Introduction: Development Studies in the Twenty-First Century

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Introduction

Development studies is a vast and rapidly expanding field of inquiry, which brings together contributions from many different disciplines and perspectives. As it has expanded, it has been divided into subdisciplines (such as economic growth, social development, governance and development ethics), which are typically shared with single disciplinary subjects such as economics, sociology/anthropology, politics and philosophy. This book provides an overview of key topics in development from a variety of different perspectives. It also attempts to reflect on the nature, scope and state of development studies at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

History and expansion

The origins of development studies are often traced back to the advent of development economics in the post war era. The late 1940s and early 1950s witnessed a rapid expansion in development economics, as the concepts, methods and tools of mainstream economics were applied to the problems of post-war reconstruction and development in Europe. The same methods and tools were quickly transferred to the study of poor countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America following the first wave of political independence and a vast new industry was born. Early contributions included P.N. Rosenstein-Rodan's wartime essay 'Problems of industrialisation of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe' (1943), Ragnar Nurkse's *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries* (1953), W. Arthur Lewis's classic paper, 'Economic development with unlimited supplies of labour' (1954), Robert Solow's 'A contribution to the theory of economic growth' (1956) and Walt Rostow's (now) controversial book, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960). Since then, research has flourished and increasing numbers of courses and textbooks have been devoted to development economics (an early classic is Kindleberger, 1958). Some of the most notable contributions from economists focused on economic growth, capital accumulation, structural changes in the economy, the transfer of technology and international trade (topics extensively covered in this book by some of the original pioneers).¹ For many writers at this time, development was basically about economic development.

Economists were not the only ones to make significant contributions to development thinking in the 1950s and 1960s. The rapidly expanding literature on economic growth and development was complemented with social, political and psychological studies of modernisation, exemplified in the work of Talcott Parsons (1960), Daniel Lerner (1958)

* I am extremely grateful to David Hulme and John Toye for helpful comments on this Introduction. I have also benefited from useful conversations with Peter Nolan and James Foster. The usual disclaimers apply.

and David McClelland (1961). In essence these theories argued that development depends on displacing traditional 'values, attitudes and norms' with modern ones (see Webster, 1990). In particular, the weakening of traditional ties and power structures (especially the kinship system), the growth of individual motivation and the rise of an entrepreneurial class were seen as key features of the social and cultural modernisation required for economic growth and structural change. These theories have been largely discredited in recent years for envisaging a single pathway to development and equating modernisation with westernisation. More radical critiques of development from sociology and politics followed in the mid-late 1960s and culminated in the notion of 'dependency' – the mirror image of modernisation.² The original (strong) version of dependency emphasised the 'development of underdevelopment' in the periphery (southern countries) due to the process of exploitation driving capitalist development in the centre (northern countries) (for example, Frank, 1967). The notion that development and underdevelopment 'are opposite faces of the same coin' (ibid., p. 33) has been hotly disputed in Marxist circles (Warren, 1973, 1980), prompting a shift within the dependency school from the notion of 'impossibility' to the idea of 'distorted development' in the periphery.³

As work on the problems of poor countries gathered momentum during the post-war period and priorities changed (to incorporate broader concerns with poverty and inequality, as well as the traditional emphasis on economic and cultural aspects of modernisation in poor countries), researchers increasingly began to look beyond economics and politics and towards the boundaries of other disciplines for answers. The chief drivers of this transformation towards 'cross-disciplinary' development studies were the early pioneers of what has become the human development movement. Led initially by a small but highly influential group of economists such as Dudley Seers, Richard Jolly, Mahbub ul Haq and Paul Streeten, these individuals initiated a 'counter revolution' in development thinking that increasingly created space (from the early 1970s onwards) for combining economic and social analysis in the field of development. Initially the emphasis shifted from economic growth to employment and 'redistribution with growth' (Seers, 1969; Chenery et al., 1974). This was quickly followed by a shift towards basic needs construed first in terms of inputs (the provision of goods and services) (ILO, 1976) and later reborn with a focus on outcomes (basic opportunities) (Streeten et al., 1981; Stewart, 1985). Today the emphasis has broadened even further to incorporate the full range of human capabilities and freedoms people have reason to value (for example, Sen, 1987, 1992, 1999, and Human Development Index in this volume). Although less clearly structured, the late 1960s and the 1970s also witnessed attempts to focus development studies on issues and analytical frameworks that centred less on economic issues. Writers such as Huntingdon (1968) wrote of 'political development' while sociologists (Apthorpe, 1970) argued for 'social planning' to accompany economic planning.

