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Molly Cochran

Millennium - Journal of International Studies 2002; 31; 525
DOI: 10.1177/03058298020310030801

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The appeal of positivism within International Relations (IR) hinges on the belief that it represents the application of science to the study of world politics. This article presents Deweyan pragmatism as an alternative, and better, way of employing scientific method in IR. John Dewey's unique formulations of key scientific concepts like 'objectivity', 'explanation' and 'experimentation' led him to an understanding of social enquiry that retains many of the virtues of scientific method while anticipating and incorporating the epistemological concerns that currently animate post-positivist work in and beyond IR.

An important part of the appeal of positivism within the discipline of International Relations (IR) is the belief that it represents the application of science to the study of world politics. This is not an appeal that can be lightly discounted. Scientific method appears to have been immensely fruitful in furthering our ability to predict what happens in the physical world. In subjects like economics, the desire to achieve a similar control over the social world has led to the entrenchment of positivism as an almost unquestioned epistemological and methodological orthodoxy. And in IR, the attractions of science, its promise of the steady accumulation of objective, and therefore reliable, knowledge about how world politics work has been a significant reason for the continuing dominance of positivism over the last thirty years, despite a host of criticisms with which readers of this journal will no doubt be familiar.

One might reasonably doubt whether any such thing as a true science of society—a social science, in other words—is possible at all. But in many ways, a more revealing line of inquiry is to ask what kind of social science we should use to study IR. Positivism is not the only game in town, and the purpose of this article is to elaborate a quite different conception of what social science is from that which we are offered by mainstream positivist theorists. Something along these lines has already been attempted by scholars employing Weberian or Habermasian social theory in IR.[1] While these do offer insightful and valuable ways of reconciling empirical or

I would like to thank the anonymous referees and Edward Keene for their comments on an earlier draft of this article.

1. Weberian approaches to IR as a social science have been favourably discussed by John Gerald Ruggie—who turns to both Weber and Durkheim to say that their

© Millennium: Journal of International Studies, 2002. ISSN 0305-8298. Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 525-548

naturalistic forms of inquiry with interpretive or critical ones, there is another worthwhile model of post-positivist social science which could help us to bridge these dichotomised forms of inquiry: that of the American pragmatist, John Dewey. One of the main purposes of this article is to outline and explain the kind of social scientific inquiry that Deweyan pragmatism represents.

I will argue that Deweyan pragmatism offers a uniquely fruitful way of addressing some of the most difficult problems that efforts to develop a post-positivist form of social science in IR have encountered,[2] especially the question of how to maintain the objectivity of inquiry while exercising ethical judgement and without effectively imposing one particular set of cultural values upon others. Dewey's method of concept formation, and his appreciation of the importance of genuinely democratic problem-solving as part of the proper activity of social science, provide a way of tackling these questions that is less prone to some of the difficulties into which the more popular Weberian or Habermasian formulations of post-positivist social science are apt to become embroiled. Before we can make such an evaluation, however, we need to have a grasp of the very individual vocabulary that Dewey employed in his work. In the first section I will briefly explain some of the principal concepts that he used. Then, in section two, I will compare Deweyan pragmatism with some other post-positivist approaches to social science, concentrating in particular on the parallels between Dewey's work and that of the leading philosophers or social theorists whose work currently informs much of the IR scholarship on these themes: Max Weber, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Jürgen Habermas. Finally, I will conclude with an evaluation of the specific contribution that

theoretical objectives illuminate the contemporary constructivist project—and by Friedrich Kratochwil. See, respectively, John G. Ruggie, 'What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge', International Organization 52, no. 4 (1998): 855-85 and Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization (London: Routledge, 1998); and Friedrich Kratochwil, Rules, Norms and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Chapter 1. A Habermasian approach to IR as a social science is invoked by Thomas Risse, '"Let's Argue!": Communicative Action in World Politics', International Organization 54, no. 1 (2000): 1-39. Of course, Andrew Linklater has been a key figure in illuminating the significance of Habermas for IR, although he does not explicitly address the implications of Habermas's work for thinking about what kind of social science IR can be. See his The Transformation of Political Community (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

2. In political theory, a roughly similar claim has been made by Debra Morris, '"How Shall We Read What We Call Reality?": John Dewey's New Science of Democracy', American Journal of Political Science 43, no. 2 (1999): 608-09.

Deweyan pragmatism can make to the problems we still face in trying to develop post-positivist approaches to social science within IR.

Deweyan Pragmatism, Science and Social Science

Deweyan pragmatism is above all to be understood as a scientific activity. Dewey himself repeatedly insisted on the value of scientific method in the study of society because it can help us to shape our social world in accordance with our goals. He often used the idea of 'control' in this context, in the sense that the use of scientific method can help us objectively to 'control' social relations.[3] But this notion of 'control' can be misleading, and it is important to clarify the somewhat unorthodox way in which Dewey used the term. As Larry Hickman notes, Dewey's idea of controlling things meant something virtually synonymous with having knowledge.[4] Control, for Dewey, is simply our capacity to cope with the world around us; it is a means of action that becomes available to us through the understanding of relationships, a knowledge we only acquire by resolving problematic situations. He did not think that if we applied scientific method rigorously enough to the social world we could control it in the sense of determining our social existence. Nor did he share the idea of control that we find in positivist social science, since the aim of control for positivists has nothing to do with Dewey's goal of helping individuals to realise their chosen ends. Positivists think that the capacity to control things comes about by identifying and verifying law-like regularities in social phenomena, especially correlations that allow us to posit relations of cause and effect. Control here is measured by the capacity for prediction that science provides; the aim is to acquire knowledge in a nomological sense. By contrast, the whole thrust of Dewey's argument is that, due to the complexity of social life and the pace of change to which it is subject, to achieve control is merely to establish a temporary and contingent resting place for inquiry. Nothing is ever settled once and for all.

Any 'truths' we might establish through a pragmatist science therefore cannot be associated with an absolute notion of 'Truth' in any nomological or foundationalist sense. To establish a truth pragmatically is to settle a controversial or complex issue for the time being, until something comes along to dislodge the comfort and reassurance that has thereby been achieved, forcing inquiry to begin again. When one reads Dewey,

3. For example, see John Dewey, 'Science and Society', in The Later Works, 1925-1953, Vol. 6: 1931-1932, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), 52.

