

12th EADI General Conference
**Global Governance for
Sustainable Development**

The Need for Policy Coherence
and New Partnerships



After 2015: What Could Development Studies Be?

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Abstract:

It is 2015. George Clooney is US President. Bob Geldof and Bono, respectively, Irish President and Prime Minister. China has just overtaken the US as the world's largest economy. India is not so far behind thanks to President Amartya Sen. Some of the MDGs were met. Some were not. The MDGs on income and education were met globally but with huge disparities. Progress in Africa accelerated following large aid flows but repayments are now looming. The other MDGs were missed though not as badly as expected. Climate change/chaos has intensified with many of the impacts felt in the South. Urbanisation is accelerating. Where next for international development research? As we move closer to 2015 space will likely open to rethink notions of 'development' post-2015 (and then likely shrink again once any post-2015 targets are chosen by the international community). This creates some breathing space. A chance to reimagine notions of 'development' beyond absolute deprivation, and 'our' agenda for 'them' in the South. This article asks is development research fit for the purpose? Indeed, what is development studies and what could/should it be?

1. INTRODUCTION

It is 2015. George Clooney is US President. Bob Geldof and Bono, respectively, Irish President and Prime Minister. China has just overtaken the US as the world's largest economy. India is not so far behind thanks to President Amartya Sen. Some of the MDGs were met. Some were not. The MDGs on income and education were met globally but with huge disparities. Progress in Africa accelerated following large aid flows but repayments are now looming. The other MDGs were missed though not as badly as expected. Climate change/chaos has intensified with many of the impacts felt in the South. Urbanisation is accelerating. Where next for international development research?

As we move closer to 2015 space will likely open to rethink notions of 'development' post-2015 (and then likely shrink again once any post-2015 targets are chosen by the international community). This creates some breathing space. A chance to reimagine notions of 'development' beyond absolute deprivation, and 'our' agenda for 'them' in the South.

We ask what is development studies? What could/should it be?ⁱ

2. DEVELOPMENT STUDIES: THE PAST?

When did DS emerge and why? Harriss (2005:17) notes "quite when 'development studies' began... ..is a matter for debate... ..[it] emerged in a particular intellectual and political context in the 1960s". The term DS only came into being as a teaching course title relatively recently – in the 1960s and 1970s – and many well known development journals and institutions date from this time period.

A number of key development research and training institutes were established in the 1960s, including the Overseas Development Institute (London) and the Institute of Development Studies (at the University of Sussex) in the United Kingdom. One issue which tends to recur is where to situate DS institutes and courses. Some would argue that to have DS research and training institutes located in developing countries is an anachronism since virtually all socio-economic and associated research and training in these countries would be expected to be 'development-oriented'. On the other hand the location of DS research and teaching in industrialized countries would be consistent with the maintenance of hegemony in the subject area, and with the development policy-related concerns of 'metropolitan' country governments and of aid institutions. However, notwithstanding these issues and concerns a number of notable DS institutions have been established in developing countries and are still active and respected – examples being the Institute of Development Studies in Nairobi University, Kenya and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies in Dhaka.ⁱⁱ

However, the issue of when DS emerged as a coherent and explicit subject area for study and research is, of course, more complex than identifying the first use of the term DS for teaching programmes or journal titles or in institutional names. The emergence of DS has traces in both colonial and post-colonial eras. Kothari (2005:47-8), for example, has argued that DS emerged out of colonial studies but that DS "rarely acknowledges [its] colonial roots.....and the variety of ways in which the west produces knowledge about other people in other places".

There is certainly a continuity between colonial studies in the past and current DS. During the period of colonial administration quite a number of significant

anthropological and economic studies were undertaken, in British colonies in the late 1940s and 1950s with funding and other support from the UK Colonial Office. Some of those who worked for the colonial administrations before independence became academics, development researchers and practitioners after independence.