Since the 1970s, many other valuable contributions have been made to development thinking, which, strictly speaking, transcend development economics and other single disciplinary subjects. Apart from work on poverty, inequality and the quality of life in poor countries, a great deal of cross-disciplinary research has focused on changes in the size and structure of populations, patterns of migration and the process of urbanisation over the course of economic development. The rapid expansion of work in this area has

created rich opportunities for collaboration across fields as diverse as economics, statistics, sociology, history and ethics; and has given rise to a ‘separable’ discipline known as demography, which has developed its own methodologies, tools and techniques for analysing population dynamics. Another rapidly expanding area of cross-disciplinary research has origins in institutional economics. This work typically combines historical studies of institutions (such as property rights, organisations, and economic and political systems) with an analysis of efficiency, economic performance and development. Other areas of research in development studies that combine insights from more than one discipline include agriculture and livelihoods, education and health, globalisation and imperialism, conflict and crisis management, and the analysis of social groups and divisions (among many other topics and issues).

While the roots of development studies are often traced back to the advent of development economics in the 1940s and 1950s, a closer look reveals a much richer pedigree in other areas ranging from ancient philosophy on the one hand to classical political economy and modern social science on the other. For example, Martha Nussbaum (1988, 1990) has drawn out the implications of Aristotle’s theory of political distribution and his analysis of human flourishing for contemporary development discourse. Moreover, the conclusions of Adam Smith’s (1776) masterpiece *The Wealth of Nations* are almost entirely about the economic development of England. In fact Adam Smith – like Karl Marx – analysed many of the inherent contradictions of capitalist development and was deeply concerned with social issues and the plight of the ordinary man (see the entries on Adam Smith and Karl Marx in this volume).⁴ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, landmark studies with relevance for development continued to emerge. Notable examples include Charles Booth (1892) and Seebohm Rowntree’s (1901) pioneering studies of poverty in London and York, which have profoundly influenced development studies (and policy) in the 1990s. In addition, plenty of social anthropologists were actively working in traditional ‘untouched societies’ prior to the Second World War (see Hulme and Turner, 1990, pp. 9–10). There are also links between contemporary development studies and colonial administration. In fact the first development courses in the UK were for colonial administrators and date back to the early twentieth century.⁵

Nature, dilemmas and challenges

There is now widespread agreement (at least within contemporary development studies) that no single discipline can adequately deal with the breadth or complexity of development. Instead what is required to deepen our understanding of development issues is a blending of analysis and methods from different disciplines (see, for example, Hulme and Turner, 1990, p. 13; Tribe and Sumner, 2004, p. 3). The blending or mixing of disciplines can take different forms. In an effort to clarify ‘different types of mixing’, Ravi Kanbur (2002, p. 483) has proposed the following distinctions, which have recently been adopted and discussed by David Hulme and John Toye (2005):

- *Cross-disciplinarity* – a generic term referring to any analysis or policy recommendation based substantively on analysis and methods of more than one discipline; there are two main variants:

- *Multidisciplinarity* – refers to work in which individual discipline-based researchers (or teams) do their best, within their disciplinary confines, to examine an issue and subsequently collaborate to develop together an overall analytical synthesis and conclusions; and
- *Interdisciplinarity* – refers to research that attempts a deep integration of two or more disciplinary approaches from the beginning and throughout an entire research exercise.⁶

On the whole, multidisciplinary is a highly additive form of cross-disciplinary research. In contrast, interdisciplinarity is far more integrative (see also the discussion in Molteberg et al., 2000). There are, of course, many different ways of mixing and combining multi- and interdisciplinary work in development studies, many of which can be found in the pages of this book.

The issue of whether development studies should be viewed as ‘a discipline in itself’ – as opposed to a rapidly expanding ‘subject’ area that cuts across disciplines – ‘is a matter of considerable dispute’ (Tribe and Sumner, 2004, p. 4). However, following John Loxley (2004), it is possible to identify some defining characteristics of development studies:

There are four essential features of IDS [international development studies] which, taken together, give the field a very distinctive identity. The first is that the central focus is on developing countries per se, which distinguishes it from Global Political Economy (GPE) and International Relations (IR) programs . . . The second, distinctive feature of IDS is that it is interdisciplinary [i.e. cross-disciplinary] in nature. Its basic premise is that any attempt to understand the developing world and how it is inserted into the world economic and political system requires the collective insights of a number of different academic disciplines . . . The third distinctive feature of IDS is that it allows, if not encourages, studies at the international, national and sub-national (regional or local) levels. It can, therefore, accommodate students with a wide, eclectic, range of interests . . . The fourth distinctive feature of IDS is that it is at once theoretical, policy-oriented, and empirical. Some students will incline more to one than the others but all students are more than likely to be exposed to each. (Loxley, 2004, pp. 26–8)

