2

VALUES AND DEVELOPMENT: A PRAGMATIC RECONSTRUCTION[1]

Brian Jenkin

Abstract: Broad consensus exists in development studies that development involves achieving and sustaining a so-called "good life." Considerably less agreement exists, however, as to what the goal of such a life consists in and what the best practices are for bringing such a life about. The varying and competing types of approaches to development currently on offer, including *cultural-economic approaches*, *capabilities approaches*, and *happiness approaches*, are the conceptual by-products of this discord. The impasse between these approaches owes in part to the vagueness and seeming incommensurability of value judgments. It owes in equal part to three common and interwoven tendencies when it comes to how values are approached in development theory and practice. These include: (1) the tendency to view values as fixed and final; (2) the tendency to formulate and evaluate means distinctly from ends; and (3) the tendency to equate the individual character of value experience with *value subjectivism*, though it is wholly compatible with *value objectivism*. The purpose of this paper is to critically analyze these value tendencies while offering a theoretical reconstruction of each utilizing conceptual resources from philosophical pragmatism, especially John Dewey's

[1] I am grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on an earlier draft of this paper which helped make its analysis clearer. Any remaining errors and oversights are my own.

version. It is argued that, by adopting a more pragmatic approach to values, development theorists and practitioners can constructively move past the present impasse in development studies.

Keywords: *development studies, John Dewey, pragmatism, theory vs. practice, value theory.*

1. DEVELOPMENT AND AXIOLOGICAL APRIORISM

The role of values in shaping public affairs has garnered widespread attention since political scientist Samuel Huntington boldly forewarned of an imminent "clash of civilizations" (Huntington 1996). According to Huntington, the vast majority of global conflicts take place not along ideological or economic lines, as is widely argued to be the case; rather, they take place across various cultural "fault lines," such as those (purportedly) separating Western and Islamic civilizations, to give a currently relevant example.[2] Though compelling in its specificity, Huntington's thesis has not been accepted without criticism. For instance, as several recent scholars have pointed out, it fails to acknowledge the significant diversity existing within cultures (Breidenbach and Pyíri 2009, p. 46) and, further, ignores the obvious fact that cultures are in constant dynamic interaction with each other and with legal, economic, political, and other factors (Cismas 2014, p. 4). Yet whether or not one accepts Huntington's view that social and political conflicts are basically contests over values, one can hardly deny that values play a part in determining human behavior. Skeptics on this point need only reference current events. Doing so, one comes upon countless images of intolerance and violence alongside those of compassion and charity, but all invariably in the name of some values (religious, political, cultural, moral, etc.) or other. This ambivalent capacity of values for advancing or impeding human wellbeing, as well as the crucial task of determining and promoting those values that conduce to the former, is a central –perhaps *the* central– concern of development, the now global enterprise of "making a better life for everyone" (Peet and Hartwick 2009, p. 1).

[2] The nine "civilizations" Huntington posits are: Western, Orthodox, Islamic, African, Latin American, Sinic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Japanese. See Huntington (1996) for a detailed presentation.

Broad consensus exists in development studies that development, taken here to mean primarily *human development*, involves achieving and sustaining a so-called "good life"– what Nobel economist Amartya Sen has described, in short, as the kind of life one "has reason to value" (Sen 1999, p. 87). Considerably less agreement exists, however, as to what the goal of such a life consists in and what the best practices are for bringing such a life about. The varying and competing types of approaches to development currently on offer, including *cultural-economic approaches*, *capabilities approaches*, and *happiness approaches*, are the conceptual by-products of this discord. The impasse between these approaches owes in part to the vagueness and seeming incommensurability of value judgments such as "good," "right," "true," "beautiful," and the like. It owes in equal part to three common and interwoven tendencies when it comes to how values are approached in development theory and practice. These include: (1) the tendency to view values as fixed and final, though they are continually subject to review and revision; (2) the tendency to formulate and evaluate means distinctly from ends, though the two are at all times reciprocally determined; and (3) the tendency to equate the individual character of value experience with subjectivism about values, though it is wholly compatible with an objectivist stance.

These value tendencies indicate an underlying commitment in most formulations of development to what is best, if somewhat cumbersomely, termed *axiological apriorism*. Axiological apriorism is the position that values exist apart from and are determined prior to experience (which is subsequently guided by them). At the same time, they attest to the positivism latent in virtually all fields of social evaluation and policy. While in its weaker, epistemological formulation, positivism's search after empirical causes, effects, and rules is innocent enough, in its stronger, more metaphysical formulation, positivism sharply isolates such facts from the interests and values that give them shape and significance, frustrating concerns to bridge the two, as evidenced by intense debates surrounding the validity and reliability of development indicators that aim past technical precision.[3]

[3] A typical defense of the persistent reliance upon gross domestic product, or GDP, is the technical precision it affords, a byproduct of its purportedly value-free nature. Yet it is important to note that even GDP finds its origin and expression in value-laden terms.

