

## **Chapter 11**

### **Methodologies in Development Studies: an Overview**

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The interdisciplinary nature of the field of Development Studies (DS) makes it hard to point towards a 'signature' methodology. Different development challenges bring different ideas about what the problem is (ontology) and how researchers can know about it (epistemology), as well as different research methods. The rationale for choosing a method can be ideological or pragmatic. In the field of DS, this often entails knowing what methods research commissioners see as credible and what types of evidence they find persuasive. The weight placed on the data generated by certain methods and the lack of critical attention to how it was actually produced shows the importance of a focus on methodology. In looking at, or for, the defining methodologies of DS, this chapter focuses on methodology in a relatively narrow sense: what types of sample and what combinations of methods are typically used by researchers within DS to construct credible arguments around questions of policy or practice. It describes which methodologies constitute the bulk of DS research through analysis of projects and outputs. Finally, it asks what people who generate and use DS research could do to increase its rigour and relevance (Gujit and Roche, 2014; see also Oswald, Leach and Gaventa, this volume) and how the political economy of development research funding might militate against this.

The chapter is structured as follows: I first introduce the debate around methodology within DS and explain why the areas I focus on in my comparison of projects and outputs matter (section 1.1). I then briefly describe the data sources drawn on in this chapter (section 1.2). I show how frequently different methodological approaches are used, by drawing on four types of data: the methodologies used in i) 122 development research projects funded by DFID-ESRC (UK Department for International Development and Economic and Social Research Council) over a period of 10 years (2005 to 2014, see Camfield et al, 2016) and ii) 110 funded by the Norwegian Research Council from 2009 to 2016, iii) the methodologies reported in a random sample of 159 papers from the aforementioned DFID-ESRC research projects and iv) in paper abstracts published in

three broad-based development journals during 2016. By looking at both projects and outputs I can check whether there is a bias towards the publication of papers with particular methodologies, which might give a misleading impression of the types of research that are funded. In the second part of the chapter, I look at the implications of these findings for development research, and specifically for the revision of the EADI definition of DS (see this volume, chapter 10, section 6).

## **1. Introduction**

A perennial challenge to the credibility of DS is the perception that it is theoretically and methodologically weaker than its component disciplines. These effects can be seen when DS scholars choose to publish in disciplinary rather than DS journals (Tezanos and Trueba, this volume) or are more successful in obtaining funding from specialist funders such as DFID than research councils who feel the field has little to say to the social sciences more broadly. It can also be seen in the UK Development Studies Association's re-envisaging of itself as a 'learned society' with prizes and a book series with a university press, rather than a body that represents civil society organisations as well as academic ones and explicitly seeks to shape policy.

The question of methodology is linked to that of theory. DS is notoriously a-theoretical as well as a-historical (Lewis 2009), as shown by the analysis of projects and papers in the following sections. This lack of attention to theory challenges DS' claim to be inter or multi-disciplinary and use mixed methods effectively as disciplines and methodologies come with very different theoretical understandings. Academics and practitioners can also be slow to recognise the implicit colonialism in their understandings of the world. Hence we need a revision of the EADI definition to reflect new insights from Southern scholars and reactions against 'business as usual' from post-development and post-colonial scholars. At the same time, there seems to be less space for 'basic' as opposed to problem-focused or evaluative DS research. This is reflected in the changing language of the DFID-ESRC calls discussed later in the chapter, the need for Impact plans with accompanying budget allocations for proposals, and the increasing emphasis on impact case studies as part of the assessment of research quality in the UK<sup>1</sup>. The tendency to value knowledge in relation to what it can do (e.g. whether it influences practice or can be commodified) is not unique to DS. However, the requirement that DS researchers be

equally at home talking to practitioners, policymakers, donors, and disciplinary peers encourages a dual persona – at once complicit with and critical of the development industry – which is not wholly comfortable (Mosse 2005). In the following sections I look at indicators of methodological good practice such as use of secondary data to contextualise findings, engagement with theory, and systematic methods of analysis. Many of these relate to good academic conduct in general. Some, such as reflection on limitations and ethics, and as part of that genuine partnership with Southern institutions, are particularly important within DS. Their importance is due to historical power imbalances and vulnerabilities and a tendency among policy makers to rush to action on the basis of poorly digested evidence (Lewis 2009). Being explicit about the limitations of this evidence can help to reduce this.