These characteristics are not controversial. Yet development studies continues to lack a commonly agreed definition or mission statement (see Thomas, 2004), although some progress in this direction is being made. In the UK, for example, recognition of development studies as a distinct field of inquiry has recently been made through the creation of a development studies subpanel for the 2008 higher education Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). In addition the (British–Irish) Development Studies Association (DSA) is collaborating with the higher education Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to generate a ‘benchmark statement’ for degree courses in development studies.⁷ While the DSA/QAA has not yet finalised a benchmark statement, the following description of development studies has been drafted for the RAE:

[Development studies] covers issue-driven research concerning the analysis of global and local processes of cultural, demographic, economic, environmental, political and social change in low and middle income parts of the world, with particular reference to structures and institutions; the changing relationships between developed and developing countries; and the critical interrogation of theories of these processes and relationships, and of development policy. (RAE, 2005, p. 1)

The document includes the following boundary statement:

Development studies research is commonly – but not exclusively – inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and heterogeneous in nature. There is a substantial degree of overlap between development studies and several cognate disciplines and disciplinary sub-fields. However, the defining emphasis in development studies is on theories, analyses, interpretations and evaluations of processes of change, their outcomes, their management and their contribution to development policy. (ibid.)

Some researchers have tried to avoid defining development studies – preferring instead to treat it as a cross-disciplinary subject that people can interpret differently. Others are keen to reopen the debate on the nature and role of development studies.⁸ One point that should be kept in mind is that the precise nature and character of development studies varies across regions. For example, we might distinguish between English, European (Scandinavian) and Canadian forms of development studies.⁹ At least some of the variation reflects different colonial histories and intellectual traditions, as well as cultural and linguistic barriers, which prevent cross-collaboration. There are also differences between Northern and Southern forms of development studies. In terms of the ‘essential features of IDS’ espoused by Loxley, Southern varieties tend to be more applied than theoretical and much more concerned with local issues. Another issue relates to how far it is meaningful to talk of ‘global’ development studies. In France, the emphasis is typically on African studies and the analysis of underdevelopment. In the USA, development economics has dominated and those research organisations with broader remits – such as the Earth Institute – have increasingly concerned themselves with poverty studies rather than development studies.¹⁰ Yet despite these variations, it is possible to identify some defining features of a truly international form of development studies which, taken together, separate it from other fields of study.

The study of development matters for several different reasons (see Loxley, 2004). More than 5.3 billion people currently live in low- or middle-income countries (World Bank, 2005a, table 1, p. 293). Together these people constitute five-sixths of the world’s population, which Loxley (2004, p. 35) points out ‘should be a sufficient, pragmatic, reason for studying the conditions in which they live and the problems they confront in trying to improve their well-being’. About 1.1 billion of these people are estimated to be living below the international poverty line on less than a dollar a day (World Bank, 2005b, pp. 21–2) and between 300 million and 420 million are trapped in poverty that persists for many years (CPRC, 2004, p. 9). Many more people are vulnerable to becoming poor. There are also gross deprivations and disparities in terms of basic human capabilities, such as life expectancy, child mortality and adult literacy (see Table 1). Such statistics provide a strong moral case for an interest in development issues.

Another reason for studying international development might be described as ‘enlightened self interest’ (Loxley, 2004, p.35). As the process of globalisation has accelerated, the North and South have become increasingly interdependent. Many of these interdependencies are economic – notable examples include trade relations and capital flows. Other forms of mutual interdependence relate to environmental and health concerns such as global warming or the transmission and prevention of infectious diseases. There is also growing concern about political stability, global security and, most recently, international

Table 1 Key indicators of poverty and development

	Population (millions) 2004	Number below dollar a day poverty line (millions)*	Low estimate of chronic poverty (millions)#	High estimate of chronic poverty (millions)#	Life expectancy at birth (years) 2003	Under-five mortality rate (per 1000) 2003	Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older) 2003
East Asia and Pacific	1870.2	277.0	53.7	84.9	70.5	41	90.4
Europe and Central Asia	472.1					36	
Latin America and the Caribbean	541.3				71.9	33	89.6
Middle East and North Africa	294.0					56	
South Asia	1447.7	524.7	133.9	187.5	63.4	86	58.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	719.0	216.4	91.0	121.3	46.1	171	61.3
All	6345.1	1099.1	298.3	421.7	67.1	84	

Notes:

* Where data are available.

Estimate of the number of people still below the dollar a day poverty line after five years.

