Working Paper
No. 451

PROBLEM- AND POLICY-ANALYSIS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Sen in the light of Dewey, Myrdal, Streeten, Stretton and Haq

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December 2007

ISSN 0921-0210

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ABSTRACT

Much of Amartya Sen's work has been directly policy-related, but his methodology of policy analysis has not been explained in detail. Action-related social science involves value-imbued procedures that guide the numerous unavoidable choices. This theme was explored earlier by authors close to Sen's milieu such as Streeten and Stretton, and by forerunners including Dewey and Myrdal. Assisted by Jean Drèze, Sen has evolved a form of policy analysis guided by humanist values rather than those of mainstream economics. Features of the methodology include: 1) A wider range of values employed in valuation, with central attention to: how do and can people live? 2) Conceptual investigation of the wider range of values. 3) Use of the wider range of values to guide choice of topics and boundaries of analysis. 4) Hence a focus on human realities, not on an arbitrary slice of reality selected according to commercial significance and convenience for measurement. 5) Use of the wider range of values to guide other decisions in analysis; thus a focus on the socio-economic significance of results. 6) A matching focus on a wide range of potential policy means. The paper characterizes Sen's policy analysis methodology, its roots in earlier work, and its relations to the UNDP Human Development approach and kindred approaches.

Keywords

policy analysis, human development, entitlements approach, capability approach

FROM 'HUME'S LAW' TO PROBLEM- AND POLICY-ANALYSIS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT[1]

Sen after Dewey, Myrdal, Streeten, Stretton and Haq

1 THE MISSING LECTURES IN SEN'S *ON ETHICS AND ECONOMICS*

Amartya Sen's lectures *On Ethics and Economics* (1987) considered two main themes. Firstly, since people use ethical ideas in orienting their behaviour, explanatory economics must understand those ideas and their roles; they are part of human and societal reality. Secondly, people argue about values, and we can identify and assess their reasons for the values. At the intersection of these two concerns, we can analyse and assess how people use values in argument. Ignorance of and segregation from ethics as a subject profoundly damages economics. Together these themes open up a great range of topics.

While *On Ethics and Economics* worked at the levels of generalized explanatory theory and argumentation about values (identification, evaluation, choice), much of Sen's work has been policy-related, and not only at the level of arguing about criteria such as efficiency or rights but concerned too with policy design and principles of policymaking. Yet neither Sen nor recent commentaries on his work (such as the special issue of *Review of Political Economy*, Vol. 15, #3, July 2003), give equal methodological attention to policy-oriented analysis. Putnam and Walsh do stress that we need value-imbued central concepts such as 'capability'. Walsh's (2003) monograph length 'Sen after Putnam' focuses on how Putnam has defended Sen's engagement in ethics by showing how every key term in his capability approach is 'an entangled term', and that such terms and rigorous defence of such a methodology are needed in order 'to build a development theory [tapestry] black with the dire facts of the poor world, white with economic analysis, and red with a humane moral appraisal of the fragility of human attainments' (Walsh, 2003, p. 389). (For related formulations see Putnam, 2002, pp. 62-3; Putnam, 2003a, p. 397.)

Direction by values is likely to be stronger in policy-related work, given its felt urgency and practical role, and the evident social and human significance of the choices. In their diverse ways, both Frank Fischer (1980) and Martin Rein and Donald Schön (1994) show aspects of this. More widely though, most social science involves not only value-imbued central concepts but value-imbued procedures that guide the numerous unavoidable choices. This has been explored and illustrated by pragmatist writers such as Michael Scriven (1972), and authors close to Sen's milieu including Gunnar Myrdal, Hugh Stretton, and Paul Streeten. Introducing Myrdal's essays *Value in Social Theory*,

[1] I would like to thank seminar audiences in Birmingham, Groningen and Rotterdam, and Bridget O'Laughlin, Steven Pressman, Ingrid Robeyns, Irene van Staveren, Paul Streeten and three anonymous referees for helpful reactions and advice.

Streeten (1958, p. xiii) argued: 'Values are not something to be discarded, nor even something to be made explicit in order to be separated from empirical matter, but are ever-present and permeate empirical analysis through and through.'

Sen remains more reticent than this in declared methodology, whether due to his affiliations, strategy, or style. Perhaps, after Myrdal's troubled example, he deemed it strategically unwise to continually stress guidance of analysis by values. He has always aimed to influence mainstream economics from within, with no offence or confrontation. His intellectual self-identification is with the economics mainstream from Adam Smith and J.S. Mill to Kenneth Arrow and Robert Solow. He regularly invokes the 'fundamental theorems of [neoclassical] welfare economics' and has put much of his energy into refining the individualistic framework of social choice theory. His theoretical focus has been more on Arrow (1951) than on Streeten (1954, 1958).

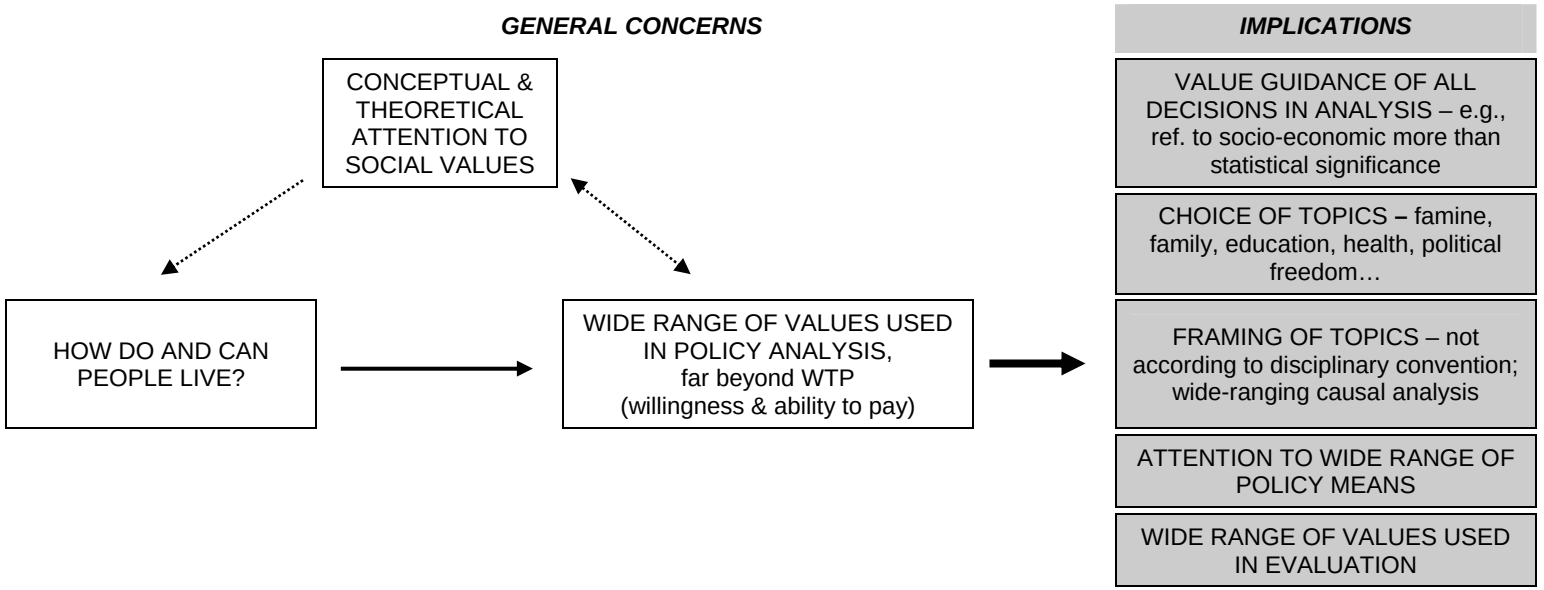
Yet, from his diagnosis of the limitations of Arrow's social choice theory, and its need for more types of information and more explicit value judgements, combined with his confrontation of famine, Sen has evolved a powerful form of policy analysis guided by humanist values rather than those of mainstream economics. It has influenced the Human Development Approach of the United Nations Development Programme *et al.* It is best seen in his book with Jean Drèze, *Hunger and Public Action* (1989), and seen also in *Poverty and Famines* (1981)*, Development as Freedom* (1999), and *India: Development and Participation* (2002). The methodology moves away from and far beyond the economic cost-benefit analysis where he began (Sen, 1960; Dasgupta, Marglin & Sen, 1972).