Development indicators reflect distinct valuational judgments about what is constitutive of, that is, what is *valuable for* development. As such, indicators are at the center of ongoing and heated debates over development's proper content and assessment. If, on the one hand, development is understood to be a purely descriptive process, then technical and quantitative indicators are sufficient measures of development. On the other hand, if development is understood at all to be a prescriptive affair, then normative and qualitative indicators are clearly called for.[4] The truth of the matter is that development, pithily defined by one development ethicist as "desirable social change" (Crocker 2008, p. 42), is a complex process with both descriptive and prescriptive components, a combination of facts and values best indicated by mixed methods.

A first step in clearing the ground for productive dialogue and collaboration among the varying approaches to human development involves taking full account of the experiential, relational, and instrumental, which is to say, "pragmatic"[5] nature of facts and values alike. As the classical American pragmatists and especially John Dewey insisted, values only ever present themselves within the factual context of lived experience: as behavioral solutions to felt problems, as instrumental guides to desired goals, as satisfactions or "consummations" of experience (Dewey 1958, p. xi). Importantly, the pragmatic position should not be equated without

[4] GDP, for example, was designed as a measure of economic efficiency. Its insufficiency as an indicator of development meant in any broader sense is patent. Put simply, indicators are intended to indicate something that is deemed important for some reason or other. As such, they are inherently value-laden and are distinct from measurements. For example, capsaicin levels in Scoville heat units (SHUs) are adequate measures of piquance; they are not sufficient indicators of spiciness. That latter determination requires information over and above the quantitative facts of the matter–namely, qualitative assessments of personal taste. For more on the important distinction between indicators and measurements, see McGranahan (1972).

[5] The terms "pragmatic" and "pragmatism" come from the Greek *pragmata* (singular: *pragma*), meaning "acts," "deeds," or "affairs"–basically everything with which one is occupied or toward which one shows concern. Pragmatism rejects as fundamentally wrongheaded the idea, held by philosophers since at least the time of Plato, that the function of thinking is simply to describe, represent, or "mirror" reality, an idea implicitly contained in all correspondence theories of truth. Pragmatists argue instead that thought is better understood as an evolved product of the ongoing transaction between organism and environment as is lived experience in all of its noncognitive richness and variety. Lived experience admits of no impassable dualisms, guaranteed foundations, a priori regulative principles, or transcendental standpoints.

qualification with the position known as *axiological phenomenalism*. Just because values only ever present themselves within the qualitative structures of lived experience doesn't mean that values have no existence apart from experience. As neopragmatist Hilary Putnam rightly reminds us, the values we experience are fundamentally "entangled" with the facts of physical reality; they are not at variance with them (Putnam 1993). Axiological positions that deem values epiphenomenal, as, say, emotive expressions in the Ayerian sense,[6] or attempt to determine values aprioristically, ignore the real but experimental nature of all human values.

To some, theoretical concerns such as these seem loftily removed from those of development practice–intellectual relics of an ivory-tower analysis out of touch with reality on the ground. Yet their resolutions are pressing. Conceptual uncertainty, as noted by feminist philosopher Martha Nussbaum, readily leads to policy choices that are just plain "wrong from the point of view of widely shared human values" (Nussbaum 2011, p. xi). Unpacking the pragmatic character of human values should assist planners and policymakers better identify the categories of value relevant for measuring development outcomes and shaping development futures. The concerns of this paper thus form a necessary complement to recent work in development ethics and fit within the growing trend of acknowledging the relevance of philosophy to issues of development policy.[7] Though the paper itself makes no policy recommendations, it is hoped that its analysis will help clarify important and frequently misunderstood issues surrounding policy formation and evaluation.

2. DEVELOPMENT VALUING AND VALUATION

Development is fundamentally a proposition about values. While this may now seem obvious, there existed for a time (and, in some policymaking circles, arguably still exists) a positivist strain in development thought

[6] It was British philosopher A. J. Ayer who, following the logical empiricists before him, declared value judgments to be neither true nor false because they do not *assert* anything, but rather *express* the feelings of the person making the judgment. Ayer's position has proven widely influential in philosophical and non-philosophical circles alike. See Ayer (1952) for details, especially the first part of Chapter VI.