Sources: CPRC (2004, p. 9), World Bank (2005a, pp. 257, 295) and UNDP (2005, p. 222).

terrorism. Loxley has also argued that development studies ‘forces us to reflect on how we live in the developed world and to confront some difficult questions about the long-term viability of our lifestyle and the values underlying it’ (ibid., p. 36).

One of the most significant challenges facing development studies in the twenty-first century is to find ways of becoming more cross-disciplinary. While development studies has long aspired to cross-disciplinarity, its achievements in systematically establishing robust, cross-disciplinary, analytical frameworks have been modest.¹¹ In recent years concerns have been raised about the ‘fragmentation of science’ (Molteberg et al., 2000, p. 318) and the ‘splintering of theoretical and applied knowledge’, which creates ‘blind spots’ and threatens to undermine the coherence and relevance of development research (Hulme and Toye, 2005, pp. 3 and 7). Several commentators have emphasised the benefits of greater cooperation between disciplines. A notable example is Ravi Kanbur, who states that ‘[t]he case for cross disciplinarity in development studies and development policy is very strong indeed’ (Kanbur, 2002, p. 483). Yet even among the most open-minded and progressive thinkers, it is possible to detect a note of ‘cautious optimism’ regarding the prospects for cross-disciplinary development studies. Kanbur (p. 484) ends up making the case for ‘small steps’ rather than ‘the deep integration of methods . . . [and] different disciplines’. He reports that at the 2001 Quant-Qual Cornell conference,

[Participants] were concerned that creating a true hybrid might lose the strengths of each approach, with the gains lost in disciplinary and methodological confusion . . . Rather ‘sequential mixing’ was preferred, where each approach would do its best, learn from other approaches, adapt these lessons, and then do its best again. (ibid., p. 484)

Even John Harriss (2002), who argues that disciplines can be ‘constraining’ and ‘repressive’ as well as productive, stops short of endorsing true interdisciplinarity by ‘respecting the importance of contributions from within individual disciplines’ (p. 488). Different disciplines, he says, ‘have different contributions to make’ and it is ‘very far from the case that all development research has to be in some way cross-disciplinary’ (p. 494).

While the payoffs from successful forms of cross-disciplinary research are potentially quite high, progress in this direction can be fraught. In the course of making a case for cross-disciplinary work, Hulme and Toye observe:

[A]s long as many economists still claim that economics can be ‘contaminated’ by the ‘softer’ disciplines of other social sciences and many non-economists dismiss as ‘reductionist’ economists’ analyses of human action, it will require considerable energy, intellectual courage and integrity to design and implement a cross-disciplinary research strategy on poverty and well-being. (2005, p. 4)

In practice, a combination of adverse incentives, institutional constraints and human failings hamper the potential for cross-disciplinary research in development studies. The following points are particularly noteworthy:

- *Professional prestige* Lipton (1970, p. 11) and Lehmann (1979, p. 3) were among the first to point to the lack of professional prestige in cross-disciplinary development research, which compels scholars (especially the best researchers) to work

within the confines of established disciplines and publish in specialised ‘quality’ journals, instead of venturing beyond disciplinary boundaries.¹²

- *Institutions and incentives* A range of institutions and incentives which include forms of university evaluation (such as single subject peer review), access to funding and other resources, probable impact on career prospects (inside and outside academic research – especially in the USA) and willingness to master a second discipline (given time constraints and intellectual demands) or collaborate with colleagues working in other disciplines (with alien methodologies and different views of the world) inevitably constrains the potential for cross-disciplinary research.
- *Envy, distrust and rivalry* The incentives and institutions that divide disciplines provide fertile ground for envy, distrust and rivalry between scholars from different disciplines, which in turn generates further divisions.¹³ This leads to the ‘intellectual stereotyping’ of other disciplines (as either objective or subjective, quantitative or qualitative, positivist or post-positivist, generalised or contextualised, etc.) and ‘ideologies of disciplinary rivalry [that] provide the currency for a debate in which self-justification is a stronger motive than the search for understanding’ (Hulme and Toye, 2005, p. 11).
- *Conflicting ideologies* Different disciplines have also been divided by politics and ideology. For example, Hulme and Turner (1990, p. 13) note that in the 1980s, sociologists and anthropologists were often excluded from development policy and planning on the grounds ‘that they are all left wing ideologues’¹⁴ and are more likely to voice criticism and dissent than those from other disciplines. To take another example, feminists and post-modernists on the one hand and mainstream economists on the other find it difficult, if not impossible, to establish constructive dialogues on development issues (and other matters) for ideological reasons.