Features of the methodology include, as outlined in Figure 1:

- A wider range of values is employed in valuation, far beyond willingness-(backed by ability)-to-pay
- Central attention goes to how do, and can, people live?
- Conceptual and theoretical investigation is undertaken into this wider range of values
- The wider range of values guides our choice of topics—famine, family, education, health, political freedom—and of boundaries of analysis. It brings a focus on core human realities, not on slices of experience selected according to commercial significance and/or convenience for measurement
- The wider range of values also guides other decisions in analysis; giving for example a focus on the socio-economic significance of results not merely their statistical significance
- Attention goes to a wide range of potential policy means, thanks to wide-ranging problem analysis, and because most of the wider range of value-carriers have major instrumental significance too: nutrition, family, education, health, political freedom.

It has become a form of policy analysis consistently guided by human development values rather than just the values of the market, namely who will pay for what. The paper's Figures structure this family of themes.

FIGURE 1
Amartya Sen's human development oriented policy analysis methodology



Where and how we act depends on where and how we look. Policy analysis as generally construed thus includes problem definition and problem analysis; we can use the term 'problem- and policy-analysis' to avoid any misunderstanding that 'policy analysis' refers only to design and selection of policy instruments and packages. Sen's contribution lies especially but not exclusively in problem-definition and -analysis. In fact, his work and the human development approach claim not more than to give a partial intellectual framework for advice on what should be done next in any given real situation..

Sen has not articulated the methodology at length, nor is he its only exponent or practitioner. The paper diagnoses the approach seen especially in his joint work with Drèze and more generally characterizes his methodology in problem- and policy-analysis, and relates it to compatible work. Section 2 identifies key issues raised by earlier authors like Dewey and Myrdal. Many of these issues are equally relevant to value-conscious pure explanatory analysis: boundaries of analysis, choice of concepts, burdens of proof, judgements of socio-economic significance. Section 3 considers how Sen responds to such issues in his form of value-oriented reality-driven economics, and shows how it is value-guided as well as value-conscious. It discusses both the capability approach and entitlement approach, and their integration. Section 4 comments on their further integration with themes of human security and human rights in the human development approach, shows how other work on methodology goes deeper in some respects, and identifies directions of follow-up.

2 VALUE-CONSCIOUS SOCIAL SCIENCE

2.1 From ontology and epistemology to methodology

Through the 1960s to 1980s the leading economics textbook in Britain and perhaps Canada, also used in innumerable other courses worldwide, was Richard G. Lipsey's *An Introduction to Positive Economics*. It continues as one of the leading textbooks, notwithstanding that a large part of the focus of economics, and of the book, is normative: the evaluation of situations, outcomes and policy problems and options. Conceived in the 1950s and 1960s, the book wished to distance itself from the normative and yet to engage in policy analysis. The values it used in evaluation were, in the fashion of the contemporary welfare economics and orthodox treatment of economic policy, largely hidden within its methodology or taken as self-evident and consensual and thus as not really values. 'Lipsey', as it was routinely called, was in this respect extreme only in its title and its explicit dedication to a positivist ideal; 'Samuelson' and most mainstream competitors were no different.

The mainstream economics methodological ideal of the period had been most prominently enunciated by Lionel Robbins in the 1930s and Milton Friedman in the 1950s: that as far as economics is concerned, values are matters of arbitrary, exogenous decision. Over value disagreements we can do nothing, except fight, declared Friedman (1953); 'thy blood or mine' orated Robbins (1932, p. 135). The choices are to be left to consumers, businessmen and authorised (and strictly constrained) political leaders. Values of consumer-sovereignty, capitalist-sovereignty and national self-concern were presumed,

subject only to special exception; consumers alone decide what is best for themselves, the owners of capital alone retain the net surplus of an enterprise, and governments value only the interests of their country's residents.

Behind Robbins and Friedman lay a type of philosophical positivism, traceable back from the interwar Vienna Circle to David Hume in the eighteenth century. It is encapsulated in the so-called 'Hume's Law': we cannot derive 'ought' from 'is'. The 'Law', or conjecture, or stipulation, is sometimes misunderstood to mean something further: that values are matters beyond knowledge, matters of taste, about which we can only fight or agree to differ – 'Hume's Second Law' in the minds of many economists (Roy, 1992). You like coffee, and I like tea. A less sweeping sister-formulation is the following: thought is or can be fully partitioned into statements of fact and statements of value. Within statements of 'value' we can perhaps distinguish evaluative ('good/bad') and prescriptive ('ought') statements.

Hume's Law can best be interpreted as a methodological warning about required procedure in inquiry: look for the value assumptions behind 'ought' statements. The asserted 'Hume's Second Law' is epistemological, about what can or cannot be known. The proposition about full fact-value partitioning is a questionable ontological claim, that becomes a description of thought only by terminological fiat and that does no justice to many realms of thought. We could accept both an ontology of partitioned facts and values and a methodology of seeking value assumptions while rejecting the epistemological claim that values are matters of taste. The ontological fiat has often been misread as a proscription of value discourse. It does not proscribe reasoned value discourse but implies that this would have a particular form, namely occurring on the two sides of a fact/value divide. Walsh (2003, pp. 328, 336) cites Bernard Williams as a recent example of a dichotomist who engaged in rigorous value discourse – as did Hume himself. Hume believed in following people's preferences on private matters, and for public matters expected to achieve a consensus of the educated.

Even more important, we may accept or adopt the proposition on methodology even if we reject the proposed fact/value dichotomy. 'I believe that boundary questions [such as between fact and value] are sometimes taken to be more important than they are. … imprecision of boundaries can still leave vast regions without ambiguity' advises Sen (1980, p. 353). Value-laden does not mean fact-empty. The methodological injunction—to look always for the value inputs that underlie prescriptions, or, by extension, evaluations—is not tied to one ontology, and leads in the opposite direction from the attempted epistemological proscription: it encourages examination of and engagement with values. An injunction to distinguish and investigate values is methodologically invaluable even if—perhaps precisely because—there are areas of intricate fact-value entanglement. It drives us to attend to things that we might prefer to, or be habituated or pressurised to, ignore and conceal. (See Weston, 1994, for a similar position.) Rather than 'Hume's Second Law' we have then what could be called 'The Myrdal-Streeten-Stretton-Scriven Programme'. Michael Scriven, for example, a pragmatist philosopher and evaluator, has built value-identification and value-examination in as part of methodologies of argument analysis and evaluation (Scriven, 1976, 1991).

Scriven's philosophical pragmatism, his recognition and indeed stress on important areas of fact-value entanglement (Scriven, 1972), leads him not to shun value investigation but to underline its importance.

Early in his career, Sen engaged with Hume's Law, checking out the philosophical mandate for an economist interested in normative analysis. His 1966 paper both paid its respects to the methodological orthodoxy and established a space to pursue his intellectual interests; he has not written in this area since the early 1970s. Abstract discussion cannot in itself tell us how to work with values, only that we can and must. It has an essential role in giving this possibility theorem, but is insufficient. Let us see some relevant aspects of using values that were identified by earlier authors—Myrdal, Streeten and Stretton—who are close in substantive focus to Sen, and by a methodological forerunner, Dewey. They cover aspects of methodology that Sen has not expounded in equal depth. Sen though has formulated and exemplified an elaborate value-guided approach in practical policy analysis and evaluation that has been more widely adopted by others. We turn to that subsequently, in Section 3.