[7] See, for example, the arguments to this effect in Sen (1999), Crocker (2008), and Nussbaum (2000).

that portrayed development as a quantitative, value-free process with purely economic goals and objectives. As ready-made plans for economic take-off consistently failed to take root in lesser-developed countries, however, attention finally was called to development's qualitative, value-laden dimensions.[8] While a theoretical advance over narrow economistic approaches, development initiatives concerned with values typically remain fixed toward commercial outcomes. Examples abound in the development literature, for instance, of the qualities or values deemed most conducive to economic growth: "rational," "scientific," and "modern." Such values are labeled by advocates and critics alike as *Western* and are often contrasted with the values they seek to challenge and even displace: "irrational," "religious," and "traditional"–values commonly designated, by mere contrast, as *non-Western*.

Assuming for a moment that this "West versus the rest" binary is meaningful, Western countries do enjoy economic living standards well above those of many non-Western countries.[9] This goes too for those geographically non-Western countries largely influenced by Western modes of industrial production and political governance, such as Korea and Japan. According to some scholars, the responsibility for a country's lack of development thus falls squarely upon the cultural beliefs and practices of its people. In other words, values, or what are better termed, highlighting their behavioral-dispositional nature and following Dewey's terminology, "valuings" (Dewey 1939, p. 5) are to blame. Lawrence Harrison persuasively argued this point to explain Latin America's seeming inability to fully combat the internal forces of corruption and poor education that impede its social and economic progress, obstacles with which many countries of the region continue to struggle three decades later (Harrison 1985). More recently, it runs undercurrent to collaborative work by Huntington and Harrison that explains the persistence of global divisions between rich and poor, between freedom and unfreedom,

[8] "Lesser developed countries" is used here in place of the now tired "third world countries," although it too imperfectly circumscribes its content. As one scholar insightfully puts it: "All countries are 'developing countries,' although that phrase is sometimes used to refer to poorer countries: every nation has a lot of room for improvement in delivering an adequate quality of life to all its peoples" (Nussbaum 2011, p. x).

[9] In truth, postcolonial and hybridity theorists, mindful that no culture is static and immutable (a fact that Huntington's analysis seems to ignore), provide us with good reason to abandon the Western/non-Western dichotomy. See, for example, the compelling argument put forth in Bhabha (1994).

largely along cultural lines (Huntington and Harrison 2000). In the wake of the publication of this last work, a virtual cottage industry of cross-cultural value studies has emerged that explores culture's relation to subjects as diverse as leadership styles to the liberal arts.

The argument that "culture matters" is by no means novel; scholars have fallen back on the explanatory power of culture since Max Weber suggested the Protestant origins of capitalism (Weber 1958). And not only are cultural accounts for non-progress common, they are compelling, especially when considered in light of the failure of colonialism and dependency theory to provide fully satisfactory explanations for underdevelopment. Further, they lend themselves to empirical testing. One can, for instance, plot a country's reported desires, interests, and habits–its valuings–as measured by the World Values Survey or other cross-national survey instrument (such as those collected in the Afrobarometer and Eurobarometer research projects) against its economic realities and identifiable patterns emerge. Employing this method, Jim Granato, Ronald Inglehart, and David Leblang uncovered that "achievement motivation" has a direct, positive effect on a country's rate of economic growth (Granato, Inglehart, and Leblang 1996). Similarly, Christian Welzel, Ronald Inglehart, and Hans-Dieter Klingemann found societies that value "individual resources," "emancipative values," and "freedom rights" rank highest in socioeconomic development worldwide (Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann 2003). By the same logic, economic inefficiency and backwardness is effectively explained by a culture's lacking these values.

Economic approaches that incorporate considerations of culture provide important information that standard theory models of economic development miss. Focusing on quantitative factors alone, standard models reinforce a fact-value dichotomy that doesn't hold up under scrutiny of even the most rigorous of scientific methods. As historian of science Thomas Kuhn revealed, even the natural sciences, after which standard theory economics patterns its impersonal, objectivist methodology, proceed only by the exercise of shared cognitive and aesthetic values, such as those that guide theory development and selection (Kuhn 1996). This is not to say that cultural-economic approaches to development are without limitation. It is rightly noted that such accounts demonstrate only correlations between culture and economy; they are unable to prove direct causal relations between the two. Similarly, as psychologist Jerome Bruner points out: culture without question shapes individual, including economic, choice; it is doubtful, however, that it wholly determines it (Bruner 1996). Appealing in their simplicity, the monocausality of cultural-economic approaches to development begs the question. Other factors than cultural values, including geographical location and environmental makeup, play an obvious part in shaping not only the form of economic outcomes, but their very possibility (to mention nothing of their desirability). For postdevelopment thinkers, to endorse their logic smacks of a renewed Western ethnocentrism that again seeks to fashion worldwide modes of living through its own materialist and consumerist values.