There are, however, grounds for optimism. Many of the barriers and institutions that discourage cross-disciplinary research in development studies are being eroded. Since the 1970s, a growing number of researchers have recognised that development problems are multifaceted and require input from more than one discipline. This favourable change in attitudes has gained momentum in recent years as examples of highly successful and innovative research projects that combine work from different disciplines have proliferated.¹⁵ More money has also been made available for cross-disciplinary research. For example, in the UK both the Economic and Social Research Council and the Department for International Development have made multi-million pound investments in multi- and interdisciplinary research centres such as the Global Poverty Research Group (www.gprg.org), the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (www.chronicpoverty.org) and the Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (www.crise.ox.ac.uk). Finally, despite the lack of professional prestige in cross-disciplinary research, there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that communication across disciplines – at least in terms of citations in the top-ranking economics journals – has increased in recent years (see Hulme and Toye, 2005). There has also been growth in the number of international development journals with a cross-disciplinary focus.¹⁶

More progress in all of these areas is required, however, if the full potential of cross-disciplinary research is to be realised. In the USA in particular, where development

economics reigns supreme, more funding and credos could be assigned to multi- and inter-disciplinary forms of development studies. More weight could also be attached to leading cross-disciplinary development journals, most of which are regarded as ‘peripheral’.

Perhaps the most widely recognised requirement for effective collaboration across disciplines is ‘mutual professional respect’ (White, 2002, p. 519; see also Kanbur, 2002, p. 484; Hulme and Toye, 2005). Researchers must be willing to look beyond the boundaries of their own discipline; they must recognise that different disciplines offer different insights and different ways of thinking about the same problem; and above all they must be willing to accept constructive criticism and build on the insights of other disciplines (see Hulme and Toye, 2005). This involves cultivating the twin virtues of ‘critical friendship’ and ‘co-determining the future’ – qualities that Michael Edwards (2002) argues will contribute to a more positive future for development studies. A healthy tension between discipline and ‘anti-discipline’ is also required (Harriss, 2002). In particular the ability to question conventional ways of viewing the world from within established disciplines and perspectives has provided crucial breakthroughs in development studies (see *ibid.*, 2002) and social science generally (see Kuhn, 1962).

So which pathway should development studies take? Should it aim to be multidisciplinary or should it strive to be more interdisciplinary? To a large extent the answer depends on the research questions and the context in which they are asked. Different disciplines have different contributions to make. They can be mixed in a variety of ways and may be more relevant in one context than another. In general, multidisciplinary research – which relies on teams of people from different disciplines and perspectives – can be expensive and difficult to manage. On large projects especially cases of professional rivalry, envy and resentment between team members, distrust and ignorance of other disciplines, and lack of cooperation are not uncommon.¹⁷ When multidisciplinary research succeeds – and it often does – the results are usually additive (rather than positive sum), as no researcher has a complete overview or integrated understanding of the research.¹⁸

On the other hand, interdisciplinary forms of research – involving individuals or groups of like-minded people committed to mastering the same disciplines – are easier to manage and less expensive (at least in terms of salaries). While interdisciplinary work is more challenging intellectually and in terms of research time (Hulme and Toye, 2005, p. 26), the results are likely to yield higher returns. Instead of merely adding insights from different disciplines, the results of such research, if successful, should integrate disciplines as far as possible in order to create a new perspective and generate a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts (Molteberg et al., 2000, p. 319; Tribe and Sumner, 2005, pp. 7–8).¹⁹ Many of the ‘pioneers of development’ and some recent Nobel Prize winners have made their reputations on the strength of pathbreaking interdisciplinary research – notable examples include Albert Hirschman (who boasts of ‘trespassing’), Gunnar Myrdal, Douglass North, Dudley Seers, Amartya Sen and Paul Streeten (see their biographies in this book). Of course it is not difficult to find examples of less-successful attempts to become interdisciplinary.²⁰ One worry is that interdisciplinary research could lack rigour if the conceptual and methodological standards of established disciplines are abandoned (Hulme and Toye, 2005, p. 25). Another worry is that there may not be enough ‘renaissance people’ with the necessary training and expertise in more than one discipline to move things forward in the next few years (*ibid.*, p. 35).