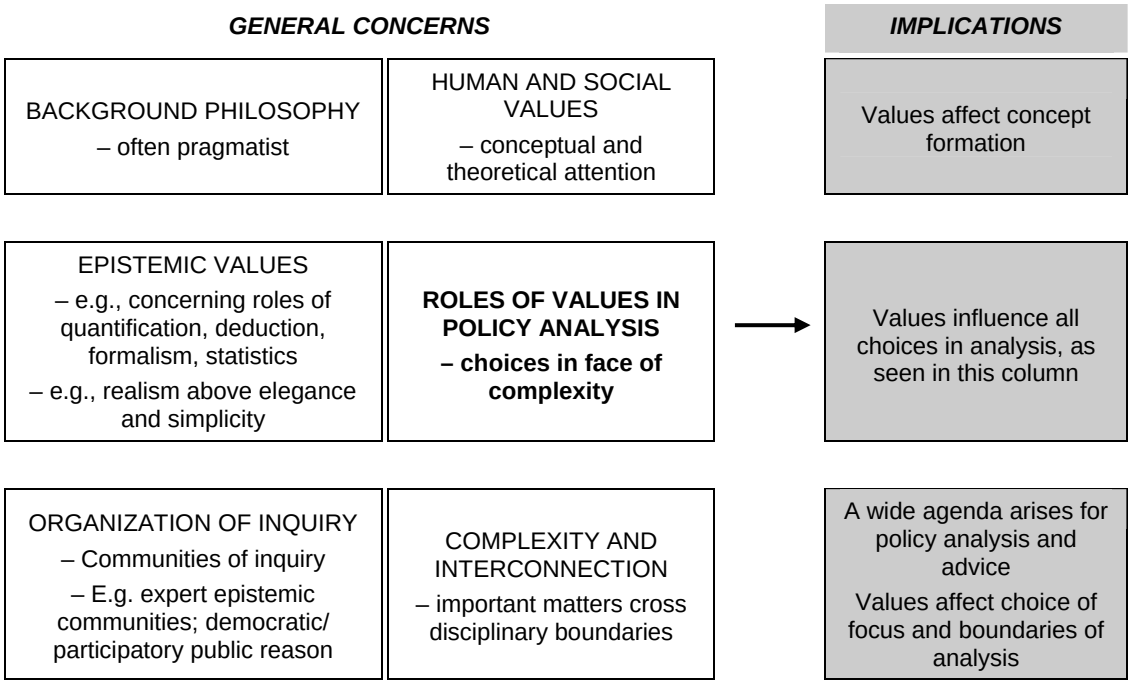
2.2 Value-laden choices in social science inquiry and policy analysis

The pragmatist John Dewey (1859-1952) remains a major influence in institutionalist economics, education, and some strands in research methodology, political theory, public administration and policy analysis, not only in America. Gunnar Myrdal (1898-1987), Swedish economist, sociologist and administrator, was exposed to Dewey's school of thought, especially in the years that he researched *An American Dilemma* (1944), but came to his own formulations. The Austrian-British economist Paul Streeten (1917-) connected many worlds, from the Vienna Circle and its critics through to the Human Development Reports of the 1990s, via work as Myrdal's main associate on *Asian Drama* (1968) and Mahbub ul Haq's chief lieutenant in the basic needs work of the late 1970s. He translated the German edition of Myrdal's *The Political Element in the Development of Economic Theory* and introduced Myrdal's collected papers on *Value in Social Theory* for an English language audience (Myrdal, 1958; Streeten, 1958). His own methodological contribution built from the 'Note on Facts and Valuations' in *An American Dilemma*. The Australian Hugh Stretton (1923-), a student of Streeten, extended Myrdal and Streeten's methodological insights into a general theory of value-guided social science (Stretton, 1969) which he has applied in a reconstruction of economics (e.g., Stretton, 1999, 2000).[1]

For Dewey, our intellectual relationship to reality is like that of a mapmaker to the earth (Shields, 2005, based on Boisvert, 1998; Dewey, 1910). Every map is selective, and every systematic map employs principles of selection that reflect intended users' interests (e.g., navigation concerns or political concerns). Maps are known to be imperfect and open to improvement, but good maps are both disciplined by data and serve user interests. Myrdal, Streeten, Stretton, Charles Wilber and various institutionalist economists elaborated on this conception, with reference to social science and

to concerns to determine or influence public action. Several interrelated themes, represented in Figure 2, permeate their work.

FIGURE 2
Some institutionalist economics themes : values and the allocation of attention



A first set of themes concerns the roles of values in analysis. *Values affect concept-formation*: 'a rule of judgement is required to determine what particular objects or experiences should be lumped together under any given concept' (Streeten, 1954, p. 362; see also Connolly, 1993). Concept-formation remains affected by reality too, as Putnam's (2003b) principle of semantic externalism reminds us; concept-formation is a judgement process, not arbitrary.

Values are inevitably implied in various aspects of explanation and interpretation, for example in allocation of the burden of proof. In statistical hypothesis testing we should compare the dangers of Type I and Type II errors with reference also to their socio-economic significance. For interpreting a data set we should look at the socio-economic significance of slope coefficients, not merely at the statistical significance of a relationship (McCloskey & Ziliak, 1996). Not all choices however in economic or policy discourse are value-matters in the sense of each reflecting an arguable world-view; some are errors, based for example on a failure to grasp the difference between socio-economic and statistical significance (ibid.).

Values, implicit or explicit, necessarily affect choice of focus, including boundaries of analysis in explanation and situation definition in policy analysis. Values are involved in the allocation of attention. Sen (1980, p. 354) makes the point for description: 'description can be characterized as choosing from the

set of possibly true statements a subset on grounds of their relevance'. The scope of coverage in explanation is potentially unlimited, since one thing affects another which affects another, in everwidening circles; almost everything has many causes and many effects. In practice none of us can uncover 'more than a very few of the conditions and processes which together produce the effects which interest [us]' (Stretton, 2000, p. 1065). Different people focus on different effects as well as different causes, in light of their 'different questions [that] spring from different values, social judgements and policy concerns' (Stretton, 2000, p. 1065). 'Which of the necessary conditions for particular effects should be brought into focus? Which of the chains of cause and effect that converge from the past should be searched for opportunities for collective choice…' (Stretton, 2000, p. 1068). Stretton's books, including those on urban planning and on environment, illustrate this powerfully. His 2000 World Development paper argues that 'the activities, causes and effects to which [neo-classical economic] theory directs little or no attention include these' in practice: [1] household and voluntary sector production, [2] the motives behind much of that production, [3] the moral sentiments which are needed to moderate and civilize acquisitive self-interest, and [4] 'The law, culture and custom which sustain and enforce people's conceptions of their legitimate interests …' (Stretton, 2000, p. 1070).

A second major theme is that of interconnection. *Important interactions cross disciplinary boundaries, especially for explaining longer-run and more fundamental changes*. There are no economic problems, only (in general) complex problems, as Myrdal liked to say. His enormous *Asian Drama* study is constructed around six interacting sets of factors: production and income; conditions of production; levels of consumption; attitudes towards life and work; institutions; and public policy (Dykema, 1986; Angresano, 1997). What Myrdal struggled to communicate in the 1960s is now the orthodoxy in development studies, ensconced in frameworks such as 'Human Development' and 'Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis'. Myrdal and Stretton argued that the interconnections are in fact significant for many short-run issues too but that we screen them out.

A third set of themes concerns epistemic values. Some of the values that are involved in explanation are epistemic rather than ethical and social—for example there may be an insistence on the mathematical or quantified—but epistemic values can have ethical implications; for example, a value that is not (yet) measurable disappears from view if we insist on measurement. Important choices exist amongst epistemic values (see Wilber & Francis, 1986). Mainstream economics has had a clear set of epistemic values; it follows

> … four rules: 1. distinguish between economic and noneconomic factors, and leave the latter out of the analysis entirely or take them as exogenously given; 2. develop mathematical models starting from the assumption that individual agents maximize utility or profits subject to constraints, and derive their implications in a deductive manner; 3. analyze economies in which individuals interact with each other through market transactions and examine whether markets produce efficient outcomes and if they do not, how they can be made to …; 4. subject the models to empirical testing using available empirical data, usually with econometric methods (Dutt & Jameson, 2001, p. 4).