4. Hickman as paraphrased in Peter Manicas, 'John Dewey and American Social Science', in Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Post-Modern Generation, ed. Larry Hickman (Indianapolis, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1998), 50.

and especially when one encounters his commitment to scientific method and the language of control, one must keep in mind that his purpose was always to work towards people being able to direct their social existence towards their chosen ends, rather than leaving all that happens in life to blind accident. 'Progress' is provisional and temporary, but it is not empty and it certainly is worthwhile because of the security that it brings for a time. To give people a sense of their own capacity for controlling their world—however limited, fragile, and ephemeral—is to provide them with a comfort without which human existence would be a very sorry condition indeed. Of course, the issues of how we determine the appropriate ends for social life, and how specific resolutions to problematic situations are actually settled in practice, raise further questions, and quite possibly ones which require that Dewey's faith in scientific method be put to one side. They may well prove to be questions that simply cannot be answered through scientific inquiry; all methods, after all, have their limitations, their own specific virtues, and their own appropriate uses. But it is crucial to clarify at the start that Dewey's hopes for what science can bring to social research are qualified in this way: Dewey's theory of knowledge, and his adoption of scientific method reflect an acute awareness of the idea of indeterminacy.

Positivism's main problem is not its attachment to scientific method as such, but rather its commitment to what Dewey called the 'quest for certainty'. In Dewey's approach to social science, '[t]he quest for certainty by means of exact possession in mind of immutable reality is exchanged for search for security by means of active control of the changing course of events'.[5] We should embrace experience as it is lived, rather than generate universalisable abstractions about a 'real world' deliberately removed from everyday practice. The conventional separation of theory from practice and knowledge from action in the philosophy of science are, for Dewey, the consequences of this quest for certainty and must be overcome.[6] In the first place, Dewey understood the 'observation' of practical facts to be both theoretical and pre-theoretical. The habits, understandings, and meanings by which we live, and which ultimately lead us to particular inquiries, mean that observation cannot be theory-free. Not surprisingly, he is critical of the spectator theory of knowledge, the proposition that the object known is unaffected by the acts of the knower. This theory is born out of a desire to hold on to the idea that objects of knowledge are 'fixed and unchangeable',[7] but it is radically out of step with what actually goes on in an inquiry. Inquiry is intervention; we interact with the objects we intend

5. John Dewey, 'The Quest for Certainty', in The Later Works, 1925-1953, Vol. 4: 1929, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 163.
6. Ibid., 19-20.
7. Ibid., 19.

to know rather than passively observing them.[8] This, in fact, is what makes transformation towards human ends possible.

Dewey also criticised the correspondence theory of truth held by positivists, that the objects of knowledge can be identified with an antecedent existence, or (in other words) that our thinking reflects, mirrors, or 'corresponds to' the world.

> A merely mental coherence without experimental verification does not enable us to get beyond the realm of hypothesis. If a notion or a theory makes pretense of corresponding to reality or to the facts, this pretense cannot be put to the test and confirmed or refuted except by causing it to pass over into the realm of action and by noting the results which it yields in the form of the concrete observable facts to which this notion or theory leads. . . . A theory corresponds to the facts when it leads to the facts which are its consequences, by the intermediary of experience.[9]

Again, Dewey's point was that inquiry requires us to muddy ourselves, so to speak, in the everyday realm of experience, to abandon the belief that we can stay pristine and know anything from an objective distance or as it 'really exists'. Dewey also criticised the covering-law model of explanation.[10] He argued that events and things in themselves do not have causal powers. Causality is not an ontological category; for Dewey, it is a logical category which manifests itself in inquiry into real-life, indeterminate situations.[11] As this might suggest, he was led to a unique concept of scientific law. In Deweyan pragmatism, laws are 'intellectual instrumentalities by which the individual object is instituted and its meaning is determined'.[12] Instead of an individual case being determined by a law, the individual case is itself the 'measure of knowledge'.[13] As

8. Ibid., 19, 70.

9. John Dewey, The Public and Its Problems, in The Later Works, 1925-1953, Vol. 2: 1925-1927, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 12.

10. In Dewey's words: 'The doctrine that causation consists of a relation between an antecedent and a consequent event is thus the result of a confused mixture of ideas . . . there are no such things as uniform sequences of events'; John Dewey, Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, in The Later Works, 1925-1953, Vol. 12: 1938, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 444-45. Thus, to assume the regularity of the universe or an event ontology, as the covering law model does, is mistaken. Instead, there is the 'ordered sequence' of a logical relationship, '[f]or the traits are logically, not temporally, conjoined. They are selected and ordered (related to one another) by means of the operations that resolve a gross qualitative occurrence into a definite set of interactions'; ibid., 449. Dewey rejected empiricist ontology.

11. Ibid., 454.

12. Dewey, 'The Quest for Certainty', 164.

13. Ibid.

with positivism, we are still interested in laws as a 'means of calculating the probability of observation of an event', but the difference in what Dewey proposes is that '[t]he full and eventual reality of knowledge is carried in the individual case, not in general laws isolated from use in giving an individual case its meaning'.[14] Laws are not immutable, universal, and only in need of discovery. They are more or less useful generalisations, tools that work in a particular situation or domain until they are found wanting and the search for more accurate laws begins again.

Timothy Kaufman-Osborn captures Dewey's idea of scientific method well in his description of Dewey's approach 'not as that which permits us to apprehend objects as they really are, but rather as an interrelated system of experimental operations that makes possible the concrete transformation of indeterminate situations'.[15] In The Quest for Certainty, Dewey offered the reader a basic statement of his understanding of scientific method, or what he called there: 'the traits of experimental inquiry'. In the new experimental science that he wanted social science to emulate, 'knowledge is obtained . . . through deliberate institution of a definite and specified course of change'.[16] Directed operations are performed to measure the relationship between changes, producing knowledge. This process of experimental inquiry has three characteristics. Firstly, 'all experimentation involves overt doing, the making of definite changes in the environment or in our relation to it'; secondly, all experiments are 'directed by ideas which have to meet the conditions set by the need of the problem inducing the active inquiry'; and finally, 'the outcome of the directed activity is the construction of a new empirical situation in which objects are differently related to one another, and such that the consequences of directed operations form the objects that have the property of being known'.[17] Thus, as William Caspary argues, knowledge is not the collection of facts which document the fixed antecedent properties of reality. Knowledge is what results from doing, from identifying problems of everyday experience which require resolution and intervening to determine the relationships of their occurrence in an effort to regulate them in ways fitting with the purposes of a community.[18] Instead of looking back, social scientific inquiry, as Dewey understands it, looks forward towards creation and discovery, the making of new and improved social situations.

To explain Dewey's unique understanding of 'objectivity' in the social sciences, it may help to delve further into exactly how he thought social

14. Ibid., 166.

15. Timothy V. Kaufman-Osborn, 'Pragmatism, Policy Science and the State', American Journal of Political Science 29, no. 4 (1985): 830.