Though rhetorically hyperbolic, the postdevelopment critique of cultural-economic approaches to development demands response. That response comes in the form of critical perspectives that temper naïve attempts to separate a culture's economically advantageous wheat from its economically disadvantageous chaff. Critical approaches to development, such as capabilities approaches and happiness approaches, recognize that some beliefs and practices are indeed better than others, but also recognize that such judgment requires sensitivity to context, to situational needs and resources, and thus can never be settled a priori in advance, much less settled against a single, fixed standard.

Sensitive to the paternalism inherent in any estimation or appraisal of a culture's beliefs and practices, yet aware that reasoned deliberation of past valuings in light of their experienced consequences is a natural feature of human inquiry–in fact, one necessary for our continued survival–critical approaches to development are the end product of the process Dewey termed "valuation" (Dewey 1939, p. 5). Valuation is the evaluative process whereby our immediate, unreflective valuings, routinized as personal habits and cultural customs, are subject to reasoned and reflective assessment. Valuation takes place when our desired beings and doings fail to prove desirable–to wit, at the moment our prior esteemed valuings become frustrated or harmful and require a choice, often vital, to be made–as when a sweets-loving person who develops insulin resistance must weigh her desire for good health against the besetting impulse to sate her sugar cravings. In situations such as these, an immediately enjoyed habit is brought under reflective scrutiny in light of its negative future consequences and is transformed accordingly in effort to avoid those consequences.

Valuation likewise takes place at the collective (familial, societal, national, etc.) level. A clear case in point: the cultural practice of female circumcision is no longer swiftly dismissed as a customary or sacred rite of passage, but is increasingly recognized for the fundamental violation of bodily integrity and human rights that it is. The result of this collective valuation has resulted in the practice's growing international criminalization (though enforcement in many countries leaves much to be desired) and its effective rebranding as female genital mutilation, a linguistic shift that is intended to facilitate a global behavioral-dispositional shift, namely, the remaking of the valuings and valuations that enabled and habituated the practice in the first place. Such critical shifts in perception and practice are the very stuff by which positive social transformation and development occurs. Unfortunately, they are long coming and hard-won, owing to the extreme difficulty with which habit and custom are broken.

3. THE CONTINUUM OF DEVELOPMENT ENDS-MEANS

The natural aim of all valuation, as the individual and collective examples illustrate, is the transformation of experience through the creation of better conduct-guiding valuings. There is an important but frequently ignored lesson here for development theory and practice–really, for all policy-oriented disciplines–and it is that values are in no sense plucked from a transcendent and acontextual source. Values emerge only and always within particular situations, as instruments for resolving the unsettled relations or felt imbalances–what Dewey simply but aptly called "problematic situations" (Dewey 1938, p. 35)–that arise time and again between humans (or other organisms) and their environments. Failure to recognize this fact time and again results in the promotion of predetermined values that, though viable in one context–say, treating natural resources as subservient to human comfort in an environment where they are plentiful–may very well prove disastrous in another–the very same behavior in an environment where mere survival is tied to resources that are scarce. As both the cause and effect of valuation, values are forever subject to criticism and revision relative to what is valuable, not simply what is valued, in the situation under consideration.

To be clear: values are not static and essential properties of objects waiting to be discovered, used, and exchanged. Such a position represents what could be called, in the spirit of Alfred North Whitehead, "the fallacy of misplaced value."[10] It is precisely such mistaken belief that motivates

[10] Whitehead severely critiqued the innate human tendency toward reification, toward mistaking abstractions for concrete realities, which he influentially called "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness." See Whitehead (2011), p. 66 for more information.

the search for fixed and objective measures of value, like those of commercial worth or economic growth–a tendency widespread enough to account for the strong linguistic connection between "commodities" and "goods." Rather, values are the hallmark of mature, intelligent behavior; they are hypotheses, experimental tools themselves to be tested, compared, and evaluated for their effectiveness in resolving problems and bringing about better states of affairs for individuals and society. And determinations of this sort are best reached not by appeal to a priori standards, but by careful and continuous deliberation on means and ends.