Desire to imitate the precision of physics has led to ignoring wider interconnections in social (in other words, socio-economic-environmental-psychological-political-cultural) systems and to the appeal 'ultimately to epistemologically vague "elegance" or "simplicity" as the prime arbiters of good work' (Mirowski 1990, p. 254). 'Elegant error is often preferred to messy truth. Theoretical tractability is often preferred to empirical relevance', rued Lipsey (2001, p. 169) recently. Priority is given to 'neatness' and broad generalizations. Convenience for modelling is regularly the decisive principle in theory building, explicitly or implicitly. 'A simple and plausible theory of human nature is one that posits that the essential human characteristic is to compete with others' asserts Dutt (2001, p. 151), as if we should focus on just one of people's many potentials and treat it as universally potent. Rather than synthesise a complex, context-relative explanation for the phenomenon of high consumption which does not increase happiness, out of several possibilities that he identifies, he chooses the single explanatory factor we mentioned (the proclivity to compete), for 'it is simple, plausible, fairly precise, quite general (in fact it can even be applied to animal societies) …' (Dutt, 2001, p. 154).

A final major set of themes concerns the organization of inquiry. *Inquiry is organized in communities of inquiry* (Kaplan, 1964), which maintain and apply their epistemic values. So-called 'epistemic communities' (Haas, 1992) have a substantial technical expertise, and are a special case of, or component of, a community of inquiry. Dewey held that communities of inquiry should be open, accountable and relevantly disciplined, in order to safeguard the quality of knowledge and for democratic reasons (Shields, 2003). However, epistemic communities are typically funded and supported in proportion to how well the implications of their approach match the concerns of powerful groups.

Since social inquiry involves selections and choices which do and should reflect social values, and also inevitably reflect epistemic values, Dewey, Myrdal and Stretton held that, for public policy, the value choices and selections should be made with wide public scrutiny, and that 'all those affected by the outcomes of inquiry should be able to participate in inquiry' (Evans, 2005, pp. 250-251). Sen shares this commitment to general public reason.

2.3 Policy analysis: in-built values of GNP or of human development?

Values play two sets of roles in policy analysis: explicit roles and implicit roles (Carley, 1980). Explicit attention to values can occur in stages of the specification and application of policy objectives. This explicit attention sometimes happens, sometimes not; when it happens this sometimes has great importance for what happens later, sometimes not. Myrdal, Streeten and Stretton noted the tacit roles of values, in framing and steering inquiry. These roles are always present and often have great importance for what happens later, but are typically undeclared and unrecognised. Here the values are built into the styles of thought and methods of analysis, determining the issues and factors that are considered. For example, cost-benefit analysis treats only monetizable aspects, treats people overwhelmingly as individuals in a market, weighs people's wishes in proportion to their purchasing power and ignores

people without money. These are not choices openly made at a stage of setting policy objectives. They are instead built into the method, as part of a worldview that values monetized economic production.

We need forms of policy analysis that have inbuilt values of human development, in contrast to policy analysis for economic output, which is biased to the purposes of the monied acting as individuals, or policy analysis for other elite purposes (Gasper, 2006). If we learn from the political success of methods like cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and logical framework analysis (LFA), we can identify some important ingredients:

- *Built-in values.* Value discourse that is not embodied in frameworks and methods for policy analysis often has little enduring impact.
- *Built-in values of human development.* There should be a responsive ability to focus on people and their problems, not a limiting pre-set frame such as the perfect markets model or the imperfect markets model (Fine, 2002). Specifically the framework should include a foundational commitment to all humans and space for a broader range of human priorities.
- *Priority to realism, and corresponding epistemic defences.* We saw that some types of epistemic value drive out some types of ethical value. The space for attention to a broader range of human priorities and interconnections has to be defended by epistemic values that stress descriptive realism above elegance, and thus for example human importance above monetization.
- *Political and administrative workability.* LFA, CBA and related methods have an established political credibility and logistical workability. They are systematic, partially explicit, have intuitive appeal, and provide limited fora for systematic public debate of choices. Human development concerns require similar formats.

Myrdal, Streeten, and Stretton provided a wealth of insights, calling for humane attention and well-informed educated judgement; but none gave a vivid and easily adopted alternative. Streeten (1954, 1958) showed how the means-ends format, by which economics tried to pass value questions to another realm (e.g., by saying that economics looks after output and growth, and others can decide how to use these), was fundamentally limited. This did not prevent the Lipsey generation from adopting such a dichotomy as their approach to policy and economics; for what was offered in its place? Streeten had in fact arrived at a major part of the 'human development' formulation, but only used it as a passing example:

> If consumption were the only end, and if production and exchange were only means to its achievement, certain rules about the optimum conditions of production and exchange could be laid down. The formulation of these rules has been the aim of an important branch of traditional welfare economics. But the disturbing fact is that neither the conditions in which production is carried on, nor the relationships generated by exchange are purely instrumental. They are *human* conditions, and *human* relations, which are valued as much as, and in some cases more strongly than, the end of consumption. Nor of course is consumption *simply* a given end. Not only are there good and bad ways of earning money, but there are also good and bad ways of spending it. (Streeten, 1954, p. 365)

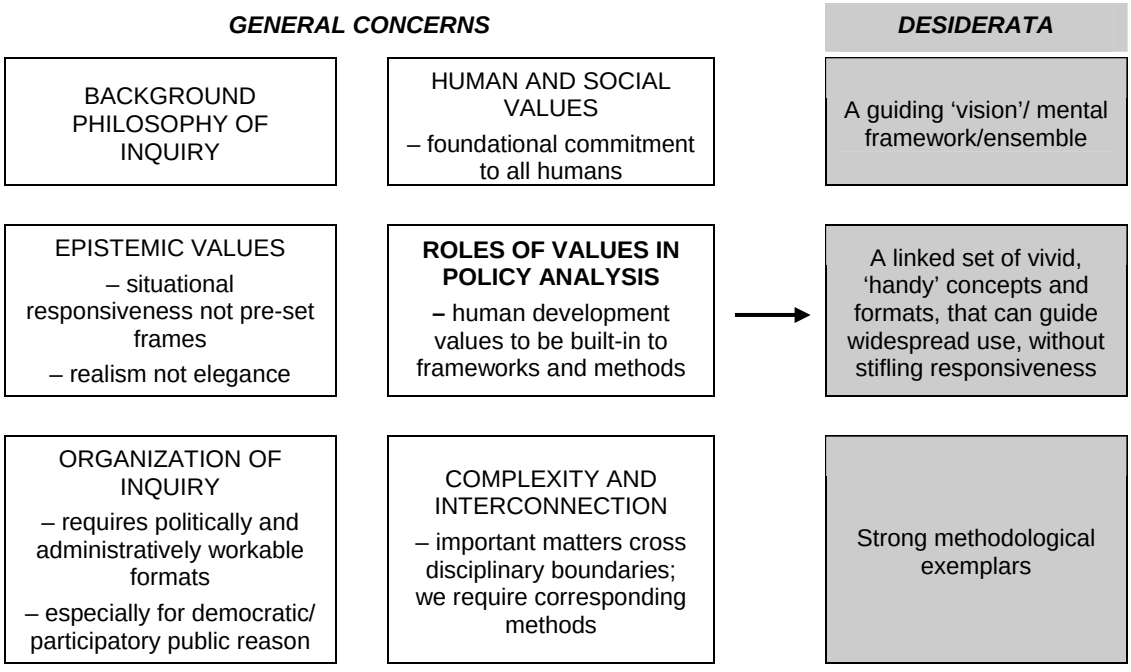
So we require not the 'fundamental theorems of welfare economics' but assessment of the full range of human functionings that generate and are generated by a system of production, exchange and consumption, a system of human living. Unfortunately another whole generation was required before a full-fledged human development perspective emerged.

To try to explain this delay, I add three more required ingredients to the list.

