

Summaries

Development Research: Globalised, Connected and Accountable

Lawrence Haddad

Does development research need reinventing? If it does, why now and in what ways does it need to be changed? These are the questions addressed by the articles in this issue of the *IDS Bulletin*, many of which were presented at IDS40, the IDS fortieth anniversary conference, in September 2006. They were also asked by the 46 Roundtables organised by IDS partners and alumni around the world to feed into and help frame the conference discussions. The articles view development research from a variety of angles and collectively argue that for it to become more relevant for the next 40 years we have to globalise it, to become less slavish to geographic and economic boundaries, to work with new partners on new issues, and to engage positively in democratic processes of social, political and economic change.

Reinventing Development Research: Listening to the IDS40 Roundtables

Lawrence Haddad

This article reflects on the outcomes of the 46 Roundtables which were hosted by IDS alumni and partners around the world to feed into and help frame the agenda for the IDS fortieth anniversary conference in September 2006. The article is not an overview or a synthesis, but a personal reflection by IDS Director, Lawrence Haddad, on what the Roundtable reports had to say. First he considers the observations that were common to many Roundtable participants and then the issues that were specific to particular regions. These were met with very different context-specific responses – observed and proposed – but perhaps with increasingly common causes. Third, there is a discussion of what is implied for development research in terms of scope, priorities, methods, actors and relationships. It is clear from this article that if development research is to be reinvented it is because the changing nature of development demands it.

Forty Years of Development Research: Transformations and Reformations

John Humphrey

This article addresses the issue of how broad a reinvention of development studies needs to be. It argues that development studies has been continuously reinvented in the past 40 years, but that in order to continue to be relevant in the next 40–50 years, three challenges need to be addressed. First, the basic assumption of the discipline – that there is something specific about developing countries that sets them apart from developed countries – will need to be challenged, if not rejected out of hand. Second, reinvention will need to involve disciplines beyond the confines of development studies and development studies institutions. Third, the relationship between development and policy, and more particularly the relationship between development research and aid donors, will have to be critically evaluated. These issues are explored through a consideration of the origins of development studies and how it has changed in 40 years since IDS was founded.

From Colonialism to the New Millennium and Beyond

Adebayo Olukoshi

Arguing that the origins of the development paradigm lie within colonial history, this article suggests ways in which development research might reinvent itself to be more effective for the challenges of the future. Failing to relate to internal country dynamics and historical contexts, development research has been ahistorical and analogous. Another weakness is failure to engage with intellectual production, with local knowledge from the West hegemonised and presented as universally valid. And resorting to binary frames dichotomises complex realities and loses all nuance. The author argues that if development research is to be meaningful and relevant, we need to invest in multidisciplinary approaches to generate new, commonly shared concepts which capture types,

layers and boundaries that define modern livelihoods. This calls for learning to do things differently, and breaking barriers to build the kind of comparative knowledge that draws from different local contexts and knowledges and which might be better adapted to the needs of state and non-state policy communities. Only then might development research become a powerful tool for social transformation.

The Global Challenge of Inequality

José Antonio Ocampo

Inequality – both within and among countries – has become one of the major challenges facing the global economy. International inequality is associated with basic asymmetries facing developing countries. International rules and institutions must therefore be designed to overcome these asymmetries. Meanwhile, inequality within countries would continue to be an essentially national responsibility. A strategy to tackle inequality must include ambitious human development efforts combined with the mainstreaming of inequality concerns in economic policy. International rules must give policy space to undertake policies that countries feel are essential to maintain social cohesion.

Development, Research and Change

Shalmali Guttal

From her position as an ‘activist researcher’, Shalmali Guttal argues that if the development research establishment wants to remain relevant in the world of progressive social and political change, it needs to open itself to alternative forms of knowledge and alternative traditions by which knowledge is generated and shared. This means that as researchers, we need to listen, observe and learn differently – and to seek out local knowledge so that it can enter into and challenge the dominant development discourse. To do this the academic and research community needs to find concrete ways to engage with the real world and be accountable to it which, of course, is a political project as much an academic one.