16. Dewey, 'The Quest for Certainty', 68.

17. Ibid., 69-70.

18. William Caspary, Dewey on Democracy (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 83-84.

science should be distinguished from natural science.[19] Objectivity is often seen as a questionable property of studies of social, cultural and moral phenomena, which necessarily involve ethical judgements. Science and the study of society therefore stand in a problematic relationship with one another. Or, in Dewey's own words: 'Scientific statements refer to generic conditions and relations, which are therefore capable of complete and objective statement; ethical judgements refer to an individual act which by its very nature transcends objective statement'.[20] For Dewey, this separation hangs on the idea that science is universal and therefore cannot refer to acts, while ethics is categorical and must refer to individual acts. However, Dewey maintained that scientific judgements have the same logical characteristics as ethical judgements. As explained above, science, properly understood, also refers to individual cases, while particular ethical judgements, in Dewey's scheme, also require generic propositions which state the relevant conditions in a universal or objective form for the purposes of control.[21] The difference is that, whereas physical science already has a substantial body of general propositions from which it can draw, this work has hardly begun in the social sciences.

Interestingly, Dewey thought that this was in part a problem of the social sciences 'slavishly following the technique of physical science', and a related problem of misinterpreting what physical science actually does. In a number of places in his works, Dewey was critical of mere 'fact finding' and the idea that collecting facts is how social science is to replicate natural science.[22] According to Dewey, the problem with the social facts being collected by social scientists is that they 'are not social facts at all', because they are examined independently of human desires and purposes. And this is where social scientists mistake what it is that natural science does: physical science does not simply 'collect facts'; it uses scientific method to determine the relationships between the objects studied. The kind of social facts which are meaningful and useful to us are those which have

19. It should be noted that Dewey did share with positivism the idea that in very general terms the logic of scientific inquiry in the social sciences is no different from that of the natural sciences. To be scientific, he argued, social inquiry must establish 'methods of observing, discriminating and arranging data that evoke and test correlated ideas, . . . ideas formed and used are 1) employed as hypotheses, and are 2) of a form to direct and prescribe operations of analytic-synthetic determination of facts'; Dewey, Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, 485, emphasis in original.

20. John Dewey, 'The Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality', in The Middle Works, 1899-1924, Vol. 3: 1903-1906, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 7.

21. Ibid., 7-8.

22. For example, see John Dewey, 'Science and Society', in The Later Works, 1925-1953, Vol. 6: 1931-1932, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), 52, and, in the same volume, Dewey, 'Social Science and Social Control', 64-65.

connection to human purposes, and the job of inquiry is to illuminate their impact on human ends so that we can gain a sense of 'an intelligible whole'.[23] This does not imply that a science of society would be purely subjective. The objects of knowledge in social inquiry have both subjective and objective elements that must be studied as a unity in the context of a specific problematic situation.

What distinguishes social science from natural science are not their logical conditions, but the irreducible complexity of the former as opposed to the latter, and this is merely a matter of degree. As Dewey put it, 'we cannot indulge in the selective abstractions that are the secret of the success of physical knowing. When we introduce a like simplification into social and moral subjects we eliminate the distinctively human factors:—reduction to the physical ensues'.[24] Factoring in those 'human' variables is what makes social inquiry more complex. The interpretation of subjective meanings is therefore an integral part of what social inquiry must do. But it is a mistake to conclude that social inquiry is lacking in objectivity, or even that the social scientific explanations will logically remain underdetermined in comparison with natural scientific ones. That is to ignore the 'objectivity' of the environing conditions in which we live as individuals. Dewey never separated the investigation of meaning from the context of objective reality; experience and meaning are bound up with one another for Dewey. The constitution of meaning takes place in an objective world, in which what is understood as the objective is that which is experienced as real. Dewey's postulate of immediate empiricism holds that things are what they are experienced as, and if things are experienced differently, then no one account is real and the others unreal. What matters is 'what sort of experience is denoted or indicated: a concrete and determinate experience, varying, when it varies, in specific real elements, and agreeing, when it agrees, in specific real elements, so that we have a contrast, not between a Reality, and various approximations to, or phenomenal representations of Reality, but between different realms of experience'.[25]

The final task in this overview of Deweyan pragmatism as a mode of social scientific inquiry is to discuss Dewey's idea of explanation. The goal of explanation is, of course, at the heart of positivist, and much post-positivist, social scientific theorising. However, once again, Deweyan 'explanation' differs from most conventional uses of the term; his language and emphasis were different. Conventionally, explanation typically has 'a retrospective focus on the formation of an idea', and it concentrates upon the 'justification of existing knowledge', whereas Dewey was concerned

23. Dewey, 'Social Science and Social Control', 65.

24. Dewey, 'The Quest for Certainty', 173.

25. John Dewey, 'The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism', in The Middle Works, 1899-1924, Vol. 3: 1903-1906, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 158-59.

with the prospective use of an idea and seeking out new knowledge.[26] It is practical activity, practical knowing, that leads to understanding and comprehension rather than explanation for explanation's sake.[27] For Dewey, explanation or the 'determination of objects as objects' is a process of justification as practical doing and discovering. It always involves 'change, transformation of existing experience, and thus is active. So far as this development is intentionally directed through the construction of objects as objects, there is not only active experience, but regulated activity, i.e., conduct, behaviour, practice. Therefore, all determination of objects as objects (including the sciences which construct physical objects) . . . gets ethical significance'.[28] The pursuit of social science is, for Dewey, always an ethical practice. It requires of its practitioners openness, diligence, and a commitment to discovering true beliefs tested against experience. It is also a democratic practice that requires a curious and critical public or community of inquirers. Anyone affected by a problematic situation, and who is conscious of its existence and consequences, is a potential inquirer.

The above is a brief summary of a series of complex arguments that Dewey developed over a long period of time and in a number of different works. It is by no means comprehensive, but it is, I hope, sufficient to show that Deweyan pragmatism offers us an unconventional idea of what scientific inquiry is in general, and of what a social science should look like. As I have shown, his work challenges conventional ways of construing key scientific concepts of control, truth, law, experiment, objectivity and explanation. It is clear, then, that a social science founded on Deweyan pragmatism would not be a positivist one. But that leaves us with another question: how does the alternative social science suggested by Dewey compare with the various post-positivist approaches to social science that have been developed by other thinkers, and which have, as I noted in the introduction, generally had more of an impact on IR than Deweyan pragmatism? We now have a better idea of how Dewey's approach differs from positivism, but how does it compare with, and what might it contribute to, post-positivist social science in IR?