- *A 'vision'*. Abstracted analysis of values often has relatively little bite. It is sometimes easier and more effective to change a vision, a mental framework, than to change the associated abstracted values, proposes the psychologist Edward de Bono (1985); one at least needs to attend to the vision and the values in tandem.
- *A vivid and 'handy' toolkit*: striking, memorable concepts, structured as an interlinked system, which organise and direct our attention and analysis, and are not difficult to absorb, remember and use.
- *Methodological exemplars*. The critique of mainstream economics is a task like painting the Golden Gate Bridge, neverending, given the forces of privilege, funding and 'elegance' that sustain it. The best criticism is instead a good working alternative: not only methodological advocacy of a humanist pragmatism but its persuasive practice. Exemplars are a vision's best communication. Myrdal's own work, though influential for a while, was ponderous and eventually partly forgotten.

Figure 3 adds these desiderata to the institutionalist and pragmatist themes of Figure 2.

FIGURE 3
Informing human development methodology from the institutionalist legacy



We will see how Sen, in conjunction with Haq, Drèze and others, has made major advances in these three directions. His analyses of famine and hunger provided the compelling exemplars that convey a vision and approach.

3 UNDERSTANDING SEN'S POLICY-ORIENTED WORK

Sen feared that the Myrdal tradition was overly preoccupied with social values as prescriptions and that it presumed that the inevitable selections in social science and policy analysis were all coloured with prescriptive intent. He insisted that there are other valid types of selection principle (Sen, 1980). Myrdal (1969) and Stretton (1969) were well aware of this point; they only counselled clarity on selection principles. In addition, when we come to policy-oriented work, prescriptive intent as a major selector is a given; Sen's own such work illustrates much of what has been said above.

We will consider both the capability approach, as more narrowly understood, and entitlements analysis, viewing them as a package.[2] Together with some other elements they constitute a Human Development Approach. We start with capability, the lead organizing value or values; and then move to the system for thinking about causes and consequences of capabilities.

3.1 Elements of Sen's approach: Value-driven focus and scope

A wider range of values is used in evaluation. We must look at life expectancy and life quality and their distribution, not only at average income and income distribution. This principle of breadth Sen and Haq drew already in the 1950s from, amongst others, Barbara Ward. Gradually, it led them beyond disciplinarity.

The wider range of values is based on and motivates conceptual and theoretical investigation. Sen's use of a wide range of values gains authority from his connection to and decades of theoretical groundwork in philosophical ethics.

The wider range of values has a central focus: on persons' life-reality, how they live and can live, what they can achieve with what they can acquire. This is the generative centre of the approach's vision. 'The focus on entitlements, which is concerned with the command over commodities, has to be seen as only instrumentally important, and the concentration has to be, ultimately, on *basic* human capabilities' (Drèze & Sen, 1989, p. 13, emphasis added), namely: 'the capability of people to undertake [basic] valuable and valued "doings and beings"' (ibid. p. 12).[3] This includes attention to security of achievement, not merely to averages.

V*alues guide the choice of topic*. There is direct attention to central human problems, identified in terms of the lead values: hunger, family, education, health, peace, participation, differential mortality,…; leading to attempts to trace their causal roots. Problems are identified in relation to feasible alternatives, rather than in terms of a timeless disciplinary agenda. 'Hunger is…intolerable in the modern world in a way it could not have been in the past.

… because widespread hunger is [now] so unnecessary and unwarranted…' (Drèze & Sen, 1989, p. 3). Enormous inequalities are part of the cause, not only part of the moral problem: markets pull resources to the monied, away from the more vulnerable.

Priority attention, notably to education, flows from causal theory as well as values. Education, including the education of girls and women, receives more attention than any other topic in Drèze and Sen's book on policy priorities for India (2002). Education is identified as intrinsically important but also as instrumentally central, notably the education of mothers and potential mothers, and as potentially constitutively important for building consensual public purposes, for example through the effect of local schools that are shared by all social classes (2002, p. 181).

The wider range of values influences detailed problem formulation in policy analysis, and generation of subsidiary topics for explanatory analysis. Attention at the level of each distinctive individual is impossible, but is still a guiding ideal: to see how persons (can) live, paying attention to the major sources of their distinctiveness. The problem of hunger must therefore be addressed on at least a class-basis, not in terms of aggregates or averages. The relevant classes are at a micro- not macro-scale: 'the analysis must *inter alia* concentrate on occupation groups ... it is often important to take a more disaggregative view of the economy than one might get from standard class analyses' (Drèze & Sen, 1989, p. 30) and look instead at 'groups of individuals sharing similar (main) ingredients of entitlements: rural seasonal wage workers, pastoralists, sharecroppers, etc.' (O'Laughlin & Pouw, 2004a, p. 6). The required next step is to consider also the positions of women and girls and any other especially marginal persons within these groups.

The focus and scope in modelling and explanation are not predetermined: as in the work on famine and hunger, they are reality-derived not discipline-derived. The focus on matters of ultimate concern induces attention to a wider range of determinants, for example the numerous other determinants of nutrition than income or food availability: tastes, social constraints, differential bodily requirements, state of health (and thus in turn: water quality and quantity, sanitation), information and education,… (Drèze & Sen, 1989, p. 177 ff.). Concern with hunger leads us to much more than food and food entitlements. Concern with physical security leads us to identify the impacts of economic inequality and gender bias on violent crime (Drèze & Sen, 2002, pp. 269-270).

Disciplinarity is exploded by the focus on persons not on abstracted general categories like income or food supply. Prolonged experience of the multi- and inter-disciplinary contemporary community of inquiry that addresses famine, hunger and nutrition—with membership from agriculture, anthropology, conflict studies, economics, epidemiology, food science, journalism, political science, physiology and nutrition, public administration, public health, medical and social statistics, and so on—seems to have influenced Sen's assumptions, for example his views on the value of public reason. Unlike many economists, he no longer talks primarily in terms of 'the economy' or 'economies'.

3.2 Entitlements analysis

Entitlements analysis links the capability approach with policy. Its application to famine and hunger was Sen's key initial exemplar. It involves, as we noted, socially disaggregated analysis (originally of absolute poverty, but extendable to other questions), with attention to groups of similarly placed people (such as occupational groups) in order to reveal their different forms and degrees of vulnerability, their effective command over goods, and its various channels and many determinants. It looks especially at people's enforceable claims and rights, *de facto*; and conversely identifies their claims and rights that are non-enforceable (Gasper, 1993). Hunger becomes understood as a social product, not solely a natural product. Blaikie's (1985) *The Political Economy of Soil Erosion* is *Poverty and Famines*' sibling; it shows how value extraction from the poor leads them to degrade nature in addition to their own bodies (see also Dasgupta, 1993). In both cases, traditional disciplinary and territorial boundaries in explanation are not presumed and are not confirmed. Hunger and resource degradation are seen to emerge as side-effects within world systems (Davis, 2001).

Values affected concept-formation in entitlements analysis in one way that was perhaps unfortunate. Sen's label 'entitlements' derives from a policy concern: a disagreement with the libertarian philosopher Robert Nozick, for whom duly derived property rights were uninfringeable. Nozick (1974) called this the entitlements theory of justice. Sen (1981) showed how such a system of Nozickian entitlements, derived through markets without (proximate) violence, deceit or illegality, could leave vulnerable groups to starve to death. For general explanatory purposes however, entitlements analysis must look at acquisition power ('exchange entitlements', including from 'exchange with nature'), not legal entitlements. One may have no prior title to that which one acquires (by use of open access resources, or charity or theft), and may not be able to acquire that to which one is entitled (legally or morally). The 'entitlements' label created many confusions (Gasper, 1993) and contributed to misreading Sen's approach as not concerned with food availability, whereas (exchange) entitlements to food in his terminology are certainly influenced by availability.