## **2. Data sources and methodology**

This chapter does not claim to describe the methodologies in DS in their entirety. However, by using the UK and Norway as illustrative examples, it draws out what might need to be asked about methodologies elsewhere. A potential limitation of this chapter is that one of the main sources of data - the DFID-ESRC review – has a UK bias. This is because the majority of Principal Investigators (PIs) were based at UK institutions, even though they come from at least 22 different countries<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, I have included projects funded by the Norwegian Research Council, which supports institutions across Europe, as long as there is a Norwegian partner. I have also included paper abstracts from journals with an explicit focus on European development research (EJDR) or based in the Netherlands (Development and Change) or the USA (World Development)<sup>3</sup>. Secondly, many researchers in DS are not academics and are instead based in NGOs, research centres, multilateral institutions, and government research and evidence divisions. I recognise that in choosing to focus on methodology in more formal settings (for example, as outlined in project proposals to prestigious funders or reported in papers in international journals), I inevitably exclude some of the day-to-day development research (for example, project needs assessments or evaluations). My personal experience of working across academic and practice-based settings is that in relation to generating primary data, there is relatively little difference between the two. Development studies' history as a colonial management tool (Ferguson 1997), its

grounding in rural settings (Marcus and Asmorowati 2006) and its focus on development problems and/or the problems of development funders point it towards particular approaches such as the household survey or the key informant interview (Chambers 1997). Nonetheless, we might expect to see a smaller range of approaches used, oriented perhaps towards less expensive qualitative approaches, if this chapter concentrated instead on the output of NGO and INGO research departments.

As outlined above, the aim of the chapter is to create a comprehensive and credible picture of development research methodologies. I do this by drawing on a range of data sources, summarised in table 1.

[table 1]

### **3. Projects**

In the following section I explore methodologies used across 122 ESRC-DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research projects covering 2005 to 2014 (the 'UK sample') and triangulate this with analysis of 110 Norwegian Research Council projects covering 2009 to 2016 (the 'Norwegian sample'). The data is not directly comparable as I was only able to access the project summaries for the Norwegian Research Council projects whereas in the ESRC-DFID analysis I had access to the original proposals and outputs. The comparison provides an overview of the research designs of the sampled projects as an illustration of the types of research carried out in DS. I note some changes in methodology over time in relation to the UK sample, for example, an increasing orientation towards research characterised as 'mixed methods'. However, these were not as pronounced as expected given the duration of the programme. The elements I look at are whether the studies have single or multiple countries and where these are located, the balance of primary and secondary data collection, the attitude towards theory, the research design, the methods of analysis, and the extent to which they reflected on ethics and limitations. I also briefly describe the calls the projects originated from, as these will have shaped their focus.

The UK sample was generated from seven calls across three phases. The calls were broadly similar, although, their foci changed over time in response to the proposals

received<sup>4</sup>. The first call was open in terms of theme and asked for 'basic research that has an eventual and demonstrable relevance to the international development agenda for reducing poverty'. At least 50% of this should be from the social sciences. Theoretical and methodological contributions were mentioned alongside substantive ones as possible foci and 'multi- or inter-disciplinary research projects are encouraged'. The second phase broadened the area focus to any country where poor people might be living, although few funded projects included countries from the global North. It also broadened the focus from people who are currently poor to those who might become poor in the future. The third phase added specific thematic areas such as ICT and Development and the final call became more practice focused, looking at 'what approaches are most effective in enabling the poorest to exit and stay out of poverty'. Although gender was not emphasised in the calls, by the third phase attention needed to be paid to 'structural inequalities - including those based on gender, age, disability, ethnicity, race, religion, class, educational status and spatial factors' as well as to issues of 'measurement and metrics'. In contrast, NORGLOBAL assessed proposals on plans to recruit women and the gender balance of the proposed team, as well as attention to gender in the research.