Global Challenges: Climate Chaos and the Future of Development

Wolfgang Sachs

In this article Wolfgang Sachs argues that environmentalism is key to successfully tackling a host of development issues including economic growth and equity, human rights and wellbeing. He argues that the growth of the West was made possible by unsustainable exploitation of carbon resources and the colonies, and this can never again be repeated.

The emergence of biophysical limits means that poverty alleviation cannot now be separated from the concept of wealth alleviation. The North will have to embark on a trajectory of reducing consumption, and while the countries of the South are entitled to increase their resource-use, growth will have to flatten out much sooner until all countries converge in a common corridor of ‘sustainable prosperity’.

Looking Back from 2046: Thoughts on the Eightieth Anniversary of an Institute for Revolutionary Social Science

Michael Edwards

As a result of a hostile external environment and its own internal weaknesses, social science is rarely important to social transformation, and this diagnosis perhaps applies especially to development studies. This article lays out an alternative framework for knowledge that attempts to close this gap. Three fundamental shifts are recommended: from a ‘development’ to a ‘social transformation’ frame of analysis, from producers and consumers to ‘co-creators’ of knowledge, and from research as a private activity to engagement with the public sphere. Taken together, these changes would lay the basis, not just for a reinvigoration of development studies, but for a new paradigm of ‘revolutionary social science’.

Development Research and Action: Four Approaches

Barbara Harriss-White

In this article the IDS history of leading ideas in development is reviewed. Following Burawoy’s classification of the production of knowledge in sociology, the IDS40 Roundtables in South Asia are used as a basis to explore and critique four kinds of production of knowledge in development studies: professional, policy-related, critical and public knowledge.

The Rise of the East: What Does it Mean for Development Studies?

Hubert Schmitz

The world has changed dramatically over the last 40 years since the great waves of independence and decolonisation. And particularly in the last 20 years, the speed of industrialisation in China and other Asian countries has been breathtaking. They are not just catching up, they have begun to drive the changes in the rest of the world. This article is particularly concerned with this rise of the East and asks what it means for development studies. Does

development studies have a place in this new world? Which strands have something to offer, which strands should be discarded? What challenges need to be taken on for development studies to thrive and avoid becoming irrelevant?

What are the Ethics of Development Studies?

Andrew Sumner

Development studies is an ethically complex field of enquiry but the ethical dimensions of development research have received relatively limited attention. Indeed, the ethical dilemmas involved in development research are rarely discussed or published and are often 'sanitised' from final research outputs. Further, given the cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural nature of development research, there is the question of whose ethics count? This article explores different approaches to the ethics of development studies and thinks (tentatively) about what researchers might do differently in order to reflect more deeply on the ethics issues raised by development research.

Revisiting the 'Gender Agenda'

Andrea Cornwall

Critical evaluation of the current status of 'gender' in development points to the conclusion that its political and analytical bite has been blunted by its domestication by development agencies. Transplanted from domains of feminist discourse and practice onto other, altogether different and in many ways inherently hostile institutional terrains, the term has retained little of the radical promise that was once vested in its promotion. 'Gender equality' is used as an umbrella term for as diverse a set of activities as gathering sex-disaggregated statistics, doing 'gender sensitisation', championing women's rights and making women more competitive in the labour market. That which once lay at the heart of the 'gender agenda' – transforming unequal and unjust *power relations* – seems to have fallen by the wayside. This article traces some of the trajectories of 'gender' in development, exploring some of the challenges that arise for feminist engagement with development research.

Whose Knowledge Counts? Development Studies Institutions and Power Relations in a Globalised World

Hilary Standing and Peter Taylor

Development studies is an uneasy discipline. It has a relatively short history that is linked particularly to decolonisation and the rise of overseas aid. It is

associated almost exclusively with certain geographical locations and a political economy of resource transfer, rather than with a particular body of knowledge or theory. It is thus founded on the very dichotomies it seeks to overcome – of North and South and the massive imbalances in access to resources that produce 'haves' and 'have-nots' in the knowledge economy. This article draws on discussions at the IDS40 Roundtables and conference to outline the key elements of a vision for the future role of development studies institutions which would begin to address these inequities and challenges.

