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Focus

Development and Change at Forty

Ben White

ABSTRACT

As *Development and Change* completes its fortieth year, this note first describes the emergence of the journal's critical, generalist identity. It then provides a glimpse into the journal's 'kitchen', comments on the transformation in global access and readership since the journal went online, and reflects on the past, present and future of journal publishing in international development studies.

Development and Change's Emerging Identity

Journal editing and publishing in development studies has seen many changes since the Institute of Social Studies introduced the first (1969/70) volume of *Development and Change* — at a time when authors composed their work with manual typewriters or even by hand, when our manuscripts and correspondence about them crossed the globe by air mail, and when our journal was type-set by hand. There were already several sister-journals in the field of international development studies.¹ Each of these has developed its own distinctive character over the years, as have the numerous, more recently established journals, many of which have become increasingly specialized. Introducing the journal, its first editors — among them Martin Doornbos, interviewed elsewhere in this Issue — noted that 'the problem of development was a good deal more complicated than it had at first been

Thanks to my fellow editors for helpful and critical comments on a first draft. In addition I would like to express my appreciation to my current fellow editors Kees Biekart, Amrita Chhachhi, Bridget O'Laughlin, Ashwani Saith and Servaas Storm, to previous fellow editors Asef Bayat and Martin Doornbos, and the late Henk van Roosmalen, and to Managing Editor Paula Bownas and Editorial Assistants Caroline Roldanus and Judith Treanor for their dedication and many years of pleasurable collaboration and companionable meetings. It has been a genuine pleasure to work with them all.

1. The oldest is *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (first appearing in 1952, the same year that the Institute of Social Studies was founded), followed by *Development* (1957), *The Developing Economies* (1962), the *Journal of Development Studies* (1964), the *Journal of Developing Areas* (1966), and the *IDS Bulletin* which appeared a few months before *Development and Change* in 1969.

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envisaged', and that there was felt to be a pressing need for 'a thorough analysis of the conditions of underdevelopment' and an 'interdisciplinary and problem-oriented' approach (Editorial Statement, 1969–70: 1–2).

These remarks, I suppose, reflected the new uncertainty facing the development studies profession as comfortable ideas of unilineal development transitions, the modernization theory and Cold War inspired 'stages of growth' came under the onslaught of the dependency theorists and others. I remember the creative havoc caused by some of the early writings of Andre Gunder Frank on the 'Development of Underdevelopment' (Frank, 1966, 1967) in my first development anthropology course, in that same academic year of 1969/70. The journal provided an early discussion on the crisis in development studies and planning, in a debate between Raymond Apthorpe (1971–2, 1972–3) and Kurt Martin (1971–2) on 'the new generalism' which Apthorpe claimed had emerged in development studies, but which Martin argued was not new at all.

Browsing through the early issues of *Development and Change*² one feels that it took some years for the journal to 'pass the doldrums' — as Martin Doornbos describes it in his Interview — and to find its critical character. This critical, generalist, interdisciplinary character was what impressed me about the journal when I first became aware of it in 1975, and it was certainly well established by the time I joined the Editorial Board in 1992. *Development and Change* now describes itself³ as:

One of the leading international journals in the field of development studies and social change [...] Truly interdisciplinary in character, it includes contributions from all the social sciences and all intellectual persuasions concerned with development. With its history of publishing unconventional and challenging articles, the journal covers a broad range of topics in a mix of regular and special theme issues. *Development and Change* is devoted to the critical analysis and discussion of the complete spectrum of development issues. *Development and Change* is essential reading for anyone interested in development studies and social change. It publishes articles from a wide range of authors, both well-established specialists and young scholars.

These are bold claims — 'truly interdisciplinary... all the social sciences and intellectual persuasions... unconventional and challenging... critical analysis... the complete spectrum of development issues' — which reflect the editors' belief in the importance first of maintaining the journal's interdisciplinary and generalist character, avoiding the trend to specialization in journal publishing, and second of locating it squarely at the critical edge of the field.