Entitlements analysis had significant limitations in its original form (Sen, 1981), but Sen did not present or use that as more than a generative schema. It is enlightening for thinking about access to food, but less helpful for thinking about access to public goods, or use of goods, or values other than goods. Entitlements analysis has lost prominence as a separate approach but has been absorbed into the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), the Human Development and capability approaches, and rights-based approaches. There the same ideas can be pursued with less pitfall-ridden terminologies. SLA, for example, incorporates themes from entitlements analysis in its assets analysis which makes a useful breakdown of the 'endowments' category into five (or more) categories of capital—natural, social, human, physical, financial (and sometimes cultural and political)—and in its attention to diverse forms of claiming-capacity. It also deals with 'capabilities', as skills, agency and assets, not only Sen's sense of attainable valued functionings (Bebbington, 1999).

3.3 Sen's approach in policy design

Further facets of Sen's methodology in problem- and policy-analysis must be noted, and can be illustrated from his and Drèze's work on famine, hunger and nutrition, and (the weakness of) social development in India.

A focus on ends, rather than a presumption of use of particular means. 'We see "social security" essentially as an objective pursued through public means rather than as a narrowly defined set of particular strategies, and it is important to take a broad view of the public means that are relevant to the attainment of this objective." (Drèze & Sen, 1989, p. 16). Use of the language of means and ends here does not presume that means are not also ends and vice versa.

Attention to a wide range of policy means. Wide-ranging causal analysis leads to wide-ranging ideas for policy. Since food entitlements can be created or threatened at many different points and in many different ways, their protection or provision can equally be promoted in many different ways: 'state action for the elimination of hunger can take enormously divergent forms' stress Drèze and Sen (1989, p. 18) – food production, food distribution, famine anticipation, regular income/employment creation, emergency temporary employment for wages in cash or kind; health care and epidemic control; general economic development measures. Later they add 'price control, tax relief, crop insurance, the support of livestock prices, and many others' (p. 85), such as 'reforms of the legal framework within which economic relations take place' (p. 24), including changes in endowments through land reform, and pension and social security rights.

Both-and, not either-or. Policy analysis not only considers multiple means, but should expect to employ multiple methods to accommodate multiple needs: 'An adequate plurality' (Drèze and Sen, 1989, p. 102) rather than an inadequate purism. This can imply increasing market orientation in areas where the state is overextended, simultaneous with increasing state action in other areas (2002, p. 52). For example, state action to boost incomes in cases of inadequate command over food can be combined with market action to deliver food in response to the boosted incomes.

The category of public action: 'public action should not be confused with state action only' (1989, p. 18). For Drèze and Sen it is instead action for public benefit, and this can be done by various agents: families, associations, NGOs/PVOs and businesses can all contribute. Public actions not via the state, and actions to influence the state, are vital: to induce State action, hold it accountable, and complement it. A governance system requires a variety of types of organization. The State is however the essential leader and coordinator on many fronts, such as social security or famine prevention (1989, p. 159); and can generate extraordinary human development gains at modest cost (p. 251) in a wide variety of political settings—wartime Britain, Sri Lanka, China, Costa Rica, Chile, Jamaica, Cuba, Hong Kong, amongst others (1989: Part III).

The category of public reason. Sen extols the importance of information and reasoned debate in the public arena: to share and test ideas, to establish mutual awareness and recognition, to build informed and sufficiently accepted statements of public purpose, to treat people with respect and thus constitute

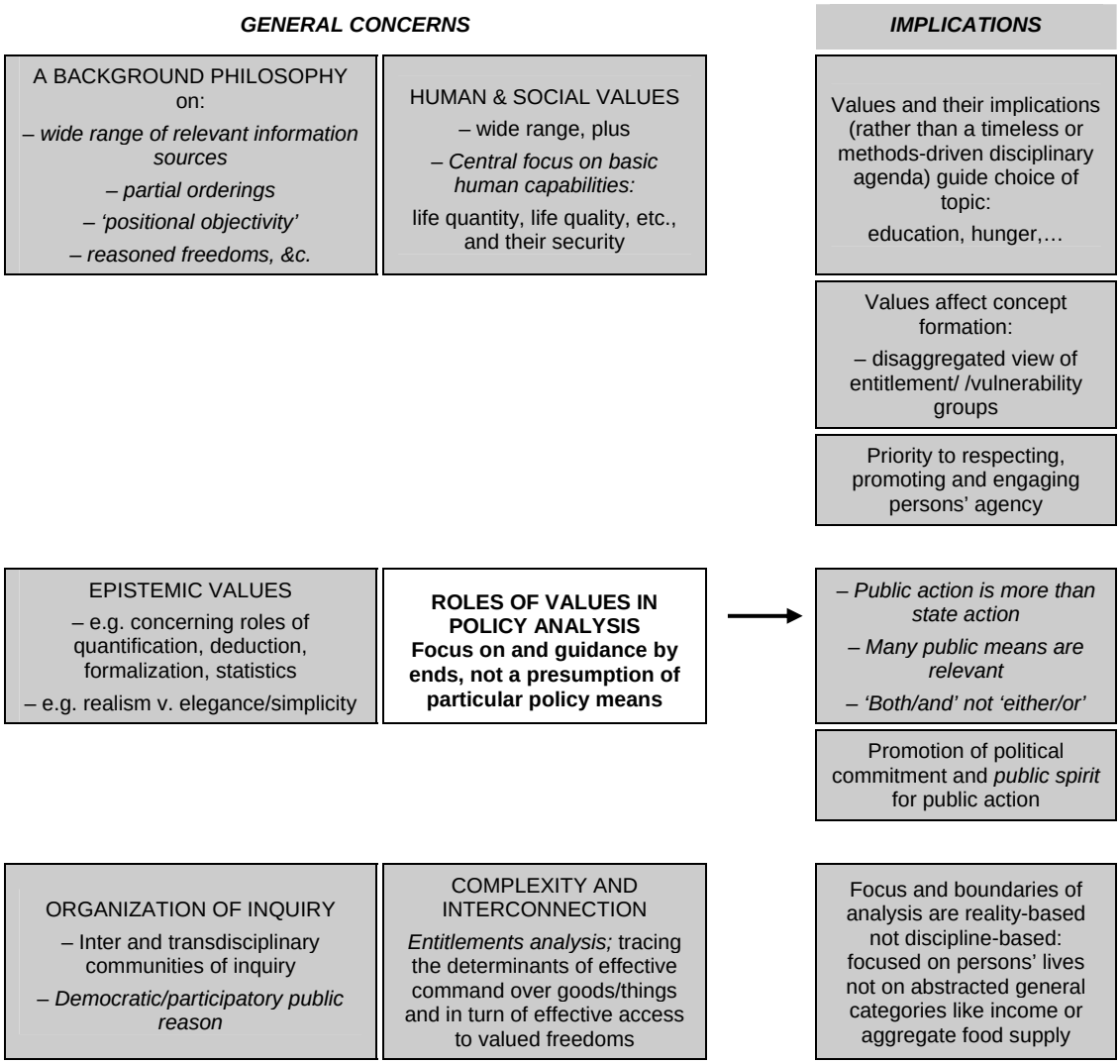
and maintain a framework of cooperation, and to provide the sort of essential political pressure seen in open reporting of disasters such as famine.

Attention to respecting, promoting and engaging persons' agency. This is illustrated in an emphasis on women's education and on the better sustained results for population policy using education and discussion rather than coercion. As a further example: universal coverage in basic social services can avoid the problems of trying to directly identify the most needy, and avoid stigmatization and ensure broad support; but employment provision and promotion can often fulfil the same three criteria while being more discriminating in use of scarce resources (Drèze & Sen, 1989, Ch.7).

The roles of political commitment and public spiritedness in furthering human development. Complementing the picture of persons as thinking agents is an understanding of people as social actors with a potential for mutual commitment. Drèze and Sen highlighted the extraordinary human development achievements that are feasible, and in several cases achieved, through well-focused public action in low and middle-income countries without having to wait for generations of economic growth. This was itself a triumph of well-focused, persistently value-guided, social analysis. *Hunger and Public Action* concluded by pointing to a new analytical and practical agenda: to understand the determinants of the political commitment, cooperation and competition which generate the required public action (Drèze & Sen, 1989, Ch.13).