NORGLOBAL spanned multiple programmes<sup>5</sup>, all of whom had specific calls, which I do not have space to analyse here. The overarching statement clarified that 'NORGLOBAL is established to strengthen Norwegian research on and for development in low- and middle-income countries, and also strengthen research capacity in these countries. The programme has a special responsibility to generate new knowledge within the field of development in Norway'<sup>6</sup>. Proposals for both schemes were assessed in a similar way with attention to the following broad criteria:

[Table 2]

Both programmes considered ethics, although this was only explicitly scored by NORGLOBAL. DFID-ESRC also requested data archiving – this was not mentioned in the first call, but by the final call all data was expected to be open access. NORGLOBAL considered the additional following criteria in assessing proposals, which reflect its

overarching statement: national cooperation (the extent to which the project strengthened the Norwegian development community), Internationalisation (the extent to which the project enhanced Norway's place in the world), Environmental impact, Recruitment of women, Gender balance in the project, and Gender perspectives in the research.

In the UK sample the projects were evenly divided between single and multiple country studies (multiple country studies mostly had two or three countries). This was also roughly the case in the Norwegian sample, (54% multiple country studies vs. 45% single country studies). Despite the predominance of multiple country studies, these were not necessarily comparative or united by a common research design. More than one third of the UK and the Norwegian samples treated the countries as single case studies. This reflects the difficulty of coordinating multiple actors with different interests in multiple settings. However, it also limits the potential contribution to development knowledge when research questions are addressed in different and incomparable ways, even within the same project. 6% of the Norwegian sample included countries in the Global North, compared to less than 1% for the UK sample. Given that the Norwegian sample started later (2009 rather than 2005), this may reflect a growing interest within DS in comparisons of the global North and South. These comparisons recognise the commonality of issues such as deprivation and increasingly of ways of addressing them (e.g. the rise in social protection) (Copestake 2015).

The main world regions included in the UK sample were South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Within these regions, South Africa, Kenya, Malawi, Ghana, Tanzania, and India predominated, suggesting a bias towards Anglophone or English speaking Africa and India. This phenomenon of certain areas being researched extensively reflects language, colonial histories, and the preferences of funders. It also reflects the ease of finding good research partners, which depends on a functioning higher education sector, specialist research institutes and civil society. Countries in possession of all of these things may not be the countries most in need of development support. 41 projects worked in fragile and conflict affected states. These are a particular focus of one of the funders, DFID, despite the methodological challenges they present. The majority of projects worked in both rural and urban locations. In the Norwegian sample only 24% of projects said where they were working and the majority of these were in rural areas (88%). Due to

the amount of missing data, we cannot judge whether this represents a neglect of urban areas, or a feeling that many settings are experiencing 'rurbanity' (Woods 2009) where these categories become less important.

In the UK sample 51% of projects analysed secondary data, often alongside generating primary data, and this was also true for the Norwegian sample (48%). Although the majority of these projects were quantitative or mixed methods, over a third of qualitative projects in the UK sample also made use of secondary data (in the Norwegian sample this was 54%). 21% of studies in the UK also archived at least some data (i.e. they deposited it in a public repository accessible online), which is a growing expectation of development research funders. This enabled a more comprehensive assessment of their contribution, and, in the case of the quantitative studies, replication (see Attanasio et al. 2009).