First of all, we need to have an idea of the domain where the potential contribution of Deweyan pragmatism to post-positivist social science in IR might be evaluated. Obviously, there is no single post-positivist way of doing social science. As Susan Hekman points out, philosophical objections to positivism spring from a number of different sources—phenomenology, ordinary language analysis, ethnomethodology, hermeneutics, critical theory and structuralism, among others—each of which has its own view of the problems of positivism, and thus its own idea of how social science

26. Caspary, Dewey, 105.
27. Ibid.
28. Dewey, 'Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality', 38-39.

should be reconstructed.[29] In the next section, I will outline one particular post-positivist approach to the reconstruction of social science—Hekman's own Weberian-inspired version—and analyse the relationship between its conceptual and philosophical structure and that of Deweyan pragmatism. There are three reasons for this choice. First, Hekman's is an exceptionally wide-ranging effort at intellectual synthesis, which begins with Weber's theory of the ideal type but draws upon a number of key sources for contemporary post-positivism, including but not restricted to Habermas and Wittgenstein. In so doing, Hekman provides us with an excellent account of what is required for a post-positivist social science to emerge as a workable alternative to contemporary positivism; her analysis therefore provides a good jumping-off point for my analysis of Deweyan pragmatism. Secondly, the theorists upon whom Hekman draws have had an exceptionally prominent impact on post-positivist thinking in IR. Her framework is therefore useful for us because it is a close, and relatively sophisticated, reflection of key themes in current post-positivist scholarship in IR. And finally, as will become clear, the way in which Hekman frames post-positivist social science has important affinities with Deweyan pragmatism, such that her synthesis helps to frame the domain within which the potential contribution of Dewey's approach can be evaluated. There are, of course, problems with Hekman's work. Most importantly, whereas she wants a comprehensive science of society, a Deweyan approach would never claim to be comprehensive. Deweyan pragmatism is a tool for understanding and responding to problematic situations, to be used in conjunction with other tools as appropriate. Deweyan pragmatism is less comprehensive and more rooted in individual circumstances, which in my view is one of its main attractions. This discussion is carried on in the next section, and then in the final section the specific ways in which Deweyan pragmatism might help us to deal with some of the main problems faced by post-positivist social scientists in IR will be explored.

Post-positivist Social Science and Deweyan Pragmatism

The post-positivist synthesis that Hekman advocates rests on two arguments drawn from recent philosophy and social theory. First, she proposes that 'social action is constituted by the meanings which social actors give to their actions and that those meanings are conceptualised in ordinary language' (an argument initiated by Wittgenstein, later taken up by Peter Winch).[30] Secondly, and somewhat contrastingly, the 'analysis of social life demands a "metalanguage" which can mediate the various language games that are constitutive of social life' (an argument taken

29. Susan Hekman, Max Weber and Contemporary Social Theory (Oxford: Martin Robertson and Co., 1983), 5-6.

30. Ibid, 151.

from Habermas).[31] This second point is crucial to the elaboration of social science: if it is just one language game among many, then its purpose of explanation is negated; somehow the language of social science must provide more clarity than that of everyday life. The danger here is that, in providing this clearer perspective, social scientific concepts can easily slip into a positivist notion of the 'transcendent nature of the social scientist's ideal language', violating the first proposition concerning the importance of actors' own ordinary language and subjective meanings.[32] We need to resolve this tension between understanding the meaning of social actors' ordinary language and constructing a 'metalanguage' that can permit the scientific explanation of both social action and the reproduction of specific social structures. The foundation from which Hekman builds her response to this problem is Weber's concept of the ideal type, and especially the notion of objectivity which is a constitutive part of it. Here, I will begin with a brief discussion of this concept in Weberian sociology, relating it back to Dewey's idea of objectivity that we discussed in the previous section.

Weberian and Deweyan 'Objectivity'

Weber's main methodological concern was to show that, while interpretation must play a significant role in social scientific analysis, an 'objective' method of concept formation is still available to us: the ideal type.[33] In a way that is strongly reminiscent of Deweyan pragmatism, the starting point for the construction of an ideal type is an immediate problem or situation: as Weber put it, 'in the social sciences the stimulus to the posing of scientific problems is in actuality always given by practical "questions"'.[34] An ideal type selectively highlights a particular aspect of reality where we believe that especially significant relationships exist, and then attempts to characterise the nature of the interconnections. We are not interested in any and all relationships and their bare-bones description; practical questions lead us to what is significant, in the sense of expressing 'general cultural values'.[35] This forms the basis for selecting out what knowledge is worth knowing. Thus, the knowledge which ideal types afford is evaluative: it always contains, indeed is founded on, an idea of

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., 152.

33. For his clearest definition of the ideal type, see Max Weber, '"Objectivity" in Social Sciences and Social Policy', in The Methodology of the Social Sciences, trans. and eds. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1949), 90. To signal his own departure from the conventional concept, Weber typically put his conception of objectivity in inverted commas.

34. Ibid., 61.

35. On the idea of 'general cultural values' in Weber's work, see especially Thomas Burger, Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation: History, Laws, and Ideal Types (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1976).

the significance of certain relationships within the manifold complexity of human society and culture.

Given that ideal types are evaluative, in what sense do they give us 'objective' knowledge about society? Clearly, objectivity for Weber cannot be a matter of correspondence to reality. Instead,

> The objective validity of all empirical knowledge rests exclusively upon the ordering of the given reality according to categories which are subjective in a specific sense, namely, in that they present the presuppositions of our knowledge and are based on the presupposition of the value of those truths which empirical knowledge alone is able to give us.[36]

An ideal type's 'objectivity' is not founded on its correspondence with unevaluated facts; it is a matter of value relevance.[37] One must turn to the values of a community of social scientists to establish the universal validity of a particular ideal-typical construction. The evaluative ideas of the community of inquirers are what make a selection of empirical data worth knowing, make it significant or meaningful, and thus constitute it as social data. And, to the extent that inquirers share the notion that a certain piece of data is significant, it is objective. Weber thus saw the objects of social scientific inquiry as discrete, individual phenomena: social science 'has its point of departure, of course, in the real, i.e., concrete, individually-structured configuration of our cultural life in its universal relationships which are themselves no less individually structured, and in its development out of other social cultural conditions, which themselves are obviously likewise individually structured'.[38] General laws and concepts cannot tap into social reality as such. Instead, through ideal-typical constructions, we select, organise, and more clearly conceptualise individual relationships of a particular phenomenon in order to understand the ends of human action and also to judge actions against the internal consistency of their stated aims.[39] The generalisations that are necessary to social scientific explanation therefore have an instrumental or functional character, rather than an ontological one.[40]

There are obvious parallels here with Dewey's approach to concept formation and his suggestions about how a social science can become

36. Weber, 'Objectivity', 110, emphasis in original.

37. It is important not to be misled by Weber's oft-cited commitment to 'value-detachment' here. The key concept in his theory of ideal type formation is actually 'value-relevance' (Wertbeziehung): on this, see Pietro Rossi, 'Scientific Objectivity and Value Hypotheses', in Max Weber: Critical Assessments, Vol. 1, ed. Peter Hamilton (London: Routledge, 1991), 344-50.