Some of these themes were standard in parts of social policy analysis, others less so. Sen presented them with particular force and lucidity, thanks to a motivating, guiding and integrating value perspective. Figure 4's larger shaded area indicates how his approach extends a general institutionalist perspective into a more explicit and evolved system of ideas and fulfils to significant degree the desiderata that we mentioned earlier.

FIGURE 4
Specifics in Sen's policy analysis approach (italics highlight key additions)



4 EXTENSIONS: CONSTRUCTION OF A HUMAN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

This final section considers how far Sen's framework, with its commitment to priority human functionings and capabilities, can be strengthened and consolidated as an approach to policy analysis. We are interested in an intellectual position's potential for growth, whether it is a progressive research program or a dead end. In assessing a position, we often face a choice between alternative formulations of the position: between weaker and stronger versions. Scriven (1976) advises that we attend to the stronger not the weaker. Criticisms of the weaker are more easily rebutted: 'But no, my position is the stronger version'. Evaluation of the stronger version addresses the real potential of the position and matches the spirit of inquiry. I wish to do that with Sen's framework. I have suggested elsewhere criticisms that I think are weighty (e.g. in Gasper, 2002a); but they do not concern its fruitfulness as a format for thinking about alternatives in public action for human development. Figure 5 surveys the extended approach that is emerging through various partnerships and refinements.

Important criticisms have been raised against the framework as a tool in policy analysis, which are summarised by O'Laughlin and Pouw (2004b, p.15):

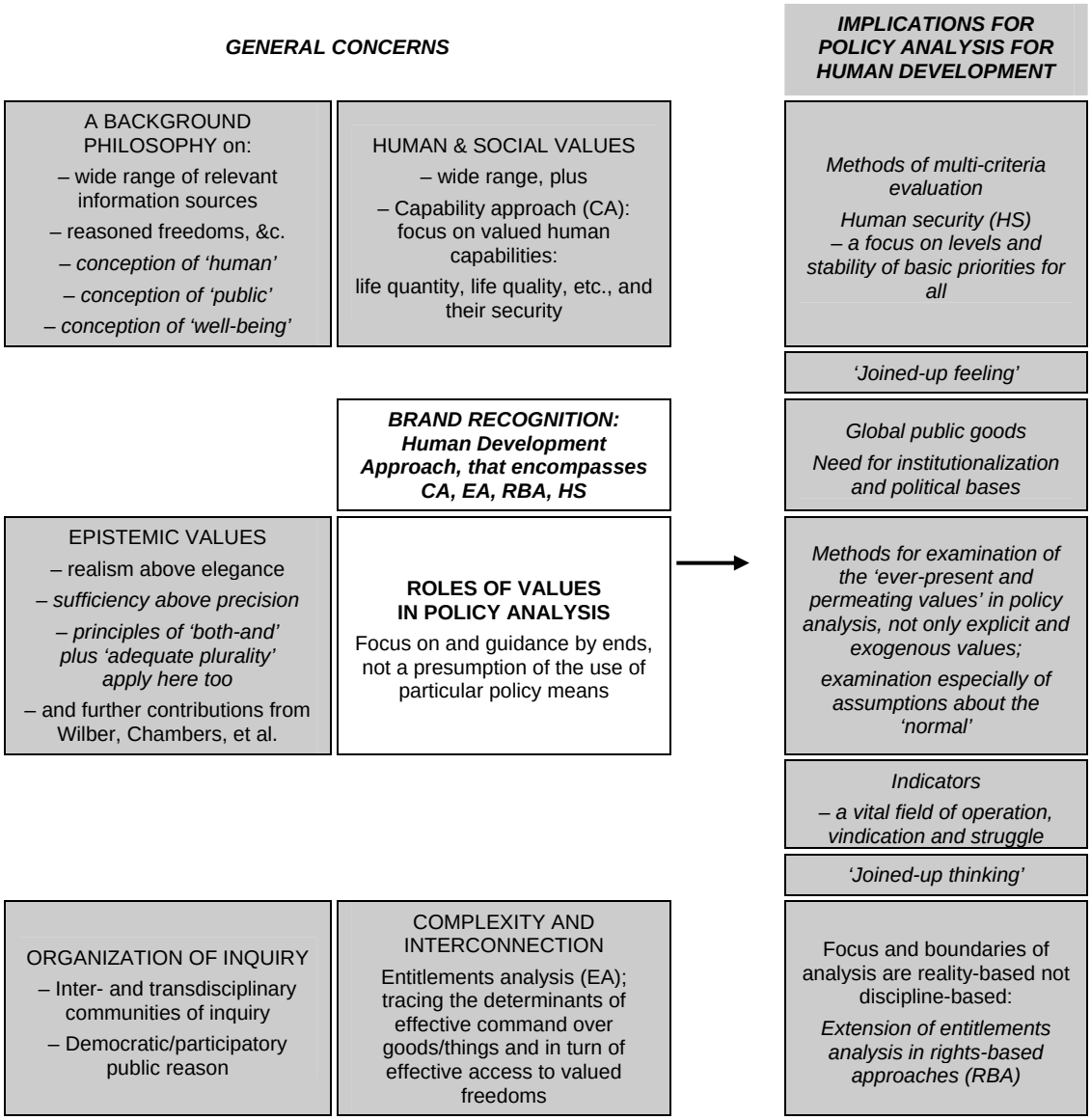
> in maintaining the microeconomist's focus on individual choice, approaches inspired by Sen's work provide a very narrow vision of poverty as a process. They do not address underlying political and economic relations of [power,] inequality [and dependency] that constrain individual choice and link individual experience to macro political and economic processes. In other words, capability, human development and livelihoods approaches do not give us enough analytical handles for identifying the reasons why certain groups of people have more capabilities or assets or different activities (and, yes, income) than others do.

Micro-level analysis should be linked to analyses of processes at meso and macro-levels and of power relations. Occupational groups are frequently in competitive class relationships with each other, with some dominating and exploiting others. Critics (e.g. Devereux, 2001) argue that the micro-focus has led attention away from essential issues.

An approach cannot do everything required but should do something useful and not undermine what else is required. The long used language of class does not bring such widespread and fine-tuned attention to effective acquirement capacities and their determinants as do the languages of entitlements, rights and livelihoods. In any case, Sen's framework does not preclude or dissuade but rather induces attention to meso- and macro-determinants. Bebbington connects the 'changing livelihood dynamics among the poor to the changing assets of other actors' (1999, p. 2032), and also directs analysis to cases where poor people 'are able to deploy and enhance their capabilities…to change the dominant rules and relationships governing the ways in which resources are controlled, distributed and transformed into income streams' (p. 2039; see also Baumann & Sinha, 2001). With 'suitable reorientation, the livelihoods approach can be turned into a valuable analytical

tool for studying and strengthening this [macro-micro] linkage' (Osmani, 2003, p. 17).

FIGURE 5
Extending Sen's policy analysis approach into a mature human development approach (italicized points are additions relative to the earlier figures)



4.1 Core concepts

One requirement is that an approach be recognised as such, which requires an adequate 'brand label'. Some people include entitlements analysis and more in the capability approach, but the main definitional statements of the capability approach restrict it to a system of valuation. It seems better to adopt the name 'Human Development Approach' for the encompassing system of policy analysis, within which the capability approach is just part of the valuation

apparatus. As Sen stresses, there are many other relevant valuation principles besides capability. The Human Development Approach is an approach to explanation and to policy which uses this widened range of criteria, including the capability approach, in evaluation and to identify what is important to attend to in a policy framework. It incorporates also entitlements analysis, human security discourse and much human rights analysis as further components.