Some of the difficulties facing cross-disciplinary forms of development studies are symptoms of more general problems in social science. In some academic departments and research institutes charged with the study of development, significant amounts of time and other resources are wasted in unproductive and potentially harmful activities such as micro management, personal rivalries, empire building, public relations and image-building exercises, unnecessary interference with other people's research and excessive fund-raising activities.²¹ In the worst-case scenarios, academic research is arrested or becomes driven entirely by the agenda of self-seeking individuals who exploit their position of power. Thus, intellectual freedom and a supportive research environment are vital ingredients of healthy research. As John Stuart Mill passionately argued almost 150 years ago, intellectual freedom is essential for the development of great thinkers:

Who can compute what the world loses in the multitude of promising intellects combined with timid characters, who dare not follow out any bold, vigorous, independent train of thought, lest it should land them in something which would admit of being considered irreligious or immoral? . . . No one can be a great thinker who does not recognize, that as a thinker it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusions it may lead. Truth gains more even by the errors of one who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think . . . There have been, and may again be, great individual thinkers, in a general atmosphere of mental slavery. But there never has been, nor ever will be, in that atmosphere, an intellectually active people . . . [W]here the discussion of the greatest questions which can occupy humanity is considered to be closed, we cannot hope to find that generally high scale of mental activity which has made some periods of history so remarkable. (Mill, 1859, p. 39)

One final observation follows from these remarks. In so far as resources which ought to be invested in the study of development are pumped into undesirable activities (such as empire building and self-aggrandisement), there is a *prima facie* case for reforming the way in which research funding is allocated. More small grants for inter-disciplinary researchers in place of larger grants for giant multidisciplinary research projects may stimulate research and generate higher returns. Unfortunately there is a striking contrast here between the trend towards gigantism in publicly funded social science research, where nowadays – following the models of the natural sciences – it is agreed that good social science research needs large teams and vast facilities and the opportunities that less ‘strategically managed’ trusts and endowments (such as Leverhulme, Nuffield and MacArthur) create for individuals.

Another dilemma for development studies is the longstanding accusation that it is ‘Eurocentric’. This has at least two significant dimensions. The first is that the concepts and frameworks it uses are largely derived from a European perspective (meaning Europe and the USA). The rise of governance (initially ‘good governance’) as a development issue illustrates this well with a focus on using European models of democracy as ideal types to judge what was happening, and prescribe what should be happening, in developing countries. The second dimension relates to the degree to which the thought leaders in development studies are citizens of OECD countries and, especially, Western Europe and North America. Development studies – like all branches of academia – clearly has such a bias, and this bias is reinforced by those in Western institutions underutilising the ideas and writings of colleagues in developing countries. Where Africans, Asians and Latin

Americans make a major contribution they commonly migrate to the universities of the USA and Europe.

Perhaps the single greatest challenge for development studies – especially in the North – lies elsewhere. Scholars must not only be able to talk to each other and relate their work to other social science disciplines. They must also be able to detach from intellectual disciplines in an effort to engage with the views and experiences of ordinary people.²² Credible development research cannot be conducted in the vacuum of a university or library. Sadly there is no shortage of such research. There is also resistance to fieldwork and/or talking to poor people in some parts of the development studies profession. For example, on arrival in Peru for exploratory fieldwork, the most senior member of the research team employing me – a highly respected professor – booked out of a prearranged guesthouse and into a hotel, where he stayed for the duration of the trip (apart from excursions to the local university and one brief trip to a nearby township he was isolated from any contact with the day-to-day life of Peruvians).²³ Nor has the spectre of paternalism been completely laid to rest. I recall a senior researcher – behind closed doors at least – declaring ‘we are not naïve . . . we are the experts’. These examples may be extreme, but they underline two important points. First, development studies must respect the voices of the poor. As social scientists, we have at least as much to learn from the poor as they have to learn from us. Second, research that does not engage with the poor and disadvantaged in a coherent and logical fashion may end up damaging the interests and prospects of the very people it is supposed to help.

Content and philosophy of the book

This book consists of 136 short entries written by an international panel of experts who discuss theoretical, ethical and practical issues relating to economic, social, cultural, institutional, political and human aspects of development in poor countries. It also includes a small selection of intellectual biographies of leading development thinkers. The book is organised along the lines of an encyclopaedia and entries are listed alphabetically. All of the entries, however, provide far more depth and discussion than those found in the average encyclopaedia or handbook. An effort has been made to cover all the major areas and issues in development studies. Some entries are devoted to emerging issues – such as the study of chronic poverty – which are likely to be of interest to the reader. Like all handbooks and encyclopaedias this collection is neither definitive nor fully comprehensive. Perhaps the most crucial casualty from among the commissioned entries is ‘Health and Nutrition’, which failed to materialise at the last minute.²⁴ Due to constraints on space it has been necessary to restrict the number of intellectual biographies to a small selection of post-war thinkers plus the seminal contributions of Adam Smith and Karl Marx.²⁵

The book is extremely diverse and includes contributions that can be characterised as interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and single disciplinary. While cross-disciplinary research is a defining feature of development studies and has huge potential, no book on development would be complete without considering the contribution of single disciplinary subjects. In the following pages a special effort is made to cover work in development economics through a series of entries on economic growth, structural transformation, international trade, foreign investment, sustainable consumption, technology, structural adjustment, cost-benefit analysis, labour markets and the debt crisis (among many other

topics). A serious effort is also made to address important topics in development sociology such as class, ethnicity and structure and agency. Most entries, however, include elements from two or more disciplines. The contributions in this book are diverse in many other ways. They are pitched at different levels, incorporate different mixtures of theoretical and applied work, embrace different methodologies and represent different views of the world.