Within the UK sample, few studies had an overarching theoretical framework. This suggests a more practice-focused orientation, as might be expected in DS. Within the UK this would be described as 'applied' (something that supports the direct realisation of development goals), although strictly speaking applied research is research that applies theory in empirical analysis<sup>7</sup>. The Norwegian sample also showed a practice orientation as 45% of projects were coded as 'completely applied' and another 43% as 'partially applied'<sup>8</sup>. Nonetheless, 41% referred to theory in the project summary, which may suggest a higher level of theoretical engagement than in the UK sample. Differences in use of theory appear to be much smaller at the level of outputs<sup>9</sup>: a quarter of outputs from the UK sample – discussed in section 1.3 – used theory to do what the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 panel for Anthropology and Development called 'situat[ing] the analysis in a wider contextual frame'. The overall figure conceals striking differences between outputs from different research designs: less than one in ten of the quantitative outputs used theory.

Nearly two thirds of the qualitative approaches in the UK sample do not specify an analytical approach. Of the six who do, almost all use content or framework analysis (5), an approach that originated in applied research on health and social policy to support easy extraction of 'relevant' information. This choice of analysis method strengthens the argument around the applied nature of funded development research. The proportion of qualitative approaches specifying an analytical approach was even lower in the

Norwegian sample – just 3% (although to put this in context only 6% of projects containing quantitative methods specified an approach). The analytical techniques used by quantitative projects in the UK and Norwegian samples were sophisticated — mostly econometric or multivariate — although mixed methods studies mainly used descriptive analysis.

One of the most striking findings in relation to the UK sample was the dominance of projects using both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods). These increased from 43% to 64% of projects between the first and second phases of research funding and remained at 57% in phase three. The dominance of mixed methods was less obvious in the Norwegian sample where only 27% of the projects that specified a research design<sup>10</sup> were mixed methods. However, given that 54% of the qualitative studies used secondary data, which is usually quantitative, it is possible that this is an underestimate. The reorientation towards mixed methods studies, in the UK at least, reflects broader changes within DS. For example, there is increasing pressure on researchers seeking funding to present their research and research design as innovative (Travers 2009 in Wiles et al. 2010). It may also reflect a fear among qualitative researchers that their methodologies will be considered insufficiently rigorous without a quantitative component. As Sumner and Tribe (2004:14) put it ‘typically combinations or triangulation are proposed to overcome the validity weakness in quantitative methods and in the reliability and representative weakness in qualitative methods’.

Within so-called mixed methods research designs, basic surveys, interviews and focus groups predominate. This suggests that the majority are not mixing methods in a particularly innovative way (although see the examples reported in section 2.1). For example, one third of mixed methods grants in the UK sample used surveys as the only quantitative method with interviews and/or focus group discussion as the only qualitative method(s). This was also true of the majority of mixed methods grants within the Norwegian sample who had specified a research method. It suggests that lack of ambition in mixed methods work may be a common problem. Another common problem is lack of integration of qualitative and quantitative components (Roelen and Camfield 2015). While it wasn’t possible to explore this in the Norwegian sample because there wasn’t a requirement to archive data, in the UK sample only two of the nine mixed methods studies that archived data archived both qualitative and



quantitative data<sup>11</sup>. This suggests that they might not be perceived to be of equal value, although the time and cost of qualitative data archiving might be another factor (Irwin and Winterton 2011). Within the UK sample fewer than twenty percent of sampled outputs and 11% of final reports<sup>12</sup> contained a reflection on limitations. While word limits could explain the lack of reflection in journal articles, the fact that limitations are not examined in reports either suggests that DS researchers may not be as critical as they could be. This is problematic for two reasons: researchers new to the field are presented with a sanitised account of fieldwork that does not prepare them for the challenges they will face and data users do not realise the need for caution in making generalisations. Similarly, only 30% of outputs discussed the ethical implications of the research, with marked differences in the level of reflection between qualitative and quantitative papers. While this does not mean that the researchers were unethical, it suggests a lack of attention to the effects on the data of imbalances of power and positionality.

#### **4. Publications from the UK sample**

The review of the UK sample included examination of a random sample of 159 quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods papers<sup>13</sup>. This was particularly important in assessing the commitment of projects to the use of mixed methods – something the EADI International Accreditation Committee<sup>14</sup> sees as a key element of development research - as while a study may collect data using many different methods, not all of this will be published, or even analysed. In this sample I used the same criteria as when examining the projects: theory and theoretical frameworks, attention to ethics, whether the analytical approach was specified, and discussion of limitations.