The conventional treatment of means and ends begins first by sharply distinguishing the two. An end is considered that which is valuable in and of itself–an end is valued for its own sake. In axiological terms, ends have what is called "intrinsic value." A mean, by contrast, is that which is valuable for the sake of something else. As such, means have "instrumental value" only. Put differently, ends are considered worthy aims or goals and means are but the "causal conditions employed to achieve intended ends–their value lies solely in their power to produce ends" (Waks 1999, p. 595). Contemporary approaches to development largely follow the conventional view. Cultural-economic approaches, for example, posit economic growth as the end of development; all other factors, including culture, are to be used (and evaluated for their effectiveness) in the course of that pursuit. They have no value save that conferred upon them as instruments of profit. Capabilities approaches, in reversal of the economic formula, assert that income is but one of several means to development's true end of capabilities–basically, what a person is reasonably free to be and do (Sen 1999). Other, equally important means include life expectancy and educational achievement. In a similar fashion, happiness approaches argue that income is really nothing more than "an instrument in the service of human welfare" (Kesebir and Diener 2008, p. 61) conceived broadly as a state of personal fulfillment and subjective well-being. Subjective accounts of well-being offer important information that objective accounts, which focus solely on material and physical needs, overlook.

The tendency to separate means and ends in this fashion–a tendency shared by cultural-economic approaches, capabilities approaches, and happiness approaches to development–is, from the vantage point of philosophical pragmatism, wrongheaded for two reasons. The first reason is ethical. It is but a small step from the separation of means and ends to an "ends justify the means" mentality. Such an attitude leads only to bad practice, as when the drive for increased happiness or education at the collective level turns a blind eye toward their unequal distribution among individuals, or when the fixation on economic growth by way of industrial output disregards the high transaction costs known as externalities that material consumption incurs to the environment. The second reason the conventional separation of means from ends is misguided is logical. Ends and means are in all cases reciprocally determined. As Dewey puts it: "ends are determinable only on the ground of the means that are involved in bringing them about" (Dewey 1939, p. 53). For instance, if obtaining a doctorate is one's goal, one will have to complete a certain program of coursework, satisfactorily pass comprehensive examinations in the chosen field of study, and produce an original research project in the form of a dissertation. And once achieved, ends become means to future ends as a matter of course. With a doctorate in hand, one can then apply for teaching positions at the collegiate or university level. Against the conventional view then, ends and means are better and more accurately viewed as a single unit, what Dewey called the "continuum of ends-means" (Dewey 1939, p. 40). To illustrate the point further by returning to an earlier example: the insulin-resistant person who desires good health views that goal necessarily in terms of the actions needed to achieve it–namely, the maintaining of stable blood sugar levels and the dietary habits this requires. Neither the maintenance of blood sugar levels nor good health are valued intrinsically, as ends-in-themselves (even if casually spoken of in this fashion). Rather, both are valued instrumentally, as functional means to further ends, such as being able to undertake work, enjoy a full social life, and prevent premature mortality.

The point being made may seem so obvious as to not need mentioning. Yet it is entirely lost on approaches to development that isolate ends from means. The crux of the pragmatic reconstruction of the conventional means-ends dichotomy for development and other policy-oriented fields is that the process of ends-formation is never final. There are no ends-in-themselves in a world marked by desire, novelty, and change. Ends are only ever what Dewey called "ends-in-view" (Dewey 1939, p. 40) that, when reached, become means to newly sought after ends. As such, ends-in-view are subject to instrumental evaluation, as are all values, for their effectiveness in resolving the problematic situations that occasion them. In Dewey's instrumentalist language, ends-means "are appraised or valued as *good* or *bad* on the ground of their serviceability" (Dewey 1939, p. 47).

4. DEVELOPMENT AS THE EXPERIENCE OF OBJECTIVE VALUE

To say that all values are instrumental is not to say that values are merely the product of human caprice or that they aim at practicality *simpliciter*–that is, at "what works" apart from serious considerations of consequence. Just such a criticism is frequently leveled against pragmatic approaches, as evidenced by the generally negative connotation of the term "pragmatic" in certain discursive circles.[11] It is, however, rooted in misunderstanding. By all accounts, values are functional–What would it mean, besides linguistic confusion, to value an object, action, or event that carries no weight for how one lives one's life?–but theirs is a practicality *secundum quid*, one that aims ever toward progress and improvement. This is what the word *value*, per its etymological roots, intends. The English *value* traces directly to the Latin *valere*: "to be strong," "be worthy," or "be well," a rich meaning that is difficult to render in translation, but comes through in the epigram, attributed to the Latin poet Martial, *Non est vivere, sed valere vita est*: "Life is not merely living, but living well." People do, of course, maintain values (at least as the word is used in everyday language) that carry no or negative weight for their lives, but such beliefs and practices are, for precisely this reason, better termed "non-values" or "disvalues," respectively.