Mahbub ul Haq, founder of the Human Development Approach (UNDP, 1990; Haq, 1999), thus included in it elements besides the well-known extension of the range of objectives to be considered in development debate and planning. First, Haq advocated and exemplified a 'joined-up thinking' (Gasper & Truong, 2005) which was not misleadingly restricted by disciplinary and national boundaries. A more vivid, incisive author than Myrdal, he had the authority of experience as Minister of Finance in Pakistan and could theorize for example how heavy military spending undermined democracy and probity not only other budgets. Second, his approach implies 'joined-up feeling': the evaluative field of reference is all humans. These two features—crossboundary analysis and feeling—support each other. Global public goods become a central issue. Third, his human security discourse (UNDP, 1994) reinforces both elements and ensconces a priority to basic human needs within the otherwise infinite perspectives of the capability approach (Gasper, 2005). Impelled by a sense of urgency, he opened the road to integration with the previously separate yet sister discourse of human rights. His urgency led, fourth, to the Millennium Development Goals as a crude but operative human development program with a rights basis.

The human development perspective generates attention to a wide range of types of determinant and correspondingly a wide range of types of public action. Income is certainly considered, and understood as a basis of power not a strong measure of welfare. It is true that Haq had a bolder open policy agenda than Sen, for example in terms of land reform. This reflects a different style not a different framework. Sen makes repeatedly, emphatically clear the central importance of structures of access and exclusion, as in his reflections on which types of people died in the Bengal famine of 1943 and communal violence of 1946-7, and on why he did not die from his mouth cancer while a student.

A human development approach needs a conception of 'human'. Here, well-being research constitutes a relevant and central ethics-economics interface (Gasper, 2007a). 'Public' is another core concept that a public policy analysis approach for human development must deepen. The neo-classical category of public good is far from sufficient. Education and health care are rivalrous and excludable services; yet they may be granted public priority as merit goods and because their 'consumption' has major positive externalities (Wuyts et al., 1992; Gasper, 2002b, 2007c).

4.2 Methods for value-guided analysis

Besides recognisable terms an approach requires recognisable, manageable methods. For the central task of digging out values and value-choices, some

types of discourse analysis are important. I have suggested a method of policy argumentation analysis which is accessible to average students and practitioners (Gasper 2002b, 2004). It combines ideas from Scriven's (1976) approach to analysis of arguments and Stephen Toulmin's (1958) format for describing argument structure and conceiving counter-arguments; with each converted into worktable layouts that guide the user. The method supports a style of policy analysis that looks critically both at macro-features and 'details', both structure and style, and helps build an independent stance, providing space for and eliciting counter-arguments, alternatives, and users' own experience and values. Avoiding the pre-set framing of arguments, found in most economic policy analysis, CBA or LFA, it instead develops skills for examining the framing assumptions that others use, which can help in conscious choice of frames and assumptions when tackling a particular issue.

One vital policy argumentation skill is to probe what is presumed as normal, as requiring disproof rather than proof. Joe Hanlon (2000) and others in the Jubilee 2000 debt relief campaign brought to the surface the assumption that, unlike for domestic personal debts, international debts have absolute priority over spending on health and education, even when the debts have been arranged with corrupt rulers and even when all concerned have endorsed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (including rights to education and health care). Thomas Pogge's (2002) work on disastrous legal presumptions in the current world economic system—disastrous for human development in poor countries—exposes and critiques the notions, so convenient to global corporations, that every *de facto* ruler of a country can make commitments that are absolutely binding on his successors: debts, resource concessions, treaties.

A second vital skill area concerns understanding indicators. Indicators are vindicators, notes Apthorpe (1996). They are central to policy rhetoric, an art of purposeful, forceful selection: they exemplify the trope of synecdoche, taking the part for the whole (Hood, 2000). Haq knew their political and administrative potency, and ensured that the Human Development work invested here. Morse (2004) provides a useful introduction to indicators oriented to the human development agenda.

The important values involved include epistemic values, not only social values. We noted in Section 2 some epistemic values within the Human Development approach: realism above elegance, and relevance and sufficiency above precision. Section 3 touched on how Sen has applied these principles. He writes about the range of relevant social values and warns that, given this wide range, for many choices pure general theory gives no answer. But he illustrates practical procedure too: how a set of imprecise criteria often are sufficient for us to make useful orderings; and how the principles of 'both-and' and 'adequate plurality' apply to styles of knowing, not only to policy instruments. Other authors offer bigger pictures of relevant epistemic values: notably Robert Chambers (1997, 2005), and Charles Wilber (1978, 1986) who proposed holism, pattern explanation, and 'storytelling'.

4.3 From joined-up feeling to rights-based approaches and deliberative public reason

To give substance and sustenance to Human Development Approach features such as 'joined-up feeling' they must become embodied in institutions, frameworks, and methods. Methods of financial and economic cost-benefit analysis have a wide coverage across people, but only for those who have money and in proportion to their affluence: they are 'money-tarian' not utilitarian. Haq had a serious concern for equity but, in the economics tradition, his Human Development Approach did not offer guarantees for individuals. The approach has subsequently moved in that direction by linking to the human rights tradition (UNDP, 2000).

Rights-based policy analysis is an operationalisation of entitlements analysis (Fortman, 1999). Entitlements impact analysis cannot be precise for there are so many determinants and uncertainties. But we can focus on rights, the rules of entitlement. Transformative policy analysis pays attention to designing and redesigning legal and institutional frameworks, including work on national constitutions and bills of rights and via the spread of international law. A principle that all those affected by a decision should be able to influence it might only be operationalizable via allocation of certain rights. At the same time rights-based approaches highlight that empowerment, not merely legislation, is the path to entitlement (Watts, 1991).

The capability approach aspires that public discourse openly consider and check what range of variables, procedures and weights to use in decision-making. It can connect here to the established methodology of multi-criteria evaluation which promotes democratic deliberation by avoiding extensive monetization and too rapid aggregation (Gasper, 2006). This is applied *sans titre* in Alkire's *Valuing Freedoms*. But formal democratic deliberation does not go far in many LDC contexts (nor, often, elsewhere), and therefore methods which contain more built-in human development commitment are needed. Multi-criteria evaluation like other methods can be prone to elite domination, and should be complemented by constitutionally based guarantees for fulfilment of basic needs.

Operationalizing the human development approach thus involves some issues of measurement but, more centrally, involves how to embed—perhaps in a rights framework—alternatives to money-tarianism and to the other entrenched assumptions in economic assessment (GNP, the potential compensation principle, and the sorts of presumption identified by Hanlon and Pogge); how to build public endorsement of such alternative frames; and how to institutionalize multi-criteria evaluation and kindred methods. Real operationalization of value alternatives in policy analysis means comprehensive incorporation into methodology. The rights-based approaches represent a partial move, which needs to be taken further in methods of policy analysis—in concept formation, situation analysis, options analysis, appraisal and evaluation—especially in reframing issues, reallocation of onuses of proof, and (re)allocation of responsibilities.

These are issues of politics, values and social theory not only of technique. Korten (1994) asked what is the Human Development Approach's underlying

political and economic theory; and warned that in the absence of any conscious theory it slid back to liberal presumptions and became merely a human face of the Washington consensus. The evidence is that Human Development Approach has progressive potential, but Korten's warning remains valid (Gasper, 2007b). Sen's insights are deep and valuable but not sufficient as a full theoretical and methodological basis for a Human Development Approach. We need to draw from others, from Haq, Stretton, Blaikie, Chambers, Fischer, Hanlon, Pogge, Wilber and many more.

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NOTES

[1] None of these authors figured in the Walsh-Putnam-Nussbaum discussion of Sen in *Review of Political Economy* (vol. 15, #3), except for one reference to Myrdal by Walsh. Putnam in his recent writings on Sen refers to Dewey but he examines only the inevitably entangled linguistic nature of the inputs to inquiry, not the content and process of inquiry itself (Putnam, 2002, 2003a).

[2] Some people use the term 'capability approach' as incorporating entitlements analysis; but the formal presentations of the approach that are widely taken as authoritative include virtually nothing on entitlements analysis (Sen, 1993; Alkire, 2002 & 2005; Robeyns, 2005).

[3] Thomas Pogge (2002) explains how in practice we would have to aim to equalize capability across persons as formulated in terms of basic capabilities that everyone has reason to value, not in terms of each person's idiosyncratic objectives.