It has also been argued that DS is a product of the post-colonial period and of the decolonization process in the 1950s and 1960s (Loxley, 2004; Molteberg and Bergström 2000; Shaw, 2004). The 1960s also witnessed the first UN “Development Decade” with the establishment of new UN institutions (such as UNCTAD) and the conversion of other institutions towards a more development-oriented role.

Other features of the 1960s were influential on thinking and activism as Harriss noted in the quotation in the opening of this section (2005:17). European events of 1968 (including the Paris uprising) had a major effect on intellectuals, and there was a resurgence of Marxist socio-economic theory together with the articulation of neo-Marxist dependency theory in a development context.

Revolution was in the air. The independence of most African colonies had recently taken place and declarations of ‘African Socialism’ were popular (Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, and Leopold Senghor in Senegal as well as black liberation movements in South Africa fighting Apartheid such as the African National Congress – for discussion see Meredith, 2005). We might also note the importance of Nkrumah’s book *Neo-colonialism: the last stage of imperialism* (1965) and of the collection of Nyerere’s speeches (1966 and 1968). In West Africa Senghor’s political writings were very influential (1964) although he also contributed significantly to African creative writing together with North African authors such as Fanon (1970) and Camus (1966). From India, Nehru’s leadership of the non-aligned movement together with Gandhi’s pacifist philosophy and anti-colonial standpoint played a considerable international role. There was also radical thinking and political action in Europe at the time, an influential civil rights movement in the USA, and the Indo-China experience (including the Vietnam war). These influences all gave a political dimension to writing and thinking about international development and to the independence of former colonies.

In the 1960s and 1970s there was an internationalization of influences on academic establishments affecting teaching and research, and many nationals of newly independent countries studied in countries other than the former metropolitan colonial powers. For example, before independence in East and West Africa most of the expatriate staff in universities were British, and after independence North Americans (US and Canada in particular), Dutch, Scandinavians, Hungarians, and others joined in making the endeavour more international in both personnel and in thinking. The development of new and expanded universities in developing countries created a significant demand for academic staff, and in the first instance this demand was largely met by expatriates. With the movement towards localization of academic staff the displaced expatriate staff needed to find a place in their home countries (for the most part) and so many academics working in a development context of a certain age are ‘returnees’ from this development process. The increased number of indigenous academics in developing countries was also of significance, with the evolution of developing country socio-economic research and research institutions.

Intellectually, as noted above, neo-Marxism as well as non-Marxist Structuralism was a major feature in the development literature at that time. Andre Gunder Frank and leading Latin American intellectuals such as Celso Furtado had a major influence on development thinking.

Thomas Kuhn's *the Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) added to a sense of intellectual revolution with his discussion of "paradigms". Kuhn argued that science does not evolve but that key anomalies build up against the dominant theory. These anomalies eventually lead to a 'scientific revolution', paradigm change (a structural shift in theory) resulting in a new world-view.

Since the 1960s DS has experienced some major changes. Examples of these changes include the shifting concepts and interpretations of 'development' and the stronger emergence of cross-disciplinarity. A more instrumental approach in DS has also been evident since the mid 1980s following concerns about an alleged lack of relevance of DS to development practitioners and to poor people. The debate of the 1980s was triggered by seminal pieces by David Booth and Mike Edwards. Since this time DS has encompassed an approach that is more instrumental and which more directly informs policy/practice/action through research rather than emphasizing high theory.

3. DEVELOPMENT STUDIES: THE PRESENT?

There is a growing literature on the nature of DS (Box, 2007; Harriss 2002; Hulme and Toye 2005; Loxley 2004; Molteberg and Bergstrøm 2002a; 2002b;).ⁱⁱⁱ Across this literature, three common dimensions emerge. One way to visualize this is to imagine a matrix in the form of a 3 x 3 x 3 *Rubik* cube (see Figure). This cube, with 27 elements, could be viewed as DS in its entirety^{iv}, individual pieces of research being located at different points within the cube.