The way in which a critical identity takes concrete shape in a development journal has of course changed over the years, as has the world of

2. All issues of the journal, from 1969/70 onwards, are now digitalized and available on-line.

3. On the publisher's web site, <http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0012-155X&site=1>

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2 development. The major difference is that in the 1970s there were several
3 radically different *mainstream* models of ‘development’, from socialism and
4 collectivization to capitalism and privatization, and with various intermedi-
5 ate models. For each of these models, living exemplars were available to
6 study, debate and criticize, as for example in the special issue on Tanzanian
7 socialism (Saul, 1971–2). By the end of the 1980s, of course, there was only
8 one mainstream model left in town, which has made critique of it all the
9 more necessary in any thinking exchange of ideas on development.

10 This helps, I think, to explain why we have developed a strong preference
11 for ‘re-thinking’ articles, those which help to question received ideas in our
12 field of work. Everyone has their favourite articles in this vein; among mine,
13 over the years, have been Ernst Feder’s (1976) critique of Harvard Business
14 School myths about agribusiness; Jane Guyer and Pauline Peters’ (1987)
15 edited volume on re-thinking African households and Diane Wolf’s (1990)
16 critique of the concept of ‘household strategies’ in the Asian context; Ben
17 Fine’s early critique of ‘social capital’ in its World Bank version (Fine,
18 1999), and Ashwani Saith on the Millennium Development Goals (Saith,
19 2006) — all of which have been widely cited and read. Some of these are
20 essays based on a wide range of literature and a global reach, others based on
21 detailed local fieldwork. It is this kind of work, I think, that keeps a journal
22 at the front of things, and I believe in the continuing relevance of a journal
23 with this generalist, critical, independent character. I hope we have sustained
24 and consolidated it up to the present, maintaining a critical distance from
25 both the mainstream and the trendy.

26 It has to be said, of course, that there is a great difference between what
27 we have published over the years, and the overall character and quality of
28 the work that we have had to read as editors. This is something I had not
29 fully understood before joining the editorial board; I had somehow imagined
30 that I would get to read lots of interesting and stimulating manuscripts in
31 addition to those we decide to publish. In fact, if what is published in
32 *Development and Change* and our sister journals gives a good impression
33 of the state of the art in development studies, what is submitted and not
34 published gives a more sombre view of the discipline; of the hundreds
35 of manuscripts submitted to the journal every year, many fall firmly into
36 the mainstream category, many are routine analyses locked in the private
37 language of the author’s discipline and with little or nothing new to say, and
38 many others attempt vaguely post-modernist critiques that engage so little
39 with questions of economic and social development that they also leave the
40 mainstream premises untouched. Sparing the readership from having to read
41 such work is, of course, one important function of an academic journal and its
42 editing and peer review process; it could be argued that this becomes more
43 important as the sheer volume of academic production increases, and the
44 modes of disseminating and accessing it have become increasingly easy and
45 costless.
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Ingredients

A journal's reputation and success (or failure) depends, in ways that are not completely understood, on an unfathomable combination of trust in the quality and/or standing of its home base, its authors, its editorial board, its international advisory board, its management, the publisher, and of course in the fairness and reliability of the referee process. Brief reflections on each of these may be of interest.

Regarding the home base, *Development and Change* is 'independent' in the sense that it is owned neither by a learned society, nor by a commercial publisher, but by an academic institution. This is a relatively uncommon form of journal ownership. The journal is published 'on behalf of' the Institute of Social Studies (which retains copyright and owns the journal)⁴ by a commercial publisher,⁵ which pays part of its revenues as royalties to ISS. On its side, ISS employs a full-time managing editor and two part-time assistant editors, and assigns part of the time of five ISS academic staff as editorial board members (our sixth editor on the present Board, Servaas Storm, is from outside ISS).