Above all, this book does not represent any single person's or organisation's view of development studies.²⁶ No person or institution should have a monopoly on defining the boundaries of such a momentous subject. Instead, the content and structure of the book evolved gradually over a period of several months stretching from late 2002 to early 2005. A preliminary list of key entries was drawn up by the editor and refined in consultation with experts from economics, politics and sociology. It was then made available for comment to students, academics and practitioners, who provided careful scrutiny. As a result the list was modified and underwent considerable expansion. During this process, all of the contributors to this volume were offered an opportunity to comment on various incarnations of the list and several have written on topics of their own design and choosing (for example, Amiya Bagchi, Herman Daly, G.C. Harcourt, Rachel Murphy and Amartya Sen).

All entries, without exception, have been peer reviewed to ensure rigour and clarity. Contributors, however, have been left with the flexibility and freedom to define the boundaries of their topics, to focus on the questions and issues that matter for them and, crucially, to express their own point of view. Some contributors have taken the opportunity to advance a particular argument (for example, Amartya Sen on the merits of the Human Development Index), while others have broken new ground (for example, James Foster who develops what he describes as a 'new general income standard framework' in his piece on Inequality Measurement). In some cases there have been trade-offs between summarising key issues for the reader and advancing an intellectual position. On balance, such trade-offs have been worthwhile. The philosophy behind the book has preserved rather than stifled intellectual freedom, spurred academic vigour and ingenuity and generated a much more interesting and provocative book. This should give *The Elgar Companion to Development Studies* a unique place among existing encyclopaedias and handbooks.

Notes

1. See, for example, Robert Solow on the Domar Model, G.C. Harcourt on the Harrod Growth Model, Robert Dixon on the Solow–Swan Model, Heinz Kurz on Endogenous Growth, Avi Cohen on Cambridge Controversies in Growth Theory, Moshe Syrquin on Structural Transformation and Arvind Panagariya on International Trade. An early source of dissent was Peter Bauer, who provided a neoliberal critique of government intervention, protectionism, economic planning and foreign aid throughout the 1950s and 1960s (for example, Bauer, 1957; see the biography of Bauer in this volume).
2. These ideas are seen as having their roots in Latin America and particularly in the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and scholars such as Raul Prebisch.
3. See Ayres and Clark (1998) for a balanced assessment of the empirical evidence. See also the entries on Modernisation Theory, Dependency, Capitalism and Development, and Colonialism in this book.
4. The work of other classical economists such as Thomas Malthus, John Stuart Mill, David Ricardo and William Petty is also relevant. Meier and Baldwin (1962) provide an overview of contributions to development thinking from Classical Political Economy and the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.
5. According to archive material drafted by Professor Malcolm Grant and kindly provided by the Development Studies Committee at the University of Cambridge, the Development Studies course at Cambridge 'started life in 1929 as the Course for Colonial Administrative Probationers. Previously this

had been a short course in London, but in 1925 the Colonial Office asked Cambridge and Oxford Universities to provide the courses . . . In 1958 [the Cambridge course] . . . was renamed the Overseas Services Course, and continued until 1963 when the course was further renamed the Course on Development and a more flexible programme [was] adopted'. Ron Clarke (1999) reflects on the connections between development studies and administrative training in the post-war period.