What is development studies?

- DS is about development (however defined – see below).
- DS is (to a greater or lesser extent) about cross-disciplinary insights. DS increasingly seeks to draw on the insights of more than one discipline but does not necessarily always achieve this satisfactorily.
- DS is (to a large extent) about applied or instrumental research.^v DS tends not to be interested in knowledge generation for its own sake but for its applied or instrumental value. DS is concerned with real-world problems (even when theorising). Many members of the DS 'community' seek to "make a difference".

Each of these three characteristics are elements within the 3 x 3 x 3 cube. The first, about the dimensions of development can be sub-divided into development a) as a process of change, b) as a policy/practice related evaluative outcome or c) as a dominant discourse. This could be viewed as a continuum from arguably value-free (development as change) at one end of the continuum to research which is more explicitly value-laden (development as a policy/practice related evaluative outcome) at the other end. We would argue that these are the three discernable definitions of 'development'. The first is historical and long-term and arguably relatively value-free – emphasizing 'development' as a process of change. The second is policy-related and evaluative or indicator-led, is based on value judgements (relating, for example, to 'good' change), and has short- to medium-term time horizons – development as the achievement of the MDGs, for example. The third is post-modernist, drawing attention to the ethnocentric and ideologically loaded Western conceptions of 'development' and raising the possibilities of alternative conceptions. A common

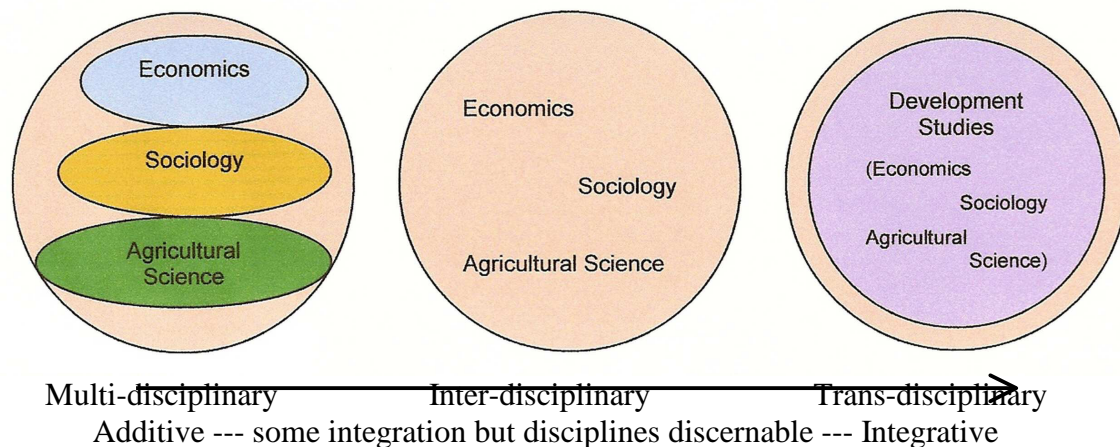
theme within most definitions is that ‘development’ encompasses ‘change’ in a variety of aspects of the human condition. Indeed, one of the simplest definitions of ‘development’ is probably Chambers’ notion of “good change”, although this raises all sorts of questions a) about what is “good” and what sort of “change” matters (as Chambers acknowledges), b) about the role of values, and c) whether ‘bad change’ is also viewed as a form of development. Although the theme of ‘change’ may be overriding, what constitutes ‘good change’ is bound to be contested.

The second dimension of the development cube, ‘about cross-disciplinary insights’, can also be placed in a continuum of approaches – multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, or trans-disciplinary research – denoting an increasing level of integration between constituent disciplines. Development Studies seeks to be cross-disciplinary. However, there are significant intellectual and professional or institutional barriers between disciplines. These barriers are both ontological and epistemological, and are also based on the structure of universities and of university politics. Haddad (2006:3) and McGregor (2006:33) have both referred to the fact that different disciplines have distinctly different ontological and epistemological approaches – to problem definition, to axioms and assumptions concerning the nature of reality and of human beings, and to analytical methods and techniques. Indeed, some disciplines even have language (or jargon) which is almost incomprehensible to those ‘outside’ the discipline.