New editors are nominated by the existing editors (after consultation with the International Advisory Board) and formally appointed by the ISS's Executive (the 'Institute Board'); the editors appoint their own Chair. In the seventeen years since I joined the Editorial Board the ISS Executive has never tried to influence an editorial appointment, our general editorial policy or specific editorial decisions — even on occasions when 'big-name' authors have made known their dissatisfaction with editorial decisions to reject or require major revisions to their work, as they sometimes do. I have greatly appreciated the Institute's consistent respect for our editorial independence, which is one important ingredient of the authority and trust which the journal enjoys among its readers and the development studies community.

A good journal needs the best authors to send it their best work. Reputation is important here. Authors have to know that the journal is highly regarded in the field; they have to be confident that their work will be reviewed by competent people, with good judgement, who will point to weaknesses and suggest improvements. Submissions to the journal have grown steadily over the years. Now we read something like 400 manuscripts each year, of which about one in nine or ten will get published. We are forced to be highly selective, to make some tough choices, and to re-direct many good manuscripts to other journals (which often publish them).

4. As of 1 July 2009, the Intitute of Social Studies became part of Erasmus University Rotterdam, with the status of a University Institute. Legal ownership of the journal therefore has passed from the ISS to Erasmus University, but under a formal agreement which guarantees ISS's autonomy in managing the journal and appointing its editors and its rights to any royalties received. We do not expect this development to affect the journal's independence in any way.

5. Currently Wiley-Blackwell.

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2 Thus the journal needs a dedicated editorial board to give all these
3 manuscripts a first reading and make decisions whether to take them further,
4 and if so who should be asked to referee them; to re-read the manuscripts that
5 come back in revised versions; and to make sometimes difficult decisions
6 based on the inputs of referees. Ideally, these editors will park their egos
7 outside the room when they have meetings, and be prepared to see their
8 favourite manuscripts — including sometimes their own work⁶ — rejected,
9 or manuscripts which they found inadequate accepted, by a majority of their
10 editor colleagues.

11 We need a large and wide network of potential referees who are will-
12 ing to advise us on manuscripts. Peer review — ‘the critical assessment of
13 manuscripts submitted to journals by experts who are not part of the editorial
14 staff’⁷ — lies at the heart of journal publishing, and good referees are its
15 most precious resource. The key to good refereeing is not just to say ‘accept’
16 for the best submissions or ‘reject’ for the worst ones (which we editors
17 could probably do ourselves in most cases), but to find in a still imperfect
18 manuscript the valuable core, and show through constructive criticism how
19 it can be developed and improved. Journal refereeing is a thankless task,
20 with no material rewards and always done anonymously so that no explicit
21 recognition can be given except to the ‘anonymous referee(s)’ in the conven-
22 tional footnote. We are extremely grateful to the hundreds of busy people
23 who are willing to spend their time on this.

24 We have an active, hands-on and time-intensive editorial process in which
25 each submitted manuscript is read by at least three of the six editors. Our
26 general practice is to assign a new manuscript to the two editors whose
27 expertise comes closest to the topic, and one other who is relatively non-
28 expert in the discipline or approach represented, since accessibility to a
29 general readership is a condition for everything we publish. As already
30 mentioned, we reject or redirect about eight or nine of every ten submissions,
31 and three or four of every five special issue proposals. About one-third of all
32 new submissions are taken further to peer review, and it is quite exceptional
33 for an article to be published without peer review. We aim for at least two
34 and up to four referees, which often means contacting many more names
35 than that. Of the one-third of submissions sent for peer review, about two-
36 thirds are rejected or re-directed; and about one-third are accepted after one
37 and (in about one-fifth of cases) two rounds of revision and re-refereeing.
38 The accepted manuscripts are professionally edited at ISS, after which the
39 publisher takes over the typesetting, physical production and up-loading,
40 distribution, marketing and access management. We keep relatively few

43 6. Having one’s own work rejected by one’s fellow-editors is a special kind of experience.
44 Luckily the collection in question found another publisher, and I have since completely
45 forgiven my (then) co-editors!