38. Weber, 'Objectivity', 74, emphasis in original.

39. Weber, 'Objectivity', 54.

40. Burger, Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation, 138.

objective. Weber and Dewey share the idea that concepts are heuristic devices, or (as Dewey put it) 'intellectual instrumentalities by which all sorts of things with no qualitative similarity with one another can be compared and brought within the same system'.[41] This extends to the kind of causal attributions that can follow from the construction of ideal types or Deweyan concepts: they reveal adequate, not determinate causes. Thus, what is on offer is axiological, not nomological, explanation; we are seeking to illuminate the logical relationships between events or actions, and the consequences that follow from particular principles and understandings. As Dewey wrote, the test of the validity or explanatory power of ideas or concepts is whether they are 'dependable signs', meaning that we can expect the same consequences to result whenever the concept is employed.[42] But they are not fixed categories. They change as meaning bestowal on the part of human actors changes; thus, concepts are up for continual revision. Nevertheless, concepts can still acquire objective validity to the extent that they explain the particular set of relationships to which they correspond until something changes, and do so within the framework of a consensus among a community of inquirers in regard to which a particular set of relationships reflect a shared set of cultural values.

For our purposes the crucial point here is, as Hekman argues, that Weber's theory of the ideal type—like, I would add, Deweyan pragmatism—provides post-positivist social science with an essential starting point, because it recognises that the analysis of social reality always involves abstraction, and specifies the conditions under which such abstraction can be 'objective'. It depends on two sets of presuppositions in the process of social analysis: 1) those of the social actors, when one begins by defining the broad category of facts to which social actors have bestowed meaning; and 2) those of the investigators, when one selects from that broad category of the subjective meaning of social actors an object of study, with that choice being guided by the values shared among a community of investigators or inquirers.[43] There is, however, an important difference in how Weber and Dewey set about doing this. Both saw social science as a purposeful activity, but Weber stopped at the point of understanding the ends of social actors and examining their internal consistency. Deweyan social science goes much further: it aims to discover significant relationships through the creation of new phenomena for the purpose of modifying existence towards the desired ends of a community.[44] Weber could not go this far because of his enduring commitment (albeit qualified) to the positivist distinction between fact and value, a distinction of which Dewey was highly critical because of its association with the 'quest for

41. Dewey, 'The Quest for Certainty', 100-01.
42. Ibid., 104.
43. Hekman, Max Weber, 30.
44. Caspary, Dewey, 92-107.

certainty' which he wished to purge from philosophy. Dewey's work supplies us with a way of building up general scientific concepts out of the subjective meanings attached by actors to social action, but without the fact/value separation that (from a post-positivist perspective) mars Weber's theory of the ideal type. In this respect, a Deweyan pragmatist theory of concept formation would be a much more suitable starting point for post-positivist social science than a Weberian one.

Understanding the Meaning of Social Action

A general theory of concept formation does not take us very far along the road to a fully-fledged post-positivist social science, however. How do we actually set about understanding what any given form of social action actually is? That, after all, is one of the essential tasks of any social science. From the perspective of subsequent social theory, Weber's analysis falls short in two respects here. First, he failed to distinguish between the meaning that is constituted within the consciousness of the individual social actor and the meaning that is constituted in the process of social interaction. Secondly, he failed to specify that both of these aspects of subjective meaning are constituted 'intersubjectively'; that is, both are established within an already existing context that shares certain concepts. As Hekman puts it: 'It is the intersubjectivity of meaning constitution on both of these levels that provides the social scientist with access to what, for Weber, is a "private" realm'.[45] The intersubjective context within which subjective meanings are constituted provides us with a 'way in', so to speak, to how actors themselves understand their social actions. It also provides us with a crucial way in which concepts can partake both of actors' subjective meanings and, at the same time, generalise away from them. Indeed, the entire subject matter of the social sciences is meaning on this second level 'in which social actors directly experience each other'.[46]

There are two main lines of argument here and Deweyan pragmatism has considerable relevance to both. One is the extension of Weber's ideal-typical social science that was effected through Alfred Schutz's appropriation of the phenomenological philosopher Edmund Husserl's idea of the 'lifeworld'. In Schutz's words, this is the 'the world of daily life which the wide-awake, grown-up man who acts in it and upon it amidst his fellow-men experiences with the natural attitude as a reality'.[47] The other, already alluded to above, is Wittgenstein's notion of 'language games', where the purpose of inquiry would be to understand the meaning of social action by understanding the rules of the specific game that has

45. Hekman, Max Weber, 67.
46. Ibid., 68.
47. Alfred Schutz, On Phenomenology and Social Relations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 72.

developed within a particular 'form of life'. Interestingly, both of these approaches were similar to the way in which Dewey developed his own conception of social scientific inquiry from basic concept formation towards an idea of exactly how the meanings that people attach to their actions might be understood. Dewey held that in order to cope in the world, people distinguish and typify their perceptions and give meaning to experience; this is the way in which experience is retained.[48] As Rodman Webb notes, both Schutz and Weber place human experience at the centre of their philosophies, and more specifically both of them 'share the belief that the taken-for-granted must be made thematic if we hope to understand human experience fully'.[49] Dewey regarded what he calls the practical arts to be fundamental sources of knowledge. By the practical arts, he was referring to common sense gained through everyday experience, skills, or what Caspary calls 'inarticulate knowings'. Indeed, Dewey's grounding of knowledge in the practical arts is a recognition not dissimilar to Husserl's that scientific inquiry is rooted in the lifeworld, or to Wittgenstein's that language games are linked to forms of life.[50] Dewey regarded this starting point for knowledge as implicit knowing based upon habits, a background from which conscious knowing grows. He sees that explicit knowledge can only emerge from 'an immense background of tacit understanding, taken for granted', which gives us 'premonitions of approach to acceptable meanings'.[51]

The shift towards the idea of a 'lifeworld' or 'form of life' is crucial to the question of how social science can begin to develop generalised concepts that allow the scientist to add a clarity that cannot be achieved by the participants in social action themselves. Here, Schutz went somewhat beyond Weber to note that the personal value interest of the scientist defines the problem and parameters of investigation, but that the problem itself sets its own 'zone of relevance' that determines the precise nature of the ideal type constructed.[52] What Schutz calls 'relevance structures' or 'zones of relevance', Dewey refers to as habits and interests, and for both writers, systems of relevance or habits form the background or horizon against which the object of inquiry finds definition.[53] Dewey also sees that the interests of the inquirer initiate and guide scientific investigation,[54] that the problem itself contains its own interests and habits

48. Rodman Webb, The Presence of the Past: John Dewey and Alfred Schutz on the Organization of Experience (Gainesville, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1976), 58-59.