##### *Use of theory and theoretical frameworks*

Approximately one quarter of the outputs (38) used theory<sup>15</sup> in their analysis. This was much lower than expected, given that engagement with theory is normally required for publication in top journals, particularly for qualitative and mixed methods studies. There were differences between the frequency of theory use in quantitative (8%), qualitative (37.5%) and mixed methods papers (41%) which partially supports this

proposition. The most popular theories were gender/ feminism (4)<sup>16</sup>, the capabilities approach (3), tipping point (3, used by a single study on urban violence), and livelihoods (2). Without the use of even middle range theory<sup>17</sup>, it is hard to see how studies can situate themselves in a broader frame or build on the knowledge of other scholars.

### *Mixed methods outputs*

Within the papers a range of methods were combined: semi-structured interviews (85%, 41), basic (79%, 38) or panel surveys (13%, 6), focus group discussions (33%, 16), narrative or life histories (29%, 14), ethnography (12%, 6), visual/participatory methods (10%, 5), behavioural and experimental games (6%, 3), and documentary analysis (4%, 2). However, as in the project level analyses, the main design appears to be a basic survey (79%, 38) plus semi-structured interviews (85%, 41) and/or focus groups (33%, 16). Methodological innovation is not necessarily an indicator of quality, however, it could signify a more solid or reflexive methodology. The standard approach to mixing methods does not seem either exciting or likely to produce diverse responses – a survey is just a more structured interview.

In relation to the sequencing of qualitative and quantitative methods, which is one indicator of the genuineness of the mixing of methods, the findings are more encouraging than at the project level as nearly half the mixed methods outputs (21) discussed this. 73% (35) of outputs from mixed methods projects reported both qualitative and quantitative data. However, 20% (7) of these reported them separately with minimal attempt at integration. Not having the methods in 'dialogue' with each other reduces the value of a mixed methods design.

### *Ethics*

Few outputs provided information on ethics (approximately 30%), as was the case at project level. Qualitative outputs were twice as likely to provide information on ethics as quantitative ones, perhaps reflecting a greater sensitivity to ethics among qualitative researchers. One third of qualitative outputs discussed ethics (32%, 21) compared to

one seventh of the quantitative (14%, 7) and one fifth of the mixed methods project (19%, 9).

### *Analytical approach*

As with the analysis at project level, the majority of quantitative outputs use regression or econometric forms of analysis, although three outputs also use descriptive statistics. 82% of the qualitative outputs (45) do not specify their analytical approach, compared to 4% of quantitative outputs (2). Of those who do, the majority use content or framework analysis (7), as was the case at project level. The majority of mixed methods projects (71%, 34) describe the quantitative analysis method, which is predominantly descriptive statistics (67%, 23 of the outputs that specified a quantitative approach). However, only 12.5% (6) describe the qualitative analysis method, which is always content analysis (as with the project level, where this approach predominated). This conveys the impression of a less systematic approach being taken for the qualitative analysis than the quantitative. However, this impression may be misleading if we consider that PIs were typically also the lead authors and the average age of a PI was 56. Over the last 15-20 years there has been a reflexive turn within the social sciences and a growth of interest in methodology reflected by specialist journals, organisations, and centres (e.g. within the UK the ESRC-funded National Centre for Research Methods). However, this was probably not the case when this cohort of researchers started their research careers. While their work is undoubtedly equally systematic and rigorous, they may not see the need, or have the language to describe the process of analysis in the detail that would now be expected.

### *Limitations*

The final point of the preceding section may apply to discussion of limitations. This is now considered a mark of quality, indicating a critical and reflexive approach to research, but was not always thought to be necessary. As with the project level analysis, few outputs mentioned limitations (less than 20%) and this omission was particularly visible in quantitative outputs (12%, 6).