Student Reflections on the IDS40 Conference

Nicholas Benequista and Ian Macauslan

Two current IDS students present their views on the IDS40 conference, influenced by their broad overview of IDS research, their multidisciplinary training and immediate proximity to teaching and training at IDS. To them, the conference seemed to underplay the role of teaching and training as a form of both learning and dissemination. Many of the salient challenges to development research resonate with issues arising during their studies. They were particularly struck by the juxtaposition of a claimed need to break down the geographic, disciplinary and subject biases and the enduring parochialism in development research; the problematic relationship with the private sector; and the problems that derive from patterns of development research funding, including an elite student body, insufficient attention to theorising, and the privileging of certain methodologies and subjects.

IDS40: Reflections from Across the Irish Sea

Mary McKeown

Mary McKeown reflects on the themes of the Dublin Roundtable: governance, security, investment, climate and the role of development studies. She notes that in many ways the ideas were predictable but it was interesting for people to talk about these things, when usually they just do not have (or make) the time to talk about 'ideas'. Describing herself as 'old-fashioned enough to think that research should be useful', the author asks questions about how research can help policymakers and practitioners make decisions. While it is, of course, naive to believe in a direct link between research and policy change, without relevant, timely research, policy has nothing to base itself on except 'hunches' and 'ideas' with no back-up and no intellectual or moral clout. She concludes with some reflections on the ways in which research communication is changing.

IDS40: Reflections from Uganda

Evelyn Nyakoojo

When she was invited to participate in the IDS40 process, Evelyn Nyakoojo wondered what opportunities African institutions, organisations and people could have to influence the development and research agenda. She points out that if IDS were an average African woman we would be celebrating the end of her life (life expectancy for women in Uganda is in the mid-40s). However, during the Roundtables and conference, Nyakoojo says she saw new potential for Africa as speaker after speaker asked what the new relationship between China and Africa would bring and how the rest of the world will fit into this new relationship. This has brought her hope and inspiration that new forms of relationship between researchers and practitioners may help to ensure that in future men and women in Africa benefit from research that addresses the felt needs identified by ordinary people.

The Geographies of Development Studies and Research

David O'Brien

David O'Brien reflects on issues connecting the conference held in Sussex with the Roundtable he co-organised in Ottawa. The most obvious was the role of the North in comparative research. Participants at the Ottawa Roundtable fell into two camps: those who worked on international issues, either critiquing or contributing to development cooperation, and those who applied their studies to domestic issues. It transpired that the relevance and utility of gender analysis, power dynamics, participatory methods, and structural analysis (among others), were equally relevant to those located in the North looking South and to those who had studied the South but now worked in the North. This '360 degree research', together with the implications for development research, are exciting and it encourages researchers to look beyond the aid industry at ways in which agents of government or multilateral cooperation cause or alleviate poverty.

Development and Policy: Rethinking Hegemonic Concepts and Ideas

Vera Schattan P. Coelho

The Roundtable in Brazil recognised economic growth and equity in access to welfare policies as the main mechanisms to promote development and reduce poverty and social inequality. However, at the IDS40 conference, the author was surprised to hear the challenging proposal that we should rethink the question of equity not in terms of growing consumption but rather through an effort to reduce it. This highlights how new ideas about 'what development should be' are gaining ground – which deserves our attention for two reasons. The first (and most trivial) is that it deals with the constant need to negotiate politically 'what development should be'. The second is concerned with the political processes through which the very meaning and goals of development are negotiated and whether national political systems and traditional institutions (both national and international) can guarantee the necessary political space for a reformulation of development.

IDS40: Reflections from Tanzania

Roy Trivedy

In this short article written from his perspective as a development practitioner in Tanzania, Roy Trivedy reflects on some of the differences and similarities between the discussions at the Roundtables held in Tanzania and in other countries around the world. While he saw many similarities, he was interested in the differences and was particularly struck by the new themes which seemed to be emerging. This led him to think critically about the way in which many development agencies currently support development research and the kinds of knowledge and experience it generates. He concludes by asking how IDS and its sister organisations could respond to this challenge and how official aid organisations, such as DFID (his current employer), could support such a transition.