49. Ibid., 34-35.

50. Caspary, Dewey, 55-56. Webb too writes that Dewey begins from a Husserlian, lifeworld-like starting point; see Webb, The Presence of the Past, 42.

51. Caspary, Dewey, 56-57.

52. Schutz, On Phenomenology and Social Relations, 111.

53. Webb, The Presence of the Past, 60.

54. For example: 'There must be some stimulus which moves to performing this particular sort of act rather than some other. Why engage in that particular kind of activity that we call judging? . . . Only the whole scheme of conduct as focusing in

which influence the precise nature of typifications or concepts constructed—in other words, the context of the problematic situation has its own logic for which solutions, in order to be workable, must fit.[55] For solutions to ultimately rest as 'settled', they are most often those which have been pursued in accordance with scientific method and therefore have the possibility of gaining consensus within the scientific community. As Webb writes, for both Schutz and Dewey, it is the 'pre-reflective collision of habits which constitute problems and trigger consciousness', but while both see that habits or horizons can inhibit creative solutions, neither see that this must necessarily be the case.[56] Regardless, explicit knowing is impossible without them and thus, for Dewey, they are 'both limiting and liberating'.[57]

A Wittgenstinian approach to this question might, as Hekman suggests, begin from 'the fact that, underlying the language of games employed by scientists, is basic agreement on a mode of argumentation that perpetuates, rather than curtails, scientific discussions'.[58] What this means is that there is a broader context in which these debates take place, manifested in the fact that social scientists engage in the same kind of activity, where what they agree to is what counts as argument.[59] This would allow the possibility of a specific form of intersubjectivity among scientists themselves. Hekman adds that Wittgenstein's notion of 'forms of life' also assists in explaining the existence of broad criteria in social life. A form of life is a network created by the interconnected language games of a culture. It represents the shared assumptions and ways of doing within a culture, making a particular way of life possible. While these assumptions or broad criteria are not fixed, they are stable enough to bind communities. Thus, Wittgenstein argues, as would Dewey, that criteria of truth and rationality are possible despite the fact that observation is never theory-free, because of the possibility for the construction of particular standards of truth, proof, justification and so forth within a particular form of life. For Dewey, by contrast, the idea of truth or verification rests more on the consequences of

the interests of an individual can afford that determining stimulus'; see Dewey, 'Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality', 18.

55. For example: 'The individualized selection and adaptation is an integral portion of the logic of the situation. And such selection and adjustment is clearly in the nature of an act'; ibid., 13. That is, we select concepts as tools demanded by the individual situation.

56. Webb, The Presence of the Past, 62.

57. Ibid. Another key area of affinity, but one I do not have space to discuss in proper detail here, concerns a concept that Schutz developed from the work of another American pragmatist writer, William James; the idea of 'multiple realities' in the field of psychology. See Schutz, On Phenomenology and Social Relations, 245-62.

58. Hekman, Max Weber, 169.

59. Ibid., 170.

the principle or concept hypothetically held and experimented with; that is, whether it yields dependable results. And yet, like Wittgenstein, Dewey did not believe that all scientists agree on a definitive set of procedures or propositions as such, but rather that they share an activity, the practice and function of which results in common ground among them.

Understanding the meaning of social action is, of course, only one task that a post-positivist social science might perform. Another is to examine social forms, structures and institutions for purposes of critical, normative analysis. This means that post-positivist social science must also be equipped with a methodology that provides an objective standpoint from which social structures can be analysed; however, one apart from the scientific definition of objectivity provided by positivists.[60] Like Schutz and Wittgenstein, Habermas tackles important epistemological points concerning the meaning of social action, but going beyond these writers, he also provides an alternative conception of objectivity to that of positivism in order to explain the development of social structures and to critically evaluate them—hence his growing appeal as post-positivist IR has evolved. Both of these elements of Habermas's social theory are to be welcomed, but there is a tricky aspect to the concept of objectivity that he supplies: he asserts the possibility of universal truth claims, but does not provide a justification for their transcultural status. This is particularly problematic for IR as a social science, since without a defensible transcultural claim to an alternative concept of objectivity, the important work of normatively evaluating social structures in world politics, like gender, labour and dominance to name some examples, is compromised. A workable concept of objectivity in IR must be broadly generalisable or expansionable across global cultures if it is not to be susceptible to charges that it marginalises and cannot accommodate the plurality that exists within international politics. As the next section argues, I believe that Deweyan pragmatism can successfully combine both tasks of post-positivist social science—understanding the meaning of social action and critically examining international social structures—with a more defensible transcultural conception of objectivity than Habermas provides.

The Deweyan Contribution: Democracy and Plurality in Social Scientific Inquiry

Thus far, I have explained what a Deweyan pragmatist conception of social science would look like, and I have identified some important affinities between it and various arguments that have informed recent post-positivist work in philosophy and social theory. It should now be clear that Dewey offers an alternative conception of social science that post-positivists at least ought to find congenial to their work. We do not yet, however, have

60. Hekman, Max Weber, 102-03.

a clear reason why post-positivists in IR should interest themselves in Deweyan pragmatism, as opposed to using any other post-positivist approach. I have touched on a few areas where Dewey's work shows significant promise for addressing the problems that post-positivist social scientists face in trying to develop concepts and theories that are capable of taking seriously the subjective meanings that social actors attach to their actions, while at the same time stepping back from those understandings in order to offer clearer, generalisable assessments of them. But now I want to explore an area where Dewey's work offers a real advantage beyond existing forms of critical theoretical social science, and one of vital importance for the study of IR: the question of the degree to which cultural pluralism can be accommodated in our social science. Of course, all social scientists recognise the importance of this problem, but it is especially important for students of a subject that seeks to make sense of the entirety of world politics. If we are looking for a post-positivist way of conducting social scientific inquiry in IR that takes plurality seriously and works to be as inclusive as possible, Deweyan pragmatism should be a prime candidate.