[figure 1]

There may also be institutional pressures that militate against complete transparency; Prowse (2008, p3) describes how 'much poverty and development research presents a smooth ex post account of research methods (often airbrushing dead ends and false starts)' and Wiles et al. (2010: 17) note that 'few authors in our sample identified failures'.

A final point, which it was only possible to explore in the UK sample, was the extent of participation from partners based in the global South. While there was evidence of collaboration with Southern partners in analysis as well as data generation, lead and co-authorship were less common on peer-reviewed publications. For example, one study with 24 papers had the PI as lead author for every paper. This is despite the fact that Southern partners were generating an impressive level of impact – a key criterion for most development research - through creatively tailoring forms of communication to the interests of stakeholders (for example, feeding information into the storylines of television dramas or creating learning resources). Cummings and Hoebink's (2017) study of authorship and membership of editorial boards confirms the marginalisation of Southern scholars: of 2112 articles identified, only 14 per cent were from developing countries (in the analysis of abstracts discussed below, 14.6 per cent were from the global South, mostly India and South Africa, with a growing number from China).

## **5. Publications from a broader sample**

To cross-check the findings in section 1.4 on a larger and more cosmopolitan sample, 151 abstracts were analysed from a representative sample of development journals. Unlike the outputs of the UK sample, only 24% generated primary data. This might be because the majority were quantitative (43%) and/or used secondary data (60%). However, it might also be a bias within the UK sample, which was largely comprised of empirical research projects (only two were purely theoretical). Although good use was made of secondary data, the expectation of the funder (DFID-ESRC) was that projects would generate their own data as well.

In relation to the research designs, only 25% were qualitative and 5% mixed methods, which presents a very different picture to the preceding section<sup>18</sup>. This may represent the preferences of the three selected journals; for example, World Development is known to be highly quantitative. In support of this, 84% of the World Development papers used secondary data and only 14% were qualitative (compared to 38% for Development and Change). It may also be because in order to quickly reach a large audience (and meet funders' 'milestones'), the outputs from the UK sample were published across a range of journals. Some of these were international, some regional; some had high impact factors, some didn't have an impact factor at all. This heterogeneity may have meant the papers from the UK sample could use research approaches that might be seen as less prestigious. While not possible within the scope of this study, it would be interesting to see whether as DS journals have acquired impact factors and increasingly high rankings, they have become more cautious in their methodological preferences. This may represent a turn towards the quantitative within development research, as has been seen in the evaluation of development programmes (Eyben 2013; Bedecarrets et al. 2015; Gujit and Roche 2014).

Given the widespread use of secondary data, the main quantitative method was various forms of cross-sectional survey analysis. However, there were also 11 analyses of longitudinal/panel data, two social network analyses and one structural equation model. There were examples of newer forms of analysis used in impact evaluations such as Propensity Score Matching (3), Instrumental Variables (1), and Difference-in-Difference (1), mainly in World Development. The main qualitative method was documentary analysis (10, of which 2 used discourse analysis), a form of qualitative secondary analysis. However, at least 46% of the qualitative papers generated their own data using interviews (8), ethnography (3) and focus groups (2)<sup>19</sup>.

Where abstracts specified a location, the majority (88%) worked in rural areas and 51% worked in a single country. 10% of papers drew on data from the global North, which is higher than the proportions for the projects sampled from the UK (1%) and Norway (6%). This may indicate a growing interest in this area within DS. The majority of papers (59%) used theory to some extent, which is a higher proportion than in the UK (25%) or the Norwegian (41%) samples and 37% of these were characterised as more theoretical than applied.

While difficult to draw strong conclusions from this exercise, it seems as though quantitative studies predominate in high impact factor journals and the majority of these use secondary data. There is anecdotal evidence that mixed methods papers are hard to publish that seems to be confirmed by this data. The finding of low representation from the global South is also confirmed, with some indication that this might be journal specific: only 6% of Southern authors were published in *Development and Change* versus 18% in *World Development* and 19% in *EJDR*. While this may not be typical – I only have data from one year – another explanation might be that published Southern authors are more likely to have written quantitative papers (68%) than the qualitative and mixed methods papers that predominate in *Development and Change*. Hopefully the increasing support offered to Southern authors by journals keen to expand their markets will start to address these imbalances.