This is not to say that a pragmatic approach to values lays claim to know what should, or, for that matter, could be desired or valued in all cases (in fact, it is the unease which accompanies this impossibility that occasions the hanging on to prefixed values, even in cases where their ill effects are well known), but it does assert that many objects, actions, and events clearly aren't desirable or valuable and that these are known directly by experience of their unsatisfactory consequences, by their failure to resolve the problem at hand, by their proving not strong, not worthy, and not well to those who bear them. As bluntly put by another major American pragmatist, C. I. Lewis: "Without the experience of felt value and disvalue, evaluations in general would have no meaning" (Lewis 1946, p. 375).

Likewise, those genuinely desirable and valuable objects, actions, and events are determinable only by experience of their satisfactory consequences, by their ability to transform a problematic situation–marked by

[11] For a detailed treatment of what pragmatism intends by "practical," see Dewey (1908).

difficulty or uncertainty–into what Dewey called a "unified" one–marked, *mutatis mutandis*, by ease and security (Dewey 1938, p. 491). Except for the coin or currency collector, income alone offers little in direct contribution to "a life which would be found good in the living of it" (Lewis 1946, p. 395). Income in itself is a non-value of the good life. Only when income is met with the capabilities that enable its use does it become a potential value. And, further, only when those capabilities are exercised in a valuable way does either become an actual value, a felt increase in subjective well-being, and a genuine component of the good life–one punctuated by experiences of what Dewey termed, variously, "consummation" (Dewey 1958, p. xi), "growth" (Dewey 1998, p. 104), and "development" (Dewey 2005, p. 82).

This seemingly innocent claim–that development must be experienced to be genuine–is open to charges of *value* (axiological) *subjectivism*. Put simply, value subjectivism is the position that no absolute, universal, or objective values exist. Rather, values are considered to be entirely relative to individual perspective, character, and interest. At first glance, this position is compelling, commonsensical even. It in principle guides our postmodern belief in the inviolability of personal conscience. It, too, implicitly undergirds development approaches rooted in axiological apriorism, wherein the validity of what counts as development depends upon the strict separation of objective and impersonal facts–those provided by economic theory, for instance–from subjective and personal values–supplied, in turn, by culture and religion. Yet the fact of the matter is that, in the wake of positivism's collapse, axiological apriorism is no longer a tenable position. This is especially so since the philosophical and scientific turns to relationality. Recent advances in quantum physics, chaos and dynamic systems theories, and the cognitive sciences, for example, point to the natural world, dynamic and constantly evolving, as the ultimate foundation of all human knowing which, by deduction, is intrinsically relational in some manner or other. Considerations of space preclude detailed presentation of the scientific advances alluded to here. For present purposes, it suffices to recognize their authoritative status as evidenced by consequent turns to naturalism and relationality in fields as diverse as literary theory, nursing research, psychotherapy, and theology (all of which take their lead from the antecedent scientific turn). What is important is that naturalism and relationality furnish attractive resources for an alternative framework for development theorizing. The claim that knowledge is relational calls attention to the fact that all knowledge implies a relationship between the subject and object of knowledge, between a knower and the known, and that any item of knowledge makes sense only when placed alongside others that together establish its context, which, if not reducible to, are at least inseparable from nature.

Long before these scientific advances, John Dewey and the classical American pragmatists railed against all forms of apriorist thinking. At its base, pragmatism is a philosophy rooted in naturalistic and relational modes of experiencing, knowing, and valuing. Its axiological, as well as its epistemological and ontological, commitments are best summed up by Dewey's conviction, rephrased by pragmatist scholar Larry Hickman, that "human beings are in and a part of nature, and not over against it" (Hickman 1996, p. 51). This fact imposes significant limits and constraints on the way we obtain, organize, and transmit knowledge, including knowledge of values. Nowhere do we find knowledge in a realm of rational, pure ideas existing apart from lived experience–from where economic principles are often depicted as originating. Rather, it is through the reciprocal interaction between our physical sensate bodies and the larger natural and cultural environments in which we abide that we primarily come to know and value the world. This holds radical implications for orthodox Western epistemology's quest for truth with a capital "T." Under the pragmatic theory, a proposition or ideology is true and valuable if the practical consequences of accepting it work satisfactorily, that is, if it helps one successfully navigate within and adapt to the conditions of his or her particular environmental niche. Pragmatist ontology is, by the same token, naturalistic and developmental. Ontological objects or beings are reconceived as environmental events of becoming, always undergoing processive transformation, with meanings and values accruing to them just insofar as they are capable of being perceived and engaged by appropriately skilled intentional agents.[12]

