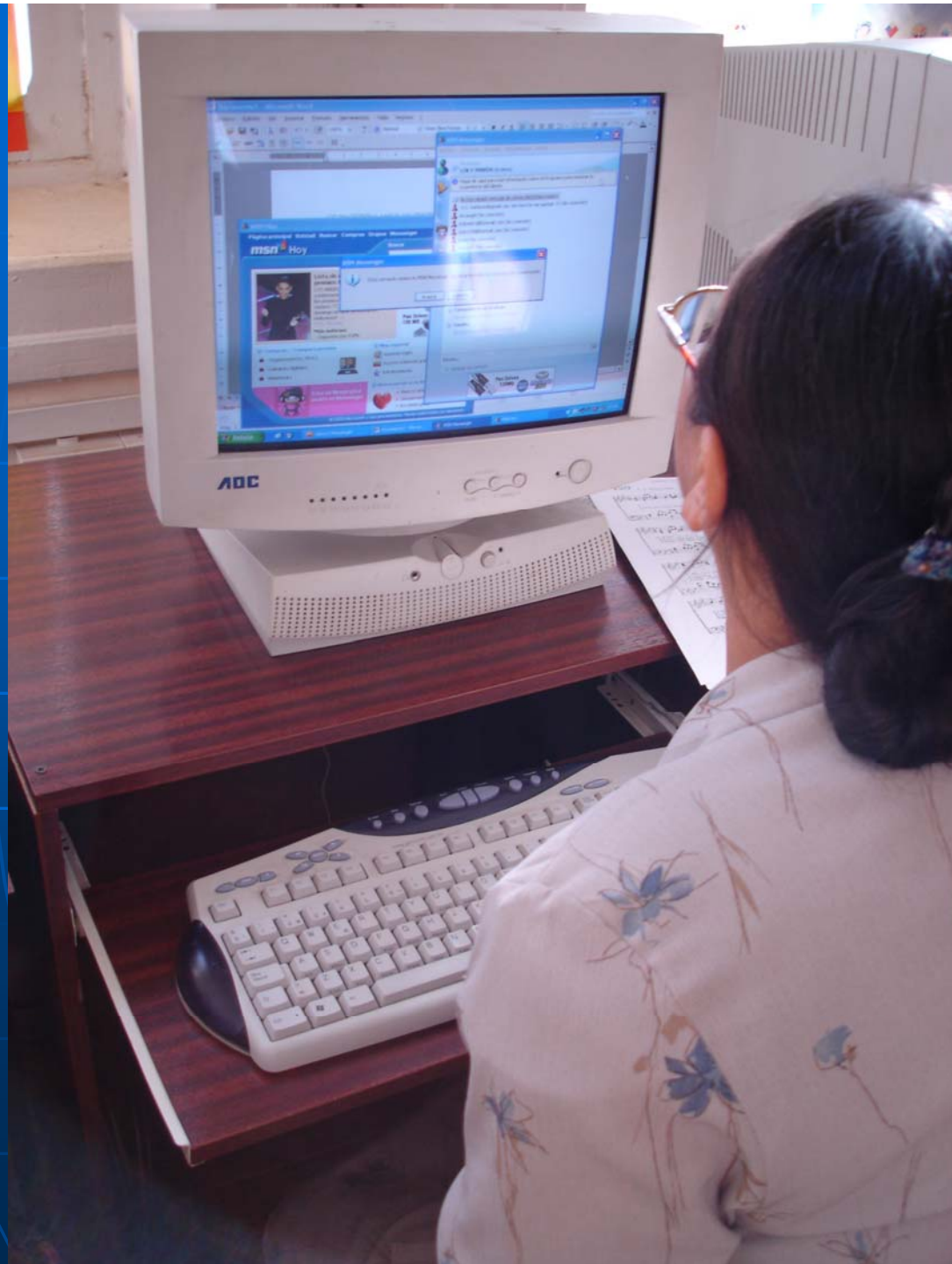
Secondary:

- easier communication
- increased knowledge
- access to markets
- business ideas
- increased income
- more voice
- time saved
- higher job satisfaction
- etc.

DEGREES OF EMPOWERMENT

- existence of choice
- sense of choice
- use of choice
- achievement of choice





Challenges

- Individual & collective choice need to be conceptually linked
- Funders prefer predefined & clearly measurable impacts
- Many funding pots are divided by function

Consequences for ICT4D research and practice

- Using a **systemic and holistic approach** which is better suited for multi-purpose technologies which impact in a systemic, pervasive and transversal way
- Seeking out mechanisms to allow people to express **choice**, e.g.

participatory monitoring and evaluation

voucher schemes

participatory budgets

participatory procurement

participatory tracking & tracing

“Ask not (only) what Development Theory can do for ICT4D, but also what ICT4D can do for Development Theory”

Instead of trying to fit a groundbreaking, multi-purpose and potentially liberating set of technologies into orthodox notions of development,

we should use ICT4D as a test case for thinking about development in a more systemic and holistic way.



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Thank You

Comments & feedback welcome:
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