To provide a more detailed analysis of the issues emerging through this comparison, I now describe three research projects, drawn from the 122 DFID-ESRC projects described in table 1. These were led respectively by economists, anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists and language and communication specialists, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of DS.

## **6. Conclusions**

In concluding I return to key elements of EADI's revised definition of DS<sup>20</sup> to see the extent to which these are evidenced by the methodological trends I have outlined above. The definition emphasises that DS 'is a multi- and inter-disciplinary field of study rather than a single *discipline*' which seeks to understand the interplay of different types of change at 'local, national, regional and global levels', acknowledging the 'varied local responses to regional or global processes, and varied development strategies'. This prompts two questions of the datasets – do we see multidisciplinary collaborations in both funded research and training, and does research operate at multiple scales, with appropriate attention to the specificity of different contexts?

In answer to the first question, multidisciplinaryity is evident within the datasets – in the Norwegian sample 36% of projects were multidisciplinary and nearly half of these drew on more than four different disciplines. Having said that, multidisciplinaryity is still

largely confined to the social sciences, with limited engagement with the humanities (the literary scholars in Walker et al) or the natural sciences. This impedes its ability to 'take into account the specificity of different societies in terms of history, ecology, institutions, culture, knowledge, technology, etc.' It is, however, operating at multiple scales, often within the same programme or paper, and the increasing use of secondary data alongside primary facilitates this larger perspective.

A second element is its applied nature – do we see development research and training that 'is increasingly applied in focus and engaged with policy and practice'? Despite the academic focus of the funding schemes and papers reviewed, there is a strong commitment to applied work, accounting for 45% of the Norwegian sample and 41% of the papers reviewed. The engagement with policy and practice is illustrated by the impact strategies described in section 2.1.

Thirdly, do we see how "the range of concerns it addresses and the methods it uses evolves over time, as witnessed by ... the emergence of novel concerns such as ... poverty and social exclusion in industrialised countries'? While we see evolution in methodology, for example, an increasing emphasis on mixed methods, the interest in the global North has been slower to develop (only 1% of projects in the UK sample and 6% in the Norwegian one had sites in the global North). Nonetheless, 10% of papers from the three major journals drew on data from the global North, which suggests that this is growing in importance.

Fourthly, in terms of research collaboration, including the production of outputs, do we see 'genuine partnerships and cross-fertilisation between institutions and individuals ... working in different parts of the world'? This is an area in which DS may have more work to do, as discussed in Gaventa and Oswald this volume. While all the research projects involved Southern collaborators, the extent to which this is reflected in authorship is limited, and appears to vary across types of output. Not all examples are as striking as the PI with first authorship on 24 papers; however, clearly more could be done to break down barriers to publication for Southern team members (Camfield 2014).

Fifthly, in looking at the projects and articles, do we see that 'in most cases, [these] are multi-disciplinary and use mixed methods', but that within this orientation 'positivist and quantitative approaches tend to be most influential'? This does seem to be the case,

with the proviso that multidisciplinary is confined to the social sciences. However, we do not see the same bias towards the quantitative that we do in (certain) publications. While specialised research funding – the UK and Norwegian samples - may be more pluralist in its orientation, the influence of the quantitative is certainly evident within the sub-field of impact evaluation and the higher levels of policymaking (c.f. Attanasio et al. 2009)

Sixthly, to what extent does development writing ‘enable students to reflect on their own experience and to learn from each other’s diverse experiences and backgrounds’ and ‘operate intelligently and ethically in situations of incomplete or inaccurate information’? The analysis of research projects and outputs shows limited critical reflection and ethical sensitivity – fewer than one fifth of outputs mentioned limitations and only thirty percent provided information on ethics. This may be due to a reluctance to admit to limitations in the research in an increasingly competitive environment for both research funding and the attention of policy makers.

Finally, to what extent are development practitioners ‘able to communicate the results of their research (and their methodology) to audiences ranging from academics and policy makers to local communities and civil society organisations [... and] engage these stakeholders in following up the research’? Section 2.1 in particular illustrates creative ways of ensuring impact, for example, feeding story lines to popular soap operas. It also provides evidence that these have been successful – the ban on the sale of customary land in Zambia and the addition of a principle around respect to the ILO Recommendation 202. This chapter has tried to convey some of the granular detail of development research across a range of settings. However, this final question reminds us that we should not lose sight of its ultimate goal – to foster ‘inclusive and sustainable development [...and] contribute to possible solutions to societal problems’.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/Independentresearch/2017/REF,201701/REF2017\\_01.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/Independentresearch/2017/REF,201701/REF2017_01.pdf), downloaded 16/11/17

<sup>2</sup> Location of first degree was used as an imperfect proxy for country of origin.

<sup>3</sup> Their respective impact factors are 2.848 for World Development, one of the top journals in DS, 1.353 for Development and Change and 1.11 for the European Journal of Development Research. The impact factors show that work published within these journals is highly cited, indicating their influence on this field. See also Tezanos et al, this volume.

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately I only have information on the proposals that were funded.

<sup>5</sup> AIDEEFFECT: Effect of Aid, MALAWI: Democracy and Governance in Malawi, Gender-eq: Women's Rights and Gender Equality, TaxCapDev: Tax Havens, Capital Flows and Developing Countries, CGIAR-stip: CGIAR Fellowship Programme, GLOBMEK: Globalisation of the Environment, Energy and Climate Research, HUMPOL: Research on Humanitarian Policy, ECONPOP: Research on Economic Growth Poverty Reduction, Reproductive Health and Population Dynamics, POVPEACE: Poverty and Peace Research, W-Balkan: Western Balkan Countries Development Studies.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.forskingsradet.no/en/Funding/NORGLOBAL/1253978603583>, accessed 16/11/17.

<sup>7</sup> My thanks to one of the reviewers for this point.

<sup>8</sup> The criterion for 'partially applied' was whether the summary made any reference to debates in the literature.

<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately it wasn't possible to also look at outputs from the Norwegian sample due to the structure of the database and the fact that many were funded quite recently.

<sup>10</sup> It was not possible to identify the type of research design for 28 of the 110 Norwegian projects.

<sup>11</sup> For example, Rea-Dickens's study of student performance in national examinations archived data from classroom observations, ethnography, surveys, and tests/examination results.

<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately the final reports for the Norwegian sample are not publically available.

<sup>13</sup> The review took a random sample of 20% or no fewer than three empirical outputs for all projects that had empirical outputs. Six projects were excluded as they either had no outputs or only briefing or conference papers which were not comparable to the other outputs reviewed.

<sup>14</sup> A body established to accredit DS masters courses worldwide.

<sup>15</sup> Theory was defined in the context of the review as an idea or set of ideas that is intended to explain facts or events, such as the theory of relativity or an economic model. Theoretical frameworks such as the capability approach were included within this category.

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<sup>16</sup> 42% of the Norwegian sample project summaries mentioned gender, although this is surprisingly low given that gender-sensitivity is an explicit criterion for funding.

<sup>17</sup> Middle-range theory explains a specific set of phenomena, e.g. Sen's concept of entitlements in relation to famine, as opposed to grand theory, which explains phenomena at a societal level, e.g. Marxism.

<sup>18</sup> 27% didn't provide enough information for their research design to be classified.

<sup>19</sup> There were also six case studies, but the methods, and the extent to which they were using primary rather than secondary data, were not specified.

<sup>20</sup> This was mandated by the EADI directors meeting in Olomouc, 29 Oct 2015.