To sum up, then, pragmatic and relational axiologies, counter their apriorist rivals, recognize that values represent more than subjective

[12] The ontology outlined here can not be discussed in detail. It accords with that advanced in Putnam (2004), where the author convincingly argues that assertions of practical ethics (and, in this case, values more generally) can be intelligibly provided without a detailed defense of their ontology, as contemporary ontology strongly tends toward an eliminative "monism" by attempting to reduce the myriad of ethical and valuational concerns that arise in practice to just one sort of object that would (ideally) make statements about ethics and value true.

preferences; values correspond to objective properties and features of our natural and cultural environments. This is precisely what James Gibson, the founder of ecological psychology, had in mind with his innovative and frequently misunderstood notion of "affordances." According to Gibson, the environment is far from a passive source of meaningless information–a position backed by behaviorist and cognitive psychologies that leave the task of meaning construction to our subjective mental activity alone. On the contrary, the environment actively broadcasts meaningful, value-laden information that invites or "affords" opportunities for specific types of responsive behavior (Gibson 1966, p. 23). Careful consideration of this fact reveals the real challenge of development as one not of disclosing eternal, unchanging, and value-free facts, but of determining the contextual, adaptive, and valuable beliefs and behaviors for solving specific development problems.

Value subjectivism is frequently offered as sufficient reason for denying values any role, or granting them only an auxiliary role, in public affairs. Yet it merely reflects the recognition that external conditions of development must be met with internal conditions for its realization or its promises count for naught. This position is wholly compatible with (at least a certain form of) *value objectivism*. In fact, as we have seen, a truly pragmatic approach, which focuses on experience in its dynamic, multifaceted, and complex wholeness, cuts across the subject-object distinction in important and decisive ways. Such a recognition should grant values a properly constitutive role in public affairs, which aims ever at mutual understanding of common ideals and purposes–the very fabric from which values are woven. At the same time, it serves as a humble reminder that we're often wrong, individually and collectively, about what is genuinely valuable for making our lives better. Only by open inquiry and reasoned deliberation can the genuinely valuable be discovered. Only through systematic training and education will the genuinely valuable also be desired. The objective value of this fact serves as a clarion call for renewed dialogue and active collaboration between cultural-economic approaches, capabilities approaches, and happiness approaches to development–all of which are essential for the genuine development of human "skills and powers, knowledge and appreciation, value and thought" (Hook 1959, p. 1013). Further, it forces perpetual reevaluation of the problematic situations in which we invariably find ourselves and, as a corollary, the ongoing refinement of the tools selected for solving them, such as income, capability achievement, increased happiness, as far as development is concerned. The point to be pressed is that the processes of problem reevaluation and tool refinement are, for natural organisms in a natural world, never final. As Dewey time and again reminds us:

> This organic fact foreshadows learning and discovery, with the consequent outgrowth of new needs and new problematic situations. Inquiry, in settling the disturbed relation of organism-environment (which defines doubt) does not merely remove doubt by recurrence to a prior adaptive integration. It institutes new environing conditions that occasion new problems. What the organism learns during this process produces new powers that make new demands upon the environment. In short, as special problems are resolved, new ones tend to emerge. There is no such thing as a final settlement, because every settlement introduces the conditions of some degree of a new unsettling (Dewey 1938, p. 35).

Despite worries that it necessarily results in a pessimistic or nihilistic outlook, the humbling appreciation of our existence as natural creatures subject to constant environmental and social pressures should in no way be taken to undermine the foundations of our progressive endeavors. It does, however, recommend experiential, relational, and instrumental–in a word, "pragmatic"–approaches to those endeavors. Appreciation of this fact is hugely relevant for development planning and policymaking and hints at the promise of adopting a pragmatic approach to development values. Preparing development studies for this reconstructive task was the primary objective of this paper. In sketching the outlines of a pragmatic reconstruction of certain aspects of development theory, important groundwork has been laid for future synthetic work. Although not carried to fruition presently (the synthesis of those insights and their implications will be no easy task), by recognizing the necessity of development's positive reconstruction, the paper seeks to move past postdevelopment critiques that stop at the negative task of deconstruction.[13] It is fully expected that the constructive recommendations offered will prove integral to the future establishment of a reflexive and pragmatic development framework capable of providing phenomenological traction for the in-