Like Habermas, Dewey's concern was that we should evaluate our existing institutions and work to change what we find to be deficient in them. 'Ideas are worthless', he claimed, 'except as they pass into actions which rearrange and reconstruct in some way . . . the world in which we live'.[61] A persistent theme in Dewey's work was that both philosophy and science should seek to do more to solve the problems of mankind, arguing that the greatest scientific revolution was still to come: 'when men collectively organise their knowledge for social application'.[62] However, the possibility of this is constrained by the fact that 'science has operated as a means for extending the influence of the institution of private property and connected legal relations far beyond their former limits'.[63] Control of science is in the hands of propertied interests and any positive social effects resulting from its development have been accidental. Dewey thought that the only way to solve this problem was to extend that control, placing it in the hands of those it should be helping, and this would require that more individuals become actively engaged in inquiry when problematic situations which effect them arise. In a comment that anticipates a host of different post-positivist concerns, he argued that the heart of the problem

> concerns the economic and legal organization of society in consequence of which the knowledge which regulates activity is

61. Dewey, 'The Quest for Certainty', 111.
62. John Dewey, Ethics, in The Middle Works, 1899-1924, Vol. 3: 1903-1906, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 52.
63. Ibid., 58.

> so much the monopoly of the few, and is used by them in behalf of private and class interests and not for general and shared use . . . The practical and social problem is one of effecting a more general equitable distribution of the elements of understanding and knowledge in connection with work done, activities undertaken, and a consequent freer and more generously shared participation in their results.[64]

In short, Dewey shares a critical theoretical interest in making judgements about societal arrangements. What makes his particular approach to this issue so interesting, however, is that he offers a way out of the foundationalist dilemma that entraps post-positivists working in a more Habermasian vein. To understand how, we need to go back to their different ways of framing the concept of objectivity. As we have seen, Dewey did not turn to the idea of a rational will for judgement to be possible. He thought in terms of a plurality of interests, but where that plurality did not mean there was no scientific way of choosing one normative commitment over another. Dewey's conception of objectivity still allowed for the assertion of truth claims, but truth claims with the potential to be transculturally valid, and more easily justifiable than the results of Habermas's meta-theoretical hoop-jumping.

According to James Bohman, pragmatism turns epistemological, moral, and metaphysical questions into practical problems.[65] This is precisely the case for Dewey's conception of objectivity. Objectively valid truths exist for Dewey, but they are not to be found via theoretical abstraction. They rest instead on experience 'within the relationships of the situation'.[66] Doubt, discrepancies, and indeterminacies that arise from time to time give rise to the recognition of a problematic situation. What is valid, what is objectively true, according to Dewey, is

> not definable or measurable in terms of the knowledge-content if isolated, but only of the function of the knowledge-experience in subsequent experiences. . . . Its peculiar fitness is functional, relative and empirical, not absolutistic and transcendental. Yet we may admit a certain empirical transcendence. The outcome of the doubt-inquiry-answer experience literally goes beyond the state of suspense and dissentience out of which it originates. So far as the knowledge experience fulfills its function, it permanently transcends its own originating conditions. It puts certain things

64. Dewey, 'The Quest for Certainty', 65.

65. James Bohman, 'Theories, Practices, and Pluralism: A Pragmatic Interpretation of Critical Social Science', Philosophy of the Social Sciences 29, no. 4 (1999): 461.

66. John Dewey, 'The Experimental Theory of Knowledge', in The Middle Works, 1899-1924, Vol. 3: 1903-1906, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 125, emphasis in original.

> out of doubt, rendering them reliable, economical and fruitful constituents in other more complex things.[67]

That which is objective is that which settles a practical problem to the extent that doubt can be put aside for the time being. And this is reflected in Dewey's idea of verification, the standards of judgement which follow from pragmatic method. Verification rests on the consequences of the principle or concept hypothetically held and experimented with; that is, whether it yields dependable results to the practical problem concerned. To the extent that it is functional in helping people to direct experience in ways that resolve a problematic situation, creating new experience through a transition away from indeterminate experience, a principle or concept is verified.[68] There are no formal, procedural standards of judgement, since the fixed nature of such standards would confine the creative and imaginative pursuit of inquiry and lead to stilted experimental outcomes. When standards of judgement do emerge, they evolve within a particular inquiry as they suit its own character and logic.

But how precisely do they emerge and how does inquiry come to 'rest' in the way that Dewey suggests? This is where the democratic nature of Dewey's method of social science becomes manifest. Dewey accepted Charles Peirce's statement that '[t]he opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate is what we mean by the truth'.[69] Truth, in other words, is a matter for deliberation within a community of inquirers, drawing from their practice and experience, putting forth reasons and arguments which are evaluated on the basis of their fit with the evidence, the objective conditions of the situation, and their ability to improve upon it in accordance with the purposes of the affected community. What must also be kept in mind is that truth must be consistent with the ends of a community; ends arrived at collectively. Moreover, Dewey believed that the notions of truth arrived at by a community would be enhanced when more inquiring minds were at work in producing them. Clearly, increasing the number of inquirers will increase the complexity involved in getting them all to agree, but taking the complexity that plurality brings to the examination of a problematic situation into account would, he argued, make for more workable solutions that can garner authentic agreement.

Habermas also attempts to guarantee the possibility of agreement or consensus through what may be viewed as a democratic methodology, but it is one that fixes standards of judgement and procedures to ensure that truth is consensually arrived at. For Dewey, such procedural safeguards not only limit inquiry, but actually undermine their democratic

67. John Dewey, 'The Knowledge Experience and its Relationships', in The Middle Works, 1899-1924, Vol. 3: 1903-1906, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 176-77.

68. See Dewey, 'The Quest for Certainty', 103-04, 152.

69. As quoted by Dewey in Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, 343 n. 6.

intentions because they suggest fixed ends rather than open-ended, public, critical reflection. On Dewey's account, communal agreement on ends, and thus truth, is in no way assured. Again, Dewey agreed with Peirce that the facts of the situation and the diligent pursuit of inquiry may or may not lead a community of inquirers to converge upon a solution that is considered settled. As Cheryl Misak writes, Peirce is a fallibilist who 'insisted that an inquirer could never know when inquiry had been pushed far enough for a genuinely stable opinion to have been reached . . . since we cannot know when we have a belief that would never lead to disappointment'.[70] What is on offer is, in Misak's words, a 'deflated' theory of truth, which can only put forward the best notion of truth available given where inquiry has come to rest in light of the evidence and argument that is present at the time; it is a notion of truth that is objective in so far as it is independent of the impulses of individuals and is instead what a group of inquirers have collectively arrived at.[71] While the possibility of agreement on standards of judgement is in some doubt, the rigorous application of scientific method to practical problems can still go a long way in helping us direct experience toward communal ends.