Additionally, there is some confusion over terms. Cross-disciplinarity is a generic term meaning *any* kind of mixing of disciplines. Multi-disciplinary entails researchers in teams conducting research from their own disciplinary viewpoint but where the team as a whole includes researchers from a number of disciplines. Interdisciplinarity is a step further towards integration rather than co-existence and means that the different disciplines are still discernable but some level of deeper integration is evident. Individuals (or teams) seek to integrate concepts and methodologies from the outset. Most of the individual researchers will have familiarity with at least a second discipline. Transdisciplinarity relates to complete integration of two or more disciplines with the possibility of forming a new discipline. As an example the field research method known as ethnography originates in anthropology but took insights from psychology, philosophy, sociology, and other disciplines. A final option in this classification is ‘non-disciplinarity’, which is not the same as trans-disciplinarity and represents a deliberate attempt to move away from the notion that one should work within well-defined disciplinary boundaries, a position which might be taken by those working in a post-modernist perspective. There is, of course, the possibility that deliberately rejecting the methods and techniques of established disciplines could result in description which is devoid of analysis.

These conceptualizations of DS have been represented in the figure below reflecting Bergstrøm and Molteberg’s perception of cross-disciplinary concepts as being within a continuum, with ‘additive’ approaches at one end (multi-disciplinarity) and fully ‘integrative’ approaches at the other end (transdisciplinarity) (2000:11).

Diagrammatic presentation of Cross-disciplinarity in Development Studies



If the first dimension is the foci – i.e. ‘development’ (however defined) and the second dimension of the cube is the approach – i.e. cross-disciplinarity, the third dimension of the development cube is the aim or purpose. This can again be placed within a continuum of purpose – from research with limited instrumentality (such as theory/abstraction) at one end of the continuum to research with high instrumentality at the other (research which is focused on policy, practice, or on an action-based approach) with combinations of the two in between. Many people are attracted to DS by some sense of concern and commitment about social justice and the prevailing levels of global poverty and inequality. One avenue for this commitment is a focus on informing policy.^{vi} Definitions of DS typically identify some level of instrumentality, as in Molteberg and Bergstrøm’s (2000:7) proposition that “knowledge generation is not an end in itself”. This makes DS, in the words of Mehta et al. (2006:1) “more loaded and contested than other kinds of research”.

Indeed, instrumentality in DS has been a central factor in many critiques of DS. It has led many to contend that DS is “the source of many of the problems of the so-called Third World” (Corbridge, 2005:1). The point at issue relates particularly to the nature of interventions in the lives of the people who are the ‘subjects’ or ‘participants’ of DS research who are often from a different social and cultural background to that of the researcher. Rahnema’s (1997:395) remark that “who are we... ..to intervene in other people’s lives?” is typical of this viewpoint. In short, if the purpose of DS research is often instrumental or applied it should be clear that issues of legitimacy are raised by this orientation towards ‘good intentions’. The ethics-related (and methodological) issues associated with this legitimacy need far greater discussion of researchers impact and accountability (see below).

4. DEVELOPMENT STUDIES: THE FUTURE?

4a. Towards global development studies?

DS could expand to be more global in perspective rather than its primary focus on ‘them’ and deprivation in the South. This is not a new idea but one that seems to resurface regularly but never quite get off the ground. The case is this – that the concerns of DS extend beyond developing countries. There is poverty and wealth in every country. Further, China is a ‘developing country’ with high poverty levels which is one of the world’s largest economies (in 2009 it is predicted to pass the US and be the largest). Inequalities within high income countries mean that the types of policy analysis applied to poverty reduction programs in developing countries have a

broader relevance. Life expectancy at the beginning of the 21st century in the Calton area of Glasgow in the United Kingdom at 53.9 years, for example, is lower than the average life expectancy in many developing countries.^{vii} The socio-economic impact of demographic and technological dynamics (as examples of structural change) requires careful policy-relevant research in industrialized countries just as much as in developing countries. All countries are developing in some sense of the term, and industrialized countries experience structural change of a socio-economic nature just as much as the developing countries. So cross-disciplinary analysis which is familiar to DS researchers is also relevant to industrialized countries.

A number of other socio-economic issues in industrialized countries are also associated with the concerns of DS. For example, problems of 'over-development' in the industrialized countries, such as unhealthy diet and obesity, have complex socio-economic causes and effects. High consumption levels with their associated high CO² emissions in the industrialized countries not only have an impact on these countries, but also impact developing countries through the global environmental effects of the emissions. Other examples of increasing interconnectedness between industrialized and developing countries are represented by the globalization of terrorism, security issues and pandemics (HIV/AIDS and avian flu for example) mean that a cross-disciplinary approach to research and policy analysis is increasingly relevant in an international context.

Seers (1963) provided a seminal discussion of the diversity of developed country characteristics, and their divergence from the characteristics of developing countries. On this basis he could justify calling the developed, or industrialized, countries "a special case". The determining characteristics included factors of production (e.g. literacy and the mobility of labour), sectors of the economy (e.g. manufacturing much larger than either agriculture or mining), public finance (e.g. reliance on direct taxes), households (e.g. very few below subsistence level and a moderately equal distribution of income), savings and investment (e.g. well developed financial intermediaries), and 'dynamic influences' (e.g. slow population growth and high urbanization). When Maxwell reviewed Seer's arguments 35 years later he suggested that they were really no longer appropriate because of the blurring of boundaries between developed and developing countries in recent years and although

the poverty line in the UK... ..is 17 times the poverty line [the dollar-a-day] established by the World Bank for developing countries... the argument [for comparatives] rests not on levels of living, so much as on the economic, political and social characteristics of different groups of countries and on the tools of analysis deployed to study them (1998:25).

Widening the international scope of DS in this way is also consistent with a view of development as structural change and with the post-modern broad conceptualization of development within a discourse. It will be recalled that to a large extent the basis of the post-modernist critique of development is that the dominant discourse of western modernity is imposed on the Third World. However, if 'development' is defined to encompass the entire planet (reminiscent of the approach of the Brandt Commission – the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, 1980 – and of the Brundtland Commission – the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), to include increased interconnectedness across the planet through globalization as well as diversity of value systems (for example cultural or spiritual) without any connotation of inferior or superior conditions then the extent of inconsistency between the first and third conceptualizations which we have established would be

considerably reduced. A possible response to this argument from the post-modernists might be that perspectives of socio-economic change in developing countries is best left to nationals of those countries and that the expansion of the scope of DS to cover global development is simply another way of imposing the values of the industrialized countries on developing countries. However, such a response would imply a remarkably compartmentalized view of international development at a time when boundaries are becoming less significant in many spheres of human activity.

4b. Towards trans-disciplinary development studies?

DS could expand to be more cross-disciplinary and perhaps one day transdisciplinary. Again, not a new idea but an one that has made perhaps some progress but there is still some way to go. Ultimately successful cross-disciplinarity may require relaxation of some of the assumptions which divide disciplines, or which restrain the development of what some would regard as a new discipline (rather than as a subject) such as DS. It has been argued that there is a risk of losing the intellectual strengths of individual disciplines within cross-disciplinary research through the weakening of assumptions. Harriss argues:

‘Discipline’ in research is productive.. ...But equally it is extremely important that academic disciplines, or the particular ‘sets of rules’ that predominate within any one of themare subject to critical scrutiny from other approaches... ..there is a sense in which ‘disciplines’ need to be saved from themselves (2002:494).

It may be necessary to take small steps within a modest approach to these controversial issues. Kanbur argues (2002:484) that, although genuine inter-disciplinarity may be worth striving for, it is possible that the best that can be hoped for is multi-disciplinarity. It is necessary to distinguish between the positive contributions which each individual discipline brings to a research problem and the aspects of the research problem to which each discipline can offer only limited insights.

There are several stages in the process of fostering and encouraging inter-disciplinarity and cross-disciplinarity. The first, an awareness and understanding stage, might involve each discipline learning and sharing the axioms of other disciplines. The second, a conceptualizing stage, taking a general or specific problem and deciding which disciplines are most relevant to the research question and establishing the basic assumptions of those disciplines about the nature of reality. What methodologies – overall research strategies and methods – including individual data collection techniques – are commonly used in the disciplines which are being considered? Are there substantial areas of agreement about the similarities and complementarities between disciplines or are there outright conflicts? The third stage, a ‘team stage’, relates to the formation of an appropriate research team which depends upon multi-, inter-, or trans-disciplinarity, and involves a degree of relaxation of disciplinary assumptions and the matching of methods. The exploitation of complementarities between disciplines remains one of the most challenging areas for DS. Researchers need shared (but not identical) beliefs about reality, goals of enquiry and language, as well as mutual respect and ‘space’ within which a dialogue (or discourse) can take place. This involves issues of the process rather than of the content of research. Myerson (1994:1515) suggests a code of practice for cross-disciplinary research based on four pre-requisites for productive cross-disciplinary as follows: People should be disposed to communicate ideas, and this requires contexts

within which it is safe and easy to do so; Ways of thinking which favour comparisons, which are relative in that sense, and are not necessarily relativistic; Creative forms of negation, which present new possibilities, or which supplement previous propositions and active tolerance of difficult emotions involved in the exchange of ideas and opinions.'

4c. Towards ethical development studies?

It could be argued that DS could, and should, pay more attention to ethical considerations – by which we mean a concern with research impact and accountability. To the extent that DS is instrumental, and if it is increasingly concerned with informing policy, practice and action then ethical considerations are crucial because researchers will inevitably intervene in the lives of 'the Other'^{viii} in two respects. First, DS research is not undertaken by those who are responsible for policy decision-making, so that the relationship between researchers and policy- and decision-makers raises ethical issues. Second, DS research (and many other areas of research) involves an inter-relationship between the researchers and the 'researched' (who may be respondents to surveys within primary data collection, or who may be the targets of policy change based on research) which has ethical dimensions. In short, we are referring to research accountability and impact .

In this discussion, we are referring to the ethics of the development *community* itself. First, for example, in more instrumental policy/practice/action-based research we may ask to what extent researchers have a responsibility for the outcomes from their research, or whether these are the responsibility of the decision-makers. Where development research has been commissioned by the policy-makers, sometimes with explicit terms of reference, or where the policy-makers provide research funding and control the research agenda the responsibility will perhaps fall more upon the policy-makers than upon the researchers. However, where ethical considerations raise serious doubts about the undertaking of certain types of research ultimately the researchers can decide not to be involved. Second, applying resources to development-related research may increase the knowledge base, but it is necessary to demonstrate that resources allocated to research have higher returns than with alternative uses.^{ix} The basic question is which has more impact – resources spent on development research or resources used in development programmes directly? Questions for reflection among researchers might include: Do outsiders 'crowd out' or 'crowd in' local researchers? Does research 'build' capacity – and should it aim to do so? To whom should researchers be accountable and what process of accountability should occur? To whom are researchers actually accountable and what process of accountability occurs in practice? Who controls the research agenda in principle, and what process of control occurs? Who controls the research agenda in practice, and what process of control occurs? What is the role of developed country institutes for research in developing countries? What should this role be? Are researchers independent - independent from whom – and how is independence assured? What does policy relevant research mean? Should all DS research be policy relevant? Do DS researchers have responsibility for the policy outcomes arising from their research? What kind of relationships should researchers have with the decision makers, policymakers and elites which their research may influence?

This debate around the issue of ethics goes to the heart of DS. It is about the ethics of *being a development researcher* – that is the ethical and moral issues associated with interventions into the lives of others. These ethical and moral issues arise for all

researchers and practitioners working in their home environment, and the fact that a considerable body of DS researchers and practitioners work in countries and environments which are not 'home' and where they are non-indigenous makes the issues more critical. For a field of enquiry predicated on an ethical point of departure – improving peoples lives in the 'Third World' – DS has been surprisingly slow at addressing the ethical implications of intervening in people lives and claiming to 'know' what is 'good' for them. This has led to what Scheyvens and Storey (2003:2) have called a "crisis of development researcher's legitimacy". It has led some people to abandon development research altogether, others to take a relativist position that 'privileges' local knowledge, and yet others to pursue participatory research as means to overcome criticisms of DS researchers in the Third World as 'academic tourists' or 'research travellers' where the process of research is beneficial only to the researcher's career (Lather, 1988:570).

It is necessary to place greater weight on the significance of the impact of interventions on the lives of other people. This is Lather's "catalytic validity" of research and "the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes participants towards knowing reality in order to transform it" (1988:272). This also implies thinking about the accountability of DS researchers. Who should decide the research agenda? What kinds of collaboration models (non-hierarchical) are appropriate? What kind of research reduces poverty? What are the transmission channels between knowledge and societal change? These are all big questions with no easy answers. What could researchers do more immediately? In the context of the point about guiding principles rather than guidelines, Pham and Jones (2006:2–3, 5) propose four dimensions of social-justice related research as follows:

[The four dimensions are] self-reflexivity in the research process; reciprocity dialogue with research participants; uncovering marginalised knowledges; and rethinking definitions of research design and validity.

5. CONCLUSIONS: TOWARDS GLOBAL, ETHICAL, TRANS-DISCIPLINARY DS?

Critics have argued that DS has been, at best, an irrelevance which has failed to meet its own aims to improve standards of living and, at worst, has been a neo-colonial or western imposition on 'the Other' by claiming to 'know' about 'the Other' and what is good for 'the Other'. By the end of the 20th Century, some were even predicting the total demise of DS due to the disappearance of the 'Third World' as a coherent category following the end of the Cold War. However, DS has thrived and has expanded its role in spite of, or perhaps because of, responses to these criticisms. Certainly, in terms of international policy interest, the volume of literature published, or in student numbers studying DS the subject has not diminished.

In countering the post-modernist critique Parfitt (2002:6–7, 83) provides an ethical exploration of why DS exists. He argues that it is not inevitable that DS is an imperialist discourse. Indeed, he argues that members of 'social minorities' (i.e. those with relatively more power) are ethically obliged to assist the 'social majorities' (i.e. those with less power) wherever they live. This draws heavily on Emmanuel Levinas (in particular, 1969; 1998) whose work was concerned with the ethics of 'the Other'. Levinas argued that the question is not "why do we exist?" but "how do we justify our existence?". Levinas contended that human beings have

an infinite responsibility for 'the Other' because the sense of identity is constructed from 'positionality' regarding, and relationships with, other human beings. His central proposition is that relationships with 'the Other' are associated with self-identity to a large extent. Indeed, human beings only have a sense of identity through the existence of others, and there is therefore a fundamental obligation to treat other human beings well because of dependence on them for a sense of identity. Levinas' ethics thus provide a basis, but not an inevitable imperative, for engaging in DS because of its role in establishing an identity as a constituent element in universal human characteristics.

In reply to the 'effectiveness' critique, a large part of the 'Third World' – notably East Asia and China – has seen some kind of positive transformation, albeit with contestation of the qualitative nature, extent and distribution of social progress. Whether DS can make any claims to be in part responsible is – of course – a highly contentious question. One might also note development 'success stories' (again with caveats) in countries such as India and Vietnam and 'improvements' in a range of international development indicators. Of course some countries have not experienced any great progress since the emergence of DS in the 1950s – a number of obvious examples are located in Sub-Saharan Africa.

When Apthorpe asked (1999:544-5) 'is there a future for development studies?' there was a range of answers from the simple 'yes' or 'no' to more complex, 'yes, but...' or 'no, but...'. Mehta et al., (2006:5) argue that DS should exist but needs to change:

Our view is that development research can avoid the same fate of colonial studies and emerge as a way of learning about development and exclusion in both rich and poor countries, and lead the way in terms of forging new approaches in connecting global and local issues, policies, solutions and researchers. To do so we must start by forging equitable relationships between northern and southern researchers and institutes and decentralizing research processes. Finally, we hope that over the next 40 years, development research will not just study processes of change, but also be an integral part of them (Mehta et al., 2006:5).

In sum, we need to reflect on the role which the researcher and the practitioner in international development studies play in international development and on the links between knowledge, power and social change. As Woolcock (2007:57) proposes a community of "practical thinkers" and "reflective doers".

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ This article draws upon a forthcoming book by the same authors - 'International Development Studies: Theory and Methods in Research and Practice'. (Sage: London).

ⁱⁱ The University of Nairobi's Institute for Development Studies was founded in 1965, and further information can be obtained from the website (http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/departments/dept_page.php?dept_code=NH&fac_code=45). The Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) was originally established in 1957, and was moved to Dhaka in 1971 after the separation of East and West Pakistan and the foundation of the state of Bangladesh. Further details can be found on the BIDS website (<http://www.bids-bd.org/about/index.htm>).

ⁱⁱⁱ Over the period since 2004 a number of country-based papers on the nature and role of development studies have been added to the EADI dossier at http://www.eadi.org/detail_page.phtml?page=dossier_devstudies

^{iv} Of course, if the matrix was increased to 4 x 4 x 4 it would contain 72 elements – so the matrix may be thought of as being generic rather than being constrained to the 3 x 3 x 3 of the *Rubik* cube.

^v Some scholars refer to DS using the word 'normative'. This is clear in the sense of meaning a commitment to practice-oriented work and to welfare improvements but can easily be confused with the meaning of 'normative' as being the obverse of 'positive' economics in the sense of being 'value-free'. A problem in this context is the 'hidden' bias towards the status quo (or towards contemporary power relations) represented by "value free" neo-classical economics. To say that DS is applied or instrumental is not the same as saying that DS is entirely normative because there are both positive and normative points of departure to practice-oriented work. The distinction between positive and normative is that the positive approach aspires to be 'value free' in the sense that biases and values are explicitly excluded from the analysis. Normative analysis explicitly or implicitly includes these biases and values. Many researchers would argue there will always be some form of bias or implicit inclusion of values in both research and analytical writing and that the issue is how to exercise control and to be aware of bias. Some researchers and writers would, of course, argue that their work is completely objective and value-free or bias-free – but many development specialists would not believe them.

^{vi} A recent survey of 43 heads of European development research institutes found that 88% saw the research community itself as an important audience, but 82% also said that policy makers in their own country were an important audience (EADI, 2006: 6).

^{vii} See <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/publicservices/story/0,11032,1691742,00.html>

^{viii} 'The Other' here are the researched.

^{ix} Surr *et al.*, (2002:8-9) list many studies that purport to demonstrate the strength of research in reducing poverty. Agricultural research in particular would seem to have a high rate of return. Surr *et al.*, note that research suggests that the cost of lifting one person out of poverty through agriculture research was US\$180-190 per person, compared with US\$2,304 per person for lifting one person out of poverty through aid spending in general.