[13] It is interesting and somewhat difficult to understand that such projects attempt to wield a subjugating power over any future attempt at subversion. This is a sin of hubris their Foucauldian "discourse is power" analyses should have rendered obsolete.

trinsically maladroit process of development theory-to-practice translation. Recasting development theory and practice along pragmatic lines, however, demands our epistemological practices be adaptive and sustainable, our ontological categories remain fallible and flexible, and our axiological principles be determined and evaluated by means of experientially-grounded heuristics. Further, it demands all of these concerns be formulated with an eye toward engendering experiences and practices that strive to improve *ecological*–and not merely *human*–well-being. Surveying the varying extant approaches to development, it is manifestly apparent that such experiences and practices have not been sought or achieved with measurable success on a global scale. This realization serves as a novel explanation of development's shortcomings and poses a unique and pressing challenge to future development work. This is a challenge and opportunity made not only to development theorists and practitioners, but to all of us. It is hoped we are up to the task.

REFERENCES

Ayer, A. J. (1952) *Language, Truth, and Logic*. New York: Dover.

Bhabha, H. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Breidenbach, J. and Nyı́ri, P. (2009) *Seeing Culture Everywhere: From Genocide to Consumer Habits*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Bruner, J. (1996) *The Culture of Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cismas, I. (2014) *Religious Actors and International Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crocker, D. (2008) *Ethics of Global Development: Agency, Capability, and Deliberative Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dewey, J. (1908) What does pragmatism mean by practical?" *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*. 5 (4). p. 85-99.

Dewey, J. (1938) *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Dewey, J. (1939) *Theory of Valuation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Dewey, J. (1958) *Experience and Nature*. New York: Dover. First edition published in 1925.

Dewey, J. (1998) *Experience and Education*. West Lafayette, IN: Kappa Delta Pi. First edition published in 1938.

Dewey, J. (2005) *Art as Experience*. New York: The Berkley Publishing Group. First edition published in 1939.

Gibson, J. (1996) *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. First edition published in 1966.

Granato, J., Inglehart, R., and Leblang, D. (1996) Cultural values, stable democracy, and economic development: a reply. *American Journal of Political Science*. 40 (3). p. 680-696.

Harrison, L. (1985) *Underdevelopment is a State of Mind: The Latin American Case*. Lanham, MD: Harvard University and University Press of America.

Hickman, L. (1996) Nature as culture: John Dewey's pragmatic naturalism. In Light, A. and Katz, E. (eds.). *Environmental Pragmatism*. New York: Routledge.

Hook, S. (1959) John Dewey–philosopher of growth. *The Journal of Philosophy*. 56 (26). p. 1010-1018.

Huntington, S. (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Huntington, S. and Harrison, L. (eds.). (2000) *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. New York: Basic Books.

Kesebir, P. and Diener, E. (2008) In defense of happiness: why policymakers should care about subjective well-being. In Bruno, L., Comim, F., and Pugno, M. (eds.). *Happiness and Capabilities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kuhn, T. (1996) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. First edition published in 1970.

Lewis, C. I. (1946) *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*. Chicago, IL: Open Court.

Mcgranahan, D. (1972) Development Indicators and Development Models. In Baster, N. (ed.). *Measuring Development: the Role and Adequacy of Development Indicators*. London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd.

Nussbaum, M. (2000) *Women and Human Development: the Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nussbaum, M. (2011) *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Putnam, H. (1993) Objectivity and the Science-Ethics Distinction. In Nussbaum, M. and Sen, A. (eds.). *The Quality of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Peet, R. and Hartwick, E. (2009) *Theories of Development: Contentions, Arguments, Alternatives*. New York: Guilford Press.
Sen, A. (1999) *Development as Freedom*. New York: Knopf.
Waks, L. (1999) The means-ends continuum and the reconciliation of science and art in the later works of John Dewey. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*. 35 (3). p. 595-611.
Weber, M. (1958) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Scribner.
Welzel, C., Inglehart, R., and Klingemann, H. (2003) The theory of human development: a cross-cultural analysis. *European Journal of Political Research*. 42 (3). p. 341-379.
Whitehead, A. N. (2011) *Science and the Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. First edition published in 1926.

Brian Jenkin
Boston University
bjenkin@bu.edu

This paper was received on March 9th, 2015, and was approved on May 15th, 2015.