Dewey's main point, then, is that practical problem-solving through the application of scientific method is capable of generating possibilities for 'objective' truth. Perhaps this insistence on scientific method does reflect something akin to Habermas's desire to offer procedural guarantees; but, if that is the case, there are still good reasons for preferring Dewey's approach to Habermas's. In the first place, Dewey's solution does not limit inquiry before it has started. More importantly, though, Deweyan pragmatism provides us with a much more compelling way of framing the cross-cultural status of social science. Dewey's conception of objectivity, as a matter of practical problem-solving rather than as a theoretical assertion, is more easily justifiable and it is more expansionable. Even a weak-foundationalist assertion such as Habermas's is not a workable response to the plurality of modernity, as an extensive critical literature attests.[72] Instead, in the pragmatist conception of objectivity as resting in the context of a situation, there is the possibility that diverse individuals can draw upon empirical experience which may well be shared; or, if not shared, those who do not have the same direct experience may, through

70. Cheryl Misak, Truth, Politics, Morality: Pragmatism and Deliberation (London: Routledge, 2000), 58.

71. Ibid., 56-58.

72. For examples of critiques of Habermas on the issue of plurality from post-modern, feminist, and critical theory perspectives, see respectively, Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); Seyla Benhabib, Situating the Self: Gender, Community, and Postmodernism (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993); and James Bohman, 'Citizenship and the Norms of Publicity: Wide Public Reason in Cosmopolitan Societies', Political Theory 27, no. 2 (1999): 176-202.

the use of 'moral imagination',[73] get inside the heads of those who do and think critically and usefully on the issue at hand. The possibilities for accommodating plurality and relatedly, its expasionability across cultures, are improved in two respects in particular: by the way in which Dewey's pragmatist method seeks out that which is different and complex for the purposes of better problem-solving; and by the particular nature of his idea of truth.

According to pragmatism, the normative commitments of a particular community initiate and direct inquiry, but there are a number of things to consider before we rule out the possibility that non-members may have a connection to inquiries underway within a given community. For example, the initial commitments that a community shares may find different expression or alter altogether during the course of inquiry, and the force of these changes, in fact, may be initiated from outside the community when inquirers borrow from the empirical experience of other communities grappling with not dissimilar situations in an effort to explore possible solutions imaginatively and creatively. Dewey's emphasis on the unity of experience finds that different provinces of reality are not incommensurable; there is much in experience that can be communicated across cultures, establishing the possibility of this kind of profitable exchange. Any new commitments that come to rest as settled after an expansive inquiry of the kind described may therefore become standards of judgement with wider applicability, thanks to the relatively inclusive process which influenced their development. Another thought, offered by Misak, is that the boundaries of cultures shift and overlap to an extent that it is difficult to say which values are those of a community alone.[74] There is every possibility that outsiders will have important interelationships with particular communal inquiries. Misak assists further in giving us a picture of the way in which pragmatism embraces plurality: 'It is clearly crucial for the pragmatist theory that wanting to get at truth is something that cuts across whatever divides us from others', and its focus on the resolution of problematic situations means that we must encounter plurality head on, building 'the full complexity or the richness of our moral lives into the position from the outset'.[75]

The second respect in which Dewey's position better accommodates plurality and expansionability is his assertion that the truths or standards of judgement that come to be settled have only 'warranted assertability'

73. Molly Cochran, Normative Theory in International Relations: A Pragmatic Approach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 207-09.

74. Misak, Truth, Politics, Morality, 131.

75. Ibid., 105, 129 respectively. See also Crispin Sartwell, 'How to Assault Yourself', The Journal of Speculative Philosophy 12, no. 2 (1998): 138, who writes, according to Dewey: '[r]econstruction in the social world can be achieved only by forms of inclusion, extending the widest possible scope for inquiry and intelligent action to the widest plurality of persons'.

and nothing more. As I have already explained, there are no such things as absolute or universal truths in pragmatism, and Dewey emphatically rejects the idea of genuinely final ends. But this does not mean that an argument for one particular solution to a problematic situation over others, and the acceptance of its associated social consequences, is inconceivable or unjustifiable. It simply means that any such preference cannot be given the status of truth. It is held to operate until a new substantive doubt arises which begins inquiry again. Until that time, though, it can serve as a basis for directing change in human social life. What Dewey's notion of objectivity loses in not offering formal, procedural conditions which assure a form of universal agreement, it gains as a conception that is less likely to marginalise those who cannot share in a Habermasian rational will. Thus, the advantage of objective standards which emerge from a process of practical problem-solving that is directed by a pragmatist idea of scientific method, but not formally structured in a more Habermasian sense, is that their less fixed or final formulation has more potential for actual expansionability due to a more contingent formulation. The formalistic Habermasian approach promises what looks like a more comprehensive universalism, but this promise is largely hypothetical. Deweyan pragmatism, by contrast, promises less but delivers more. The question that remains is whether the one guidepost which directs inquiry for Dewey, the value of scientific method mentioned above, is cross-culturally expansionable. I believe a strong case can be made that it is, based on the fact that Dewey's approach to social scientific thinking is animated by practical problems and practical reasoning. The need for problem-solving in everyday life, paramount reality, is something we all share in across cultures and scientific method is, by Dewey's understanding, an efficient route to good problem-solving that can be explored and shared transculturally, uniting experience.

Conclusion

In this article I have sought to introduce Deweyan pragmatism to IR scholars as a candidate for reconstructing how we pursue social science in our field. I have explained how Dewey understood what it meant to do social science, and developed some points of comparison between his approach and ways of doing social science that are more commonly associated with post-positivism in IR today. Most importantly, I have highlighted the main contribution that Deweyan pragmatism stands to make to post-positivist social science in general, and in IR in particular. The specific way in which Dewey framed such ideas as objectivity and truth as the goals of social scientific inquiry allowed him to develop a method of inquiry that is uniquely suited to maximising the democratic

inclusion of people from varying cultural communities in the process of solving the problems that affect them all.

Deweyan pragmatism allows us to retain the virtues of scientific method in trying to exercise some control over the world in which we live. Unlike positivism, it does so in a way that is fully cognisant of the epistemological and methodological difficulties that attend the application of such a method to the study of the social world. In that respect, as I explained in section two, it is consistent with the broad thrust of a certain kind of post-positivist social scientific scholarship that has already begun to attract considerable popularity within IR. But Deweyan pragmatism offers us something that no other post-positivist social science has succeeded in achieving: the opportunity to develop a scientific way of solving international problems that would be genuinely inclusive of cultural plurality. Of course, we still have some way to go before we have the Deweyan public spheres in the international realm that would make such a form of inquiry the norm rather than the exception in contemporary world politics. The emergence of such publics and their acquisition or use of power is an area that demands further analysis. But the prize of having a useful scientific method for solving our problems, free from the taint of positivism, makes that endeavour wholly worthwhile.

Molly Cochran is Associate Professor in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology