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What is Development Studies?

Andy Sumner
King's College London

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Prepared by

Andy Sumner¹ (King's College, London)

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Correspondence to: andrew.sumner@kcl.ac.uk.

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¹ Professor of Development Studies, King's College London. The author would like to thank for feedback and comments on earlier drafts the following: Imaduddin Abdullah, Arief Anshory Yusuf, Azral Bin Mazlan, Jelke Boesten, Laura Camfield, Gilles Carbonnier, James Copestake, Salome Ecker, Andrew Fischer, Rory Horner, David Hulme, Bhanubhatra Jittiang, Ray Kiely, Kyunghoon Kim, Ingrid Kvangraven, Simon Maxwell, Anisa Muzaffar, Eduardo Ortiz-Juarez, Alfredo Saad-Filho, Diego Sanchez-Ancochea, Ben Selwyn, Paul Shaffer, Ashra Shrestha, Maysoun Sukarieh, Raphael Susewind, Thomas Tanner, Susanne von Itter, Geof Wood, and Michael Woolcock.

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Abstract

Development Studies is an established area of scholarly enquiry, which implies some consensus over what the study of development entails. Does such a consensus exist? This paper argues that although there is some common understanding on Development Studies being about 'development' and having an inter-disciplinary as well as normative orientation, there is a set of quite different approaches to, or constellations of, Development Studies.

The paper presents a typology of constellations that differentiates between an 'aid-dependence framed Development Studies', a 'global Development Studies', a 'critical Development Studies' and a 'classical Development Studies'. The paper discusses how approaches differ in terms of: the definition of what constitutes desirable development; whether desirable development as defined is possible or under what conditions; the scope of Development Studies and to what extent the 'North' is explicitly incorporated into the study of developing countries (or if the North is also the subject of study); and the scales emphasised in the analysis.

The typology of Development Studies presented seeks to highlight internal differentiation within Development Studies, the identification of which serves a purpose of greater understanding between the different camps of each other; and to allow for more meaningful exchanges between camps on commonalities and differences though it is not just a matter of enabling a conversation. Further work is needed. There is more unpacking in the sense that each approach outlined is a crude aggregate and within each approach is situated various sub-approaches; and there are different dominant disciplines and different methodologies to elaborate in each or different ways of knowing. Further, there is also a need to lay bare the uneven power bases and outlets in which any conversations might happen.

1. Introduction

Development Studies is an established area of scholarly enquiry, which implies some consensus over what the study of development entails. Does such a consensus exist? This paper argues that although there is some common understanding on Development Studies being about ‘development’ and interdisciplinary as well as normative in orientation, there is a set of quite different approaches to, or constellations of, Development Studies or what Development Studies should be. The contribution of the paper is to map the constellations and to thus present a typology. The objective of the paper is to facilitate further discussion. The paper is not intended to be definitive, nor exhaustive. Further, the perspective is inevitably partial and shaped by where the author sits in the world and their conscious/unconscious biases and blind spots.

There is thus an important question of what methodology should be used or how to characterise Development Studies, in the sense of what data/database is the discussion to be based on? Specifically, is Development Studies to be characterised by a content review of taught courses of that name or is Development Studies to be characterised by something that emerges inductively from scholarly literature that invokes the framing of ‘Development Studies’? The approach of the paper in hand is to take the latter avenue. This is because in some countries, teaching and research programmes dealing with the Development Studies field are not labelled ‘Development Studies’ as such. Development Studies may be ‘integrated’ to some extent into other areas and thus less visible as a label for the area of enquiry. In fact, the label ‘Development Studies’ has a particular history which is discussed shortly, and departments, institutes and teaching and research programmes labelled Development Studies are much less evident in universities in developing countries than in the North.²

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a short history of Development Studies. Section 3 presents four stylised visions or constellations of contemporary Development Studies. Section 4 concludes.

2. Development Studies: A Brief (Contested) History

Where or when was ‘Development Studies’ established as an area of enquiry and study? The exact moment in which the area of enquiry that can be labelled ‘Development Studies’ emerged is contentious.³ One reference point is the period after World War II and Truman’s 1949 call for ‘a bold new program for making the benefits of... industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of

² The paper uses the label ‘developing countries’ to refer to countries that are not high-income Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member nations, acknowledging this is an imperfect approach and alternative terms such as ‘Global South’ are often used with different meanings in different epistemic communities. See for discussion, Dados and Connell (2012), Haug (2021), Haug, Braveboy-Wagner, and Maihold (2021), and Waisbich, Roychoudhury, and Haug (2021).

³ This section builds on ideas originally presented in Sumner and Tribe (2008). See Wood (2017) for detailed history.

the underdeveloped areas', and relatedly the formal decolonisation process of the 1950s/1960s. That said the genealogy of Development Studies can also be traced back to a longer intellectual history and to the period of colonialism itself. It has been argued that contemporary Development Studies tends to pay too little attention to its contested history. Kothari (2005b, pp. 47–8) makes the point that Development Studies 'rarely acknowledges [its] colonial roots'. In fact, numerous development-related studies were conducted during colonialism. One illustration of this are the anthropological and economic studies conducted in then British colonies in the late 1940s and 1950s by the UK Colonial Office (e.g., Gulliver, 1957; Lewis, 1953; Mayer, 1951; Peacock and Dosser, 1958; and relatedly see also Goodacre, 2005 on the colonial roots of Development Economics).

Underlying the question of the genealogy of Development Studies is a deeper question about development as either the intentional actions of a specific macro-agent (e.g., a government ministry post-independence or a colonial administration) versus development as *stuff that happens*—i.e., social change (see detailed discussion of Lewis, 2019 who identifies Arndt, 1981 as one earlier scholar to discuss the idea of development as something that is done versus something that happens). Cowen and Shenton (1998, p. 50) famously differentiated between immanent (unintentional or underlying processes of) development such as the development of capitalism, and imminent (intentional or 'willed') development such as the deliberate process to 'develop' the 'Third World' after formal decolonisation. More recently, there is Hart's (2001) demarcation of 'big D' development as the conscious effort of post-World War II, large scale, deliberate process of modernisation and 'little d' development of broader social change.

It is perhaps not surprising then that in the words of Harriss (2005, p. 17), 'quite when "development studies" began... is a matter for debate'. Harriss situates the emergence of Development Studies in the intellectual and political context of the 1960s political ferment and decolonisation and thus the *intentional* camp above. Only since the 1960s or 1970s and thus quite recently have teaching courses been labelled 'Development Studies' (or initially, 'Third World Studies', later, 'International Development' and some recently, 'Global Development'). Additionally, many recognised journals (as well as research and teaching institutes) were established around the period between the mid-1960s and late 1970s, such as the Journal of Development Studies, Development and Change, World Development, and Third World Quarterly (respectively established in 1964, 1970, 1973, and 1979).

In other words, an argument is typically made that Development Studies emerged as a result of the decolonisation process itself from the 1950s and 1960s onwards (Bernstein, 2005; Loxley, 2004; Molteberg and Bergstrøm, 2000a, 2000b; Shaw, 2004) with a strong emphasis on economic development and Development Economics though the role of Economics within Development Studies remains contentious to this day.⁴ The 1960s coincide with the first United Nations (UN) 'Development Decade',

⁴ Fine (2002) and Kanbur (2002) both argue that there have been intellectual tensions between development economists and economists, between development economists and non-economist Development Studies researchers, and between mainstream economists and Development Studies researchers. Economics has been accused of 'imperialist' tendencies not only in Development Studies but across the social sciences as a whole (Fine, 2002). As Kanbur (2006, p. 11) puts it, 'within each of these disciplines [those disciplines within Development Studies] one does not find the paradigmatic unity that there is in economics. At least in the context

manifested in the creation of new UN institutions, notably the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, established in 1964) as a counterbalance to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD, founded in 1961), and the redirection of other international agencies towards more development-focused roles. Further events occurring across the globe during the 1960s impacted development-related thinking, such as the 1968 protests, the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements in the US, the revival of Marxism and Latin American theorists' adaptation of neo-Marxian theory to developing countries (e.g., Cardoso and Faletto, 1969), proclamations of 'African Socialism' in many newly independent countries (e.g., by Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, and Julius Nyerere in Tanzania)⁵, the black liberation movements challenging Apartheid in South Africa, Nehru's contribution to the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as anti-colonial campaigns which began well before the 1950s/60s. In sum, the global political context was ripe for the emergence of a field of enquiry—in new institutes, departments, and journals—related to newly independent countries though there was a time lag to setting these up. That said the colonial roots of Development Studies clearly have a legacy in, for example, the large number of departments and institutes of Development Studies based in the UK and other European countries as well as their emphasis on the study of former colonies in the case of the UK in Africa and South Asia.

3. Development Studies: Four Contemporary Approaches

3a. Defining the core characteristics of Development Studies

There are several waves of literature since the end of the Cold War on what Copestake (2015) refers to as 'the perennial debate within DS [Development Studies] about its own identity' (p. 101).

First, towards the end and in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, there were a set of debates focused on calls for a greater relevance of Development Studies to practitioners and a critique of development theory and the 'impasse' in development theory (see Booth, 1985; Edwards, 1989). Second, in the early-to-mid 2000s a set of publications sought to understand the common characteristics of Development Studies as climate change and other issues became more prominent (see for example, Box, 2007; Harriss, 2002; Hulme and Toye, 2006; Loxley, 2004; Molteberg and Bergstrøm, 2000a, 2000b; Schmitz, 2007; Simon, 2005; Sumner and Tribe, 2008; Woolcock, 2007 and the edited volume of Kothari, 2005a). Third, there was a wave of discussions in the late 2000s/early 2010s in the aftermath of the global financial crisis (for example, Copestake, 2010; Fischer and Kothari, 2011; Gore, 2010; Wood and Tiwari, 2012). Fourth, in the later 2010s another set of publications pursued to grapple with the implications of major shifts and new issues in the study of development, not only climate change but also the rapid development of China and new technologies, among other meta-trends. These publications have also noted the bifurcation of the group of developing countries into a large set of developing countries with rapid economic growth versus a smaller set of extremely poor, aid-

of Development Policy Studies, what seems to unite these disciplines, and their sub-branches, is viewing themselves as an alternative paradigm to the economic method, each in its own different way.'

⁵ See Nkrumah's (1965) book *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, Nyerere's (1966, 1968) collection of speeches, as well as North African authors like Fanon (1952, 1961, 1970).

dependent, and stagnant or zero-economic growth developing countries (see in particular, the range of contributions in the edited volume of Baud, Basile, Kontinen, and von Itter, 2019).⁶ This includes—centrally—the long running questioning of economic growth as the goal of development (see Sen and Seers and more recent discussions on ‘degrowth’) and the ‘pluralisation’ of ideas or ‘cosmologies’ in terms of the meaning of progress and what constitutes a good society (see discussion of Wood, 2017). There are also questions of national development problems versus common or cross-border problems or global interdependencies (see discussion in Currie-Alder, 2016). One notable set of papers in *Development and Change* sought to understand what some of these meta-changes imply for Development Studies itself, with a lead piece (Horner and Hulme, 2019a) arguing for a conceptual shift from ‘international development’ to ‘global development’. According to the authors, the necessity of such a shift is justified by the blurring boundaries between South and North due to increasing global interdependence as a consequence of climate change.⁷ In short, even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, or the war in Ukraine, there has been ferment in Development Studies on how a range of ‘new’ issues, each of which radically impacts development itself, would or should impact on the study of development.

So, what is Development Studies? In keeping with the literature above, four commonalities can be identified across research and teaching in Development Studies.⁸ First, and self-evidently, Development Studies investigates the processes and outcomes of ‘development’—meaning societal change of some kind, although the definition of what constitutes desirable development remains highly contested, as do the conditions or mechanisms under which desirable development is possible. Additionally, not only development’s general meaning disputes its composition, what kind of development is desirable and for whom are other areas of contestation. There is further debate around the extent to which the focus is on processes (e.g., of economic development), outcomes (e.g., of rising average incomes), and/or discourses (the superiority of modern, high consumption society over other types of society). Second, Development Studies is interdisciplinary in the sense that it is not the same as (Development) Economics or (Development) Sociology. Development Studies is not—or rarely—taken to be an academic discipline in itself but rather an interdisciplinary area of enquiry or field or a ‘knowledge community’.⁹ Third, Development Studies research tends to be applied, instrumental, or

⁶ Notably Basile and Baud, 2019; Camfield, 2019; Chhachhi, Hutter, Damodaran, and Baud, 2019; Gupta, Hordijk, and Vegelin, 2019; Komba, Kontinen, and Msoka, 2019; Lutringer, 2019; Madrueño and Martínez-Osés, 2019; Melber, 2019; Mönks, Carbonnier, Mellet, and de Haan, 2019; Oswald, Leach, and Gaventa, 2019; Schöneberg, 2019.

⁷ See also exposition in Horner, 2020; Oldekop et al., 2020 and responses including Alemany, Slatter, and Rodríguez Enríquez, 2019; Bangura, 2019; Büscher, 2019; Fischer, 2019; Ghosh, 2019; Onaran, 2019; Sumner, 2019; Ziai, 2019; and also Hope, Freeman, Maclean, Pande, and Sou, 2021).

⁸ See for example, Mönks, Carbonnier, Mellet, and de Haan (2019) and EADI (2017) in particular on the definition question.

⁹ Hulme and Toye (2006, pp. 1094-5) use the term, specifically, that ‘[a] knowledge community is defined here as a network of knowledge-based experts who share an interest in a subset of knowledge issues, and who accept common procedural protocols as criteria to judge the success of their knowledge creation activities. What is essential here is not that all members of a knowledge community know or communicate with each other, but that they have common intellectual interests and aims, and a shared understanding and

normative in orientation in the sense that knowledge is not generated for its own sake as one finds in other areas of scholarly enquiry but rather to understand real-world problems (even when theorising). Fourth, Development Studies is concerned, to date at least, with developing countries, most of which were colonised by (now) 'developed' countries or the 'North'. Developed countries themselves are ambiguously situated in the study of development in developing countries; sometimes they are included explicitly or implicitly, in other instances developed countries are absent altogether.

Close comparative areas of inquiry to Development Studies are Area Studies and International Studies, which both share some characteristics with Development Studies, such as an interdisciplinary approach and inclusion of developing countries in the analysis. However, neither are overtly normative in their purpose nor have the 'development' focus (however defined). Furthermore, Area Studies tends to focus on specific regions and can include developed countries, which Development Studies has generally not done historically (though see discussion below). In contrast, International Studies places an importance on global political economy at the centre of the analysis.

3b. Which Development Studies? Four constellations

Although the commonalities above point towards a sense of some common understanding on what Development Studies is in a broad sense, different epistemic communities within Development Studies differ substantially in how they approach the area of enquiry, sometimes with underlying dominance of specific disciplines within an interdisciplinary approach. In fact, the approaches are sufficiently different to warrant the use of the Kuhnian term 'paradigm'. Kuhn's (1962, p. 175) original point of reference for a 'paradigm' was 'the entire constellation of beliefs, values and techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community'. However, Masterman (1970) noted that Kuhn's definition of a 'paradigm' has been interpreted in 21 different ways though these can be grouped into the following: A paradigm as the 'exemplar', model, or 'vehicle' which is to be pursued; the '(world) vision' or the meta-physical view and its ontological foundations; and the 'body of professionals'. In the following discussion we focus on the first two (and return to the latter in the concluding discussion). We use a set of questions to frame the discussion related to exemplars and world-visions. Specifically: What is desirable development? Is desirable development possible and if yes, under what conditions or via what mechanisms? What is the scope emphasised? What scale(s) tend to get highlighted?

First, what is desirable development—i.e., development of what, from what, to what, and with what outcomes? How to make value judgements on outcomes? What dimensions matter most? Should the aggregated or dis-aggregated picture (e.g., winners and losers) be emphasised?

acceptance of the methods by which their sort of knowledge is successfully created... the legitimate methods or 'procedural protocols' of each knowledge community provides it with its intellectual discipline, determining among other things the content of the training thought to be appropriate for those aspiring to become members.'

Second, is desirable development as specified in the epistemic vision possible to attain? If so, under what conditions or via what mechanisms? If not, what are the limits?

Third, what is the scope (of countries to be studied) emphasised in Development Studies—i.e., ‘developing countries’, ‘developed countries’, or both? What about ‘hybrid’, ‘deviant’, or ‘converging’ cases such as South Korea, Taiwan, or Eastern Europe that somehow are difficult to classify? Moreover, to what extent—if at all—is the North incorporated into the study of the South and/or is Development Studies also about studying the North itself? This could be done in at least two ways: Studying poorer/marginalised parts of the North as ‘developing countries’ or the effects of the North on developing countries (e.g., through accelerating climate change in terms of carbon dioxide emissions).

Fourth, what is the emphasis given to development at different scales—local, national, global?

A set of contemporary epistemic visions of the study of development can be characterised. The stylised visions (meaning generalised tendencies rather than absolutes) are:

- (i) an aid-dependence framed Development Studies;
- (ii) a global Development Studies;
- (iii) a critical Development Studies; and
- (iv) a post-aid, classical Development Studies.

Each approach is characterised next. Table 1 below compares the different approaches. It should be emphasised what follows below is a *stylised* or generalised sketch. Inevitably, there is some crudeness in the characterisation. Furthermore, individual researchers may well draw from different approaches or have a foot in different camps, leading to hybrids. In short, the stylised visions here should be seen as tendencies or differing epistemic visions rather than absolutes. This means approaches may differ within these broad-brush characterisations. In particular, the labels used here are contestable and inevitably crude themselves. The labels are employed here to facilitate the exploration of each approach to be discussed.

First, there is what could be labelled an ‘aid-dependence’ framed Development Studies. This has originated in some ways out of the funding of ‘traditional’ donors (in contrast to ‘new’ donors), such as the UK Department for International Development (DFID) as it existed until 2020 (now part of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and other bilateral aid agencies. This approach places considerable emphasis (and research funding) on the role of aid in development and over the last decade has morphed—as a result of economic growth in many developing countries leading to fewer extremely poor or aid dependent countries—into a study of aid-dependent, conflict-affected countries or ‘fragile states’ (as for example UK Aid emphasise for bilateral aid spending). There is emphasis on the remaining low-income countries, typically in sub-Saharan Africa, arguably due to the influence of Collier’s (2007) advocating for a focus on the ‘bottom billion’ in policy formation at UK DFID and elsewhere.¹⁰

¹⁰ The focus of UK bilateral aid on the poorest countries sits alongside Collier’s (2007) assertion that change in the poorest countries can only come from within.

In short, not all donors follow this approach, although the aid-dependent, poorest and conflict-affected countries receive attention from much of the bilateral donor community in policy as well as research and by some multilateral donors too though not exclusively. This approach has to some extent (though by no means all) emerged into research focusing largely or entirely on poor, often conflict-affected low-income countries, and has moved away from countries that do not fit this lens. In sum, this approach manifests as study of very poor developing countries that are aid-dependent for the foreseeable future, and often focuses on aid delivery and/or projects in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

Less attention is paid to middle-income developing countries (however defined) where aid does not really matter, even though conflict is evident in many middle-income countries. In general, little attention is given to Latin America and East Asia other than questions of very poor countries emulating East Asia's or China's development as well as the role of middle-income countries as new donors in low-income countries (especially China). The approach defines development as reducing or ending conflict, building peace, starting the economic growth process, and reducing poverty via donor funded social protection and other measures. Development is thus a movement from conflict and extreme poverty towards less conflict, peace, economic growth, and less extreme poverty. The developing countries in focus are typically a sub-set of the group of developing countries; namely, the low-income countries with internal or external conflicts. Development as defined is argued to be difficult but in principle possible for this set of countries. Aid is viewed as essential. To a considerable extent the 'local' or ground-level scale is emphasised in this approach. In sum, an aid-dependence framed Development Studies narrows the scope of consideration to the poorest countries (however defined—but typically characterised by aid dependence, low income, high poverty, conflict, or weak state capability).

Second, there is a 'global' Development Studies. This approach seeks to move beyond the focus on developing countries to consider development in all countries, in the South and North, and the impact of global trends such as climate change (see in particular, Horner and Hulme, 2019a, 2019b and earlier discussions in Haddad, 2006; Mehta, Haug, and Haddad, 2006; Saith, 2007; Sumner, 2012, earlier still in de Haan and Maxwell, 1990; Maxwell, 1998 and Gaventa, 1998, and yet earlier in Seers, Schaffer, and Kiliunen, 1979). The scope encompasses all countries and the interconnectedness of development, poverty, wealth, and wellbeing in the North/West and South/East. Furthermore, it posits that all countries are developing in some sense and that there is wealth and poverty in both the North/West and South/East. Many development problems and their solutions are neither the preserve of the North/West nor the South/East alone and wellbeing in the North/West and South/East is increasingly connected. Thus, according to this approach, the demarcation between developed/North and developing/South has become blurred since the Cold War to the point of being meaningless. Hence, the defining dichotomy in Development Studies—that of developed vs developing countries—has lost validity.

To underline this point, Horner and Hulme (2019a) refer to the 'converging divergence' thesis, arguing that global inequality has been falling (i.e., there is convergence) while national inequality has been

increasing (i.e., there is divergence).¹¹ Horner and Hulme call for a conceptual shift in Development Studies, replacing the 'international development' of the last three decades which is based on the developed/developing binary with 'global development' considering all countries. In other words, rather than investigating poor countries, poor people, and the developing world/South, Development Studies should examine issues relating to development in all countries. Development is defined as multidimensional and sometimes is equated with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (e.g., the exposition of Horner and Hulme, 2019a). Development is argued to be possible to some degree but not easy. Furthermore, strong emphasis is placed on national and global interactions as well as global agendas. Functioning multilateralism is considered essential.

Third, there is a critical Development Studies which is influenced by post-colonial/decolonial, post-development, thinking. This challenges, or repudiates, the entire notion of capitalist modernity and the pursuit of development in its current form. This epistemic vision became prominent in the 1980s/1990s (e.g., Escobar, 1992; Esteva, 1985, 1992; Rahnema, 1997) and has been reinvigorated with debates on decolonising both development and Development Studies over the last decade (e.g., Wilson, 2012; Pailey, 2020; Patel, 2020). It is important to note that discussion of decoloniality stretch across all the epistemic visions of Development Studies.

In the approach of critical Development Studies, the definition of development is an anti-definition given that capitalist modernity and the pursuit of development as currently undertaken are considered to be motivated by the interests of the North (and elites of the South). Since this approach radically differs from the two visions outlined previously, direct comparisons are not easy. Rather than a conceptualisation of development, critical Development Studies is an outright attack on the 'development industry' and its researchers, practitioners, as well as aid institutions. Foucault (1966, 1969) and Said (1978, 1993) shaped some of the premises this approach draws on, namely that the North's political and intellectual depictions of the 'Third World' have been essential to subordinating the latter. The construction of developing countries as 'inferior' to developed ones is considered to serve as justification for the 'plunder and violence' by the North (Alvares, 1992, p. 1). In short, desirable development would be an alternative mode of development or an alternative to development which would not be capitalist modernity (meaning high consumption lifestyles or at least the aspiration to this) and manifested in ideas emerging from within developing countries (e.g., the Bantu 'Ubuntu' or Latin American 'Buen Vivir' philosophies). There is a focus on forms of resistance by subordinate groups within countries, given the perceived lack of success of government-led resistance (e.g., Chile in 1973 or Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia in the 1980s). Development as widescale Western-type modernisation is considered impossible (and undesirable) for developing countries (and the North). Local or ground-level experiences are emphasised in the study of alternative development or alternatives to development.

The outline here so far is rather focused on the 1990s and the original post-development critique of orthodox development as capitalist modernity. A contemporary characterisation needs to incorporate

¹¹ This empirical pattern of falling global inequality may though be temporary, as it is driven by China's development. In due course China's development could start to put upward pressure on global inequality (see Kanbur et al., 2022).

the evolution of post-colonial theory (of for example, Spivak, 1988) into what can be characterised as a critical Development Studies with a strong emphasis on decoloniality. Thus, the current approach is more linked to social movements, feminism, Indigenous rights, and anti-racism in addition to being directed towards decoloniality and environmental concerns. This approach to Development Studies draws on post-colonial theory. Specifically, Bhambra (2014) highlights the intellectual contributions in Said (1978), Bhabha (e.g., 2014), and Spivak (e.g., 1988) as well as Quijano (e.g., 2007), Lugones (e.g., 2007), and Mignolo (e.g., 2000).

Race more generally is an important focus of critical Development Studies. For illustration Patel (2020) presents an exposition of the 'race and decolonial turn' in Development Studies through a review of articles in six major Development Studies journals.¹² Patel finds that just 32 of 9,280 papers surveyed mention the words 'race', 'racial', or 'racism' and only 24 of these 32 engage with race in its own right or in knowledge production and validation. Race is either (p. 1471) a variable in quantitative studies and sits within Development Economics rather than Development Studies, or it is a descriptive container. Just seven papers explore race as a construct that 'does something' and is socially situated in for example the politics of race, racial hierarchy, or racial difference. Consequently, it is argued, race and the racism inherent in European colonialism continues in production and value of knowledge in Development Studies.¹³

Fourth, there is a 'post-aid' or revived classical Development Studies. This approach is somewhat resonant with 'classical' Development Studies in the 1960s and 1970s (see for example, Gore, 2000; Fischer, 2019). This vision of Development Studies is emergent to some extent and is the result of two or three decades of rapid economic growth in many developing countries leading to fewer very poor developing countries and more middle-income developing countries (however defined). It draws from various influences from classical Development Studies and heterodox political economy. This approach emphasises structural disadvantage, relational hierarchy, and the importance of history in the study of 'late development', with aspects of 'neo-developmentalism' (Ban, 2013; Bresser-Pereira, 2011; Chang, 1994a, 1994b, 2002; Wade, 1990).

The emphasis in this classical Development Studies lies mostly on post-aid, middle-income countries (MICs)—typically unambiguous MICs that are in little or no obvious danger of returning to the group of very poor countries in per capita income terms—and especially upper-middle-income countries (UMICs), although the World Bank's country thresholds are rarely utilised overtly. The commonality of this group of countries is not actually average income but that foreign aid receipts do not really matter because domestic resources have become substantial due to economic growth. The main element under study is national economic development within the contemporary global economy—structural transformation, not just economic growth—in the historic and contemporary global

¹² Journal of Development Studies, Development and Change, World Development, Progress in Development Studies, Third World Quarterly, and the Journal of International Development.

¹³ At the same time, Western conservative traditions also reject development and liberal intervention as a form of cultural imperialism and argue for separate ethnopolitics (see Samuel Francis or Alain de Benoist).

economy. Secondly, questions of national income distribution are sometimes though not always part of the enquiry.

This approach is in some ways a parallel to the narrowing of aid-dependence framed Development Studies. The emphasis in post-aid, classical Development Studies is—given the focus on MICs—typically on Latin America and East Asia, though there is some focus on Africa where structural transformation is evident. Furthermore, this approach is concerned with studying national economic development albeit heavily qualified and critical of the qualitative nature of progress. The extent to which desirable development is possible is contested as a consequence of structural constraints placed on developing countries by the global economy, and the eventually possible development may be of a less desirable nature. In short, ‘late industrialisation’ or structural transformation is generally viewed as desirable, though tough and getting tougher as more and more MICs compete over similar entry points to global value chains, making it harder to capture enough economic activity to industrialise. In fact, many MICs are experiencing stalled industrialisation or are deindustrialising (see Palma, 2005, 2008; Rodrik, 2015; Sumner, 2021).

In short, four visions of Development Studies can be outlined and compared. A set of fault lines are apparent across these different visions of Development Studies: First, the extent to which desirable development entails becoming more or less like OECD high-income countries, meaning capitalist modernity (higher consumption) of some kind even if it takes a more equitable form, or rather pursuing alternatives to capitalist modernity. Second, the degree to which desirable development is possible or under what conditions or which mechanisms. Third, the situating of the North in the analysis of developing countries and lastly, relatedly, differing emphases of scales.

4. Concluding Discussion

This paper has presented a history of Development Studies and argued that although there is some common understanding on Development Studies being about ‘development’ and having an interdisciplinary and normative orientation, there is a set of quite different approaches to, or visions of, Development Studies or what Development Studies should be. The paper outlined a set of stylised constellations of Development Studies. Specifically, an aid-dependence framed Development Studies; a global Development Studies; a critical Development Studies; and a post-aid, classical Development Studies.

The fault lines between these four stylised visions of the study of development include the definition of desirable (or undesirable) development, whether desirable development (or what kind) is perceived to be possible and under what conditions or pre-requisites, which societies are the focus of enquiry—the poorest countries, the unambiguous MICs, all developing/colonised countries, or all countries of the world—, how/whether the countries of the North are situated in the study of development, and the hierarchy of scales (sub-national/local versus national or global or interactions between scales).

The typology serves two purposes. First, it provides a map of Development Studies which helps understanding the internal differentiations within Development Studies as an area of enquiry. Second,

the identification of internal differentiations within Development Studies helps to aid greater understanding between the different camps of each other and thus allows for more meaningful exchanges between camps on commonalities and differences. However, it is not just a matter of enabling a conversation. There is more unpacking to do. Each approach has been outlined in crude aggregate. Within each approach is situated various sub-approaches; and there are different dominant disciplines and different methodologies to elaborate in each or different ways of knowing. There is also a need to lay bare the uneven power bases and outlets in which any conversations might happen. In short, to understand the approaches more fully and beyond the typology presented, there is a need to understand the institutional basis of each approach in departments and journals typically based in the North, albeit with increasing diversity on editorial teams and boards. The discussion thus returns to Masterman's third dimension of a Kuhnian paradigm or the 'body of professionals' and the institutional basis of these different approaches to Development Studies. Specifically, there are a set of questions to probe further to understand the politics of knowledge generation in Development Studies, such as where is each approach anchored in terms of countries, research institutes/university departments, and research funders? Where do researchers in each approach publish in terms of journals, working paper series, and books (as well as whether those publications are in Development Studies or in the researchers' 'home' disciplines)? Exploring these further would be a useful next step to opening a conversation, which needs to go beyond English language outlets and spaces.

Table 1. Which Development Studies?

APPROACHES TO, OR CONSTELLATIONS OF, DEVELOPMENT STUDIES	Tendencies			
	WHAT IS DESIRABLE DEVELOPMENT?	IS DESIRABLE DEVELOPMENT POSSIBLE? IF YES, UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS OR VIA WHAT MECHANISMS?	WHAT IS THE SCOPE EMPHASISED? WHICH SOCIETIES TEND TO BE THE FOCUS OF STUDY? HOW IS THE NORTH SITUATED IN THE ANALYSIS?	WHAT SCALE(S) TEND TO BE EMPHASISED?
An aid-dependence framed Development Studies	Reduction of conflict, initiation of economic growth, externally financed poverty reduction	Yes, but not easy; aid is an essential pre-requisite	Low-income, aid- dependent, typically sub- Saharan Africa but not exclusively The North is not explicitly incorporated unless relevant to the issue (e.g., aid or conflict). Tendency to assume that North to South transfers of finance, technology, and institutions can engender development	Sub-national/national; emphasis on aid and to some extent on projects
A global Development Studies	Multidimensional development (e.g., the UN Sustainable Development Goals)	Yes, but global meta- trends represent challenges (e.g., climate change); functioning multilateralism is an essential pre-requisite	All countries – developed and developing. The North is directly incorporated in the analysis for comparison with developing countries, studied in its own right, or as part of global issues	Interactions between sub-national, national, and global

**APPROACHES TO,
OR
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OF, DEVELOPMENT
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Tendencies

WHAT IS DESIRABLE
DEVELOPMENT?

IS DESIRABLE
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IF YES, UNDER WHAT
CONDITIONS OR VIA
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WHAT IS THE SCOPE
EMPHASISED? WHICH
SOCIETIES TEND TO BE
THE FOCUS OF STUDY?
HOW IS THE NORTH
SITUATED IN THE
ANALYSIS?

WHAT SCALE(S) TEND TO
BE EMPHASISED?

A critical Development
Studies

A search for forms of
development based on
decoloniality, equity,
and environmental
concerns; a critique of
existing development
modes; allied to new
approaches, e.g.,
degrowth, 'Pluriverse',
'Buen Vivir', etc.

Not as currently construed
in the mainstream as
capitalist modernity; the
dismantling of capitalism
is an essential pre-
requisite for many

Post-colonial societies

The North is directly
incorporated in colonial and
neo-colonial discourse and
other mechanisms of control
and power

Sub-national, local
initiatives, different
forms of 'resistance',
and protest (can also
be global)

A post-aid, classical
Development
Studies

National economic
development (i.e.,
economic
transformation)
with/without attention
to domestic income
distribution questions

Historically yes, though
getting much harder over
time; economic policy
autonomy within the
global economy is an
essential pre-requisite

Generally, middle-income
countries in Latin America
and Asia. Especially so Brazil,
Russia, India, China, and
South Africa (the BRICS) and
wider set of 'emerging
economies' or MICs, and
potentially some high-growth
poorer countries. The North is
directly incorporated as
home to transnational
corporations orchestrating
global value chains, as home
to global banks/finance, and
as control centre of global
governance

National with
interactions with global

Source: Author's elaboration

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EADi

EADI e.V.
Kaiser-Friedrich-Strasse 11
53113 Bonn, Germany

Tel: (+49) 228 261 81 01
Fax: (+49) 228 261 81 03

Email: postmaster@eadi.org
<https://www.eadi.org>