6. Molteberg et al. (2000) and Tribe and Sumner (2004) have drawn a slightly different set of distinctions between 'interdisciplinarity', 'multidisciplinarity' and 'transdisciplinarity'. In their scheme 'interdisciplinarity' is roughly akin to cross disciplinarity; multidisciplinary is defined along the same lines as above; and transdisciplinarity is used to refer to 'a highly integrative form' of development studies that involves the unification of disciplines (Molteberg et al., 2000, pp. 318–19).
7. See the DSA's revised benchmark statement dated February 2005 (DSA, 2005).
8. An example of the former is Jenny Lunn, who is currently working on the Royal Geographical Society's 'Global Perspectives' Research Project. In contrast, Susanne von Itter tells me that the European Development Association is keen to reopen the debate on the nature and role of development studies.
9. The collections edited by De Bandt et al. (1980) and Bowles (2004) provide European and Canadian perspectives on development studies.
10. An internet search using the Lycos and Excite search engines suggests a growing number of degree courses in development studies in the USA. Examples include the interdepartmental degree programme in international development studies at the University of California founded in 1987, and the development studies programme at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies.
11. The livelihoods approach (for example, Ellis, 2000) is one of the few detailed elaborations of such frameworks (see also Livelihoods Approach, this volume). Another example is the capability approach (Sen, 1987, 1992, 1999), which integrates contributions from economics, social science and philosophy (see Capability Approach, this volume).
12. This is especially the case in economics, which is the only social science officially recognised as a practising profession (see Hulme and Toye, 2005). It must also be noted that the World Bank, which has the largest concentration of well-resourced researchers working on development, prioritises research concepts and approaches that come out of single-discipline economics.
13. Lipton (1970, p. 11) reports that even highly successful attempts to work in more than one discipline, such as Gunnar Myrdal's, 'are often mistrusted . . . by more narrow minded colleagues'. Sadly there is often envy, distrust and rivalry within as well as between disciplines.
14. Of course this statement is not entirely true, as Hulme and Turner point out.
15. The rapidly expanding literature on well-being and human development is a prime example and combines work from disciplines as diverse as economics and philosophy (see Clark, 2002b). Hulme and Toye (2005, p. 26) cite some additional examples, which include emerging studies of poverty that systematically combine econometric analysis with sociological life histories.
16. The most notable include the *Journal of Development Studies* (first published in 1964) and *World Development* (first published in 1973). Over the years the content and disciplinary focus of these journals has diversified. Harriss (1999, p. 498), for example, remarks that 'it is clear that the three economists who were the first editors of the JDS [*Journal of Development Studies*] had no idea of contributing to the establishment of a new inter-disciplinary field. They referred in their short preface (it was only a paragraph) in JDS 1(1) to the aim of publishing work from among a large amount of new research that was being done by economists on economic development, and – very much as a sub-plot – to encouraging more work on political development'.
17. Myrdal (1962) famously argued that we should declare our value judgements and biases. My views on this topic have inevitably been coloured by an entirely negative experience of one cross-disciplinary research project. For the record, my experiences of such projects at Manchester/Oxford and Cambridge have been positive.
18. Howard White (2002) makes a compelling case for advances in understanding that have occurred in three areas of research through cross-disciplinarity.
19. According to Paul Streeten (1974, p. 26), 'the only forum where interdisciplinary studies in depth can be conducted successfully is under one skull'.
20. Lipton (1970, p. 11) mentions the case of Everett Hagen, when suggesting that '[a]ttempts by first-rate [single discipline] specialists to work in other disciplines . . . often produces results that are not highly regarded by the new discipline and not understood in the old'.
21. These comments are not meant to imply that this is more of a problem for development studies than for other social science subjects. There are numerous examples of research departments and institutes that produce high-quality development research and do not devote significant amounts of time and other resources to genuinely wasteful activities.

22. I have tried to make this point in relation to the rapidly expanding literature on well-being in development studies. In particular, I have called for a new form of 'empirical philosophy' that is firmly rooted in social reality (Clark, 2002a, b). Arguably, most areas of development studies would benefit from greater integration between theoretical and applied work. For example, compare the literature on well-being (highly conceptual, less applied) with parallel work on sustainable livelihoods (conceptually weaker, highly applied). Interestingly there has not been much in the way of meaningful exchanges between these two strands of research.
23. Robert Chambers (1997) has crusaded for development studies researchers to adopt participatory approaches to knowledge creation. One may agree or disagree with his crusade, but self-evidently researchers who seek to avoid any interaction with the people whose lives they are writing about are missing an important source of information and potentially reinforcing processes of social exclusion.
24. Kirkpatrick et al. (2002) includes papers on 'health and nutrition' and 'reproductive health'. Other lost entries in the present volume include 'Apartheid', 'Africa's Agricultural Crisis', 'Rural Non-Farm Economy' and 'Subjective Well-Being'.
25. An effort was made to select some representative examples of prominent thinkers from different disciplines and perspectives. There are, of course, several notable omissions. Originally the goal was to restrict the number to no more than 20 biographies, although in the end the actual number crept up to 23. The fact that a biography appears (or does not appear) in this volume does not necessarily imply a value judgement about the relative merits of a particular contribution to development thinking. One worthy candidate for a biography was reluctant to be included.
26. In a previous job my senior research colleagues did attempt to set conditions on this volume in terms of additional editors, selection of issues and focus. These pressures were not accommodated.

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