46 7. This is the definition of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (Hames,
2007: 1).

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accepted manuscripts in stock, which means that articles get published fairly soon after acceptance, partly compensating for the sometimes lengthy referee process.

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A good journal also needs a skilled and dedicated managing editor and support staff. We are very lucky to have had Paula Bownas, our managing editor, working full time with the journal for seventeen years, now ably assisted by two part-timers, Judith Treanor (whose main job is to handle the book reviews) and Caroline Roldanus (chief assistant). All these people are committed to the jobs they do, and they do them extremely well.

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Then, of course, we need a publisher of quality, which can design, produce and market (as well as making available free in many countries) a physically distinctive and attractive journal, which earns money. The publishers need to make money, and we need them to do that so that they can pay the ISS royalties, without which the Institute could not support the services of our professional managing editor and support staff, which in turn is what makes possible our rather thorough editorial and peer-review process.⁸ *Development and Change* has worked with three publishers over the years, most recently Blackwell (since 1994). We appreciate the work which the Blackwell (since 2008, Wiley-Blackwell) team has done over the years; this is not an easy time for the field of journal publishing.

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We also need the support of an Advisory Board. We have a large and distinguished International Advisory Board (with currently forty-two members, based in fourteen countries), names which we hope do more than grace the inside front cover. The Board combines both rising stars, established figures and ‘elders’ drawn from many countries and many sub-fields of development studies. Some of them are very active, and others less so, in providing comments and suggestions, channelling the work of promising young authors to the journal, and so on. In general, I think we do not fully exploit the potentials available in our International Advisory Board.

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Another condition of course is the capacity to innovate, to see new niches and fill gaps. This can involve encouraging article submissions and Special Issues on themes and approaches which take us out of the box, particularly from young researchers; it can also involve new types of content which move beyond the standard article format. Our annual sixth issue, *Development and Change Forum*, which has appeared each year since 2005, in special format, has a somewhat different purpose from our regular issues. It aims to provide readers, once a year, with a useful and lively way to keep in touch with new and emerging trends and debates in the study of development and change, while at the same time reflecting on important ideas and debates of the past through ‘legacy’ pieces and interviews with well-known figures in our field. The formula seems to have worked; five of the ten most frequently

8. While the ISS executive formally recognizes that the journal has intrinsic value for ISS and therefore is not required to be run as a profit-making project, it is expected to cover a good portion of its costs through royalties.

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2 downloaded articles in 2008, for example, were *Forum* contributions. At
3 present we are engaged in a re-thinking of our Book Reviews section, away
4 from standard short single-book reviews and towards longer ‘review essay’
5 pieces, usually covering multiple books.
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8 **Who Reads *Development and Change*?**
9 **Transformations in Global Reach and Access**
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11 The one essential element I have not so far mentioned is the journal’s
12 readership. If all the ingredients I have mentioned are in place and in good
13 shape, the journal will have a large, potential readership who will appreciate
14 what the journal has to offer them. In 40 years the journal has grown steadily
15 in terms of volume (the number of issues, articles and pages published each
16 year), circulation and — of course — price. In 1969, subscribers to Volume 1
17 received three issues per year (about 286 pages in total) for the price
18 of US\$ 7 or 25 Dutch guilders, from its first publisher Mouton & Co.
19 Ten years later, Volume 10 (1979) — now published by Sage — consisted
20 of 719 pages in four issues. Volume 20 (1989) maintained the same size
21 (720 pages in four issues) and by Volume 30 (1999) the journal — now
22 published by Blackwell — provided four thicker issues, with an increase in
23 volume to 880 pages. We have further increased the number of issues and
24 pages to five issues and 1034 pages in 2001, and to six issues (almost 1300
25 pages) in 2005. In this fortieth anniversary year, the journal thus provides
26 readers with about 450 per cent more than Volume 1 in terms of pages, and
27 since the publisher’s current format and font allow more words per page,
28 readers are probably getting closer to six times as much actual content per
29 year.

30 Potential readers become actual readers only when the journal can reach
31 them, and they can reach the journal. Most readers and institutions now access
32 *Development and Change* at much less than the full institutional cost. By
33 Volume 20 (1989) the journal had introduced a differentiated pricing system
34 with greatly reduced costs to non-institutional subscribers. By Volume 30
35 (1999) there was an increasing range of reduced subscription rates for In-
36 dividuals, Students, Developing World Institutions and Developing World
37 Individuals. Blackwell has always operated a highly differentiated subscrip-
38 tion policy for the journal, between institutional and personal subscribers
39 and between richer and poorer world regions.

40 However, despite the low prices for individuals and for developing-
41 country institutions, in the pre-online era the majority of subscriptions (and
42 a still greater proportion of revenues) were from developed-country institu-
43 tional subscribers. In 2000, for example, of our total hard copy print run, 75–
44 80 per cent was destined for ‘Northern’ countries (Europe, North America,
45 Japan, Australia/New Zealand). The developing-country institutional subscrip-
46 tion, although less than one-third of the price to Northern institutions,

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2 was clearly beyond the reach of most developing-country libraries, and we
3 had less than 100 developing-world subscriptions. As a result, while many
4 developing-country scholars and professionals knew the journal, most prob-
5 ably got to read *Development and Change* articles only through receiving
6 occasional photocopies through personal contacts or when visiting North-
7 ern institutes as graduate students or visiting fellows. This was a problem
8 that concerned the editors greatly, and was one of the main reasons for our
9 interest in the radical transformation of academic reading patterns and the
10 marketplace for academic writing that happened with the emergence of the
11 Internet and the technology for instantaneous and cheap transmission and
12 retrieval of digital text.

13 Since we are a ‘toll-access’ journal — a matter in which we have no choice,
14 for the reasons explained earlier — we need continually to ask whether we
15 are doing enough to expand access, and particularly to make online access
16 very cheap or free in Latin America, Africa, Asia and transitional coun-
17 tries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Are there fundamental
18 contradictions between this (to us, very important) goal and the impera-
19 tives of commercial publishers to safeguard revenues, and what has online
20 publishing meant in terms of balancing these objectives and concerns?

21 My appointment as Chair of the Editorial Board in 1997 more or less
22 coincided with the journal’s decision to go online. The effect in terms of
23 access to the journal has been spectacular. In 1998, when the journal first
24 became available online, about 1,000 institutions and individuals had access
25 to the journal in hard copy, and a total of 374 articles were accessed online.
26 A little more than a decade later, the overall (institutional) circulation of the
27 journal had increased to more than 6,500 and the number of articles accessed
28 and downloaded online had increased to about 130,000 per year, making us
29 one of the most downloaded journals in the field.

30 While the number of ‘traditional’ institutional subscriptions has remained
31 relatively stable, their relative importance has dropped dramatically. The
32 majority of institutions with access today are consortia members with access
33 to the publisher’s collection of journals, some paying, others with heav-
34 ily subsidized access and others with free access through ‘philanthropic’
35 deals such as the HINARI, AGORA/OARE and INASP initiatives. Cur-
36 rently, some 2,300 developing-country sites have full access through these
37 initiatives, and a further smaller number of subscribers in the developing
38 world are active users of EBSCO access which involves a one-year em-
39 bargo. This represents an enormous expansion of access in the global south,
40 compared to the few dozen traditional hard-copy subscribers in these regions
41 in the 1990s. The coverage is still uneven — nearly 130 sites in Kenya and
42 Tanzania, but only twenty-three in Zambia and seven in Togo; 383 sites in
43 Nepal, but only fifty-six in Bangladesh and twenty in Sri Lanka — but it
44 shows us what is possible.

45 If someone has to pay for access — which in my opinion will continue
46 to be the case for journals with a solid peer-review, editorial and publishing

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process — this is a very appropriate channel for international, bilateral or private philanthropic support to higher education and research in developing and transitional countries. Think of the huge amounts of money that were poured into ‘library development’ — infrastructure, training, book and journal acquisition budgets — in the young post-colonial universities of Africa, Asia and parts of Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1960s and 1970s, first by the big foundations like Ford and Rockefeller, then by the bilateral donors and the World and regional Development Banks. While some of these libraries continue to function under difficult conditions, so many others are now in collapse, whether through lack of funds as donor fatigue or government cutbacks set in, through poor management, or sometimes intellectual corruption as professors on authoritarian campuses fear that their students may become smarter than themselves. These problems can be to a large extent circumvented now through online consortia access, which in many countries is now available free or very cheap, as already noted, through initiatives like the HINARI, AGORA/OARE and INASP programmes.

What Gets Read?

Until recently journal editors had only the ISI citation statistics — a notoriously unreliable indicator of reader interest, at least in the social sciences and humanities — as a guide to what kinds of articles were attracting readers’ interest. Since going online we receive routine statistics from the publisher on numbers of ‘downloads’ of our articles, which is a far more reliable indicator, but still not an exact measure, of readership.⁹ Journal editors, therefore, finally have some relatively reliable indicator of what is getting read.

The ten most downloaded articles in 2008 (with whole-text downloads ranging from just under 700 to over 1700) make an interesting list, as seen in Table 1.

Note that the list includes one interview, two introductions to special issues, two *Forum Debate* contributions, two *Forum* ‘Focus’ articles, and a review article, as well as conventional articles; it includes articles from 2006, 2005, 2002 and 1998 as well as 2007, suggesting that many of our articles have a relatively long shelf-life.¹⁰ Another feature of these most popular

9. Download statistics are still less than completely accurate because they do not register, for example: all students who read course materials which have been downloaded for them only once by the course administrator; all readers who use the journal in ‘traditional’ hard-copy form, as individual subscribers, library users or recipients of free copies (the journal’s total hard-copy print run is currently around 1,000).

10. This pattern is maintained as we go further down the list. Of all the articles with more than 300 whole-text downloads in 2008 (57 titles in all) less than half were published in 2008 or 2007 (47 per cent); 16 per cent were published between 2004 and 2006, 25 per cent between 2001 and 2003, and 12 per cent in 2000 or earlier.

Table 1. *Development & Change's* Ten most Downloaded Articles in 2008
(alphabetically by author)

Author(s) and Title	Year	Type
Amrita Chhachhi and Linda Herrera, 'Empire, Geopolitics and Development'	2007	<i>Forum</i> Roundtable (Debate) Introduction
Andrea Cornwall, Elizabeth Harrison and Ann Whitehead, 'Gender Myths and Feminist Fables'	2007	Special Issue Introduction
Hein de Haas, 'Turning the Tide? Why Development Will Not Stop Migration'	2007	Article
Julie Hearn, 'African NGOs: The New Compradors?'	2007	<i>Forum</i> Roundtable (Debate) contribution
Sam Hickey and Giles Mohan, 'Relocating Participation within a Radical Politics of Development'	2005	Article
Jennifer Milliken and Keith Krause, 'State Failure, State Collapse, and State Reconstruction'	2002	Special Issue Introduction
Jan Nederveen Peterse, 'My Paradigm or Yours? Alternative Development, Post-development, Reflexive Development'	1998	Review Article
Ashwani Saith, 'From Universal Values to Millennium Development Goals: Lost in Translation'	2006	<i>Forum</i> Focus article
Sara Schoonmaker, 'Globalization from Below: Free Software and Alternatives to Neoliberalism'	2007	<i>Forum</i> Focus article
Alberto Toscano, interview with David Harvey	2007	<i>Forum</i> Reflection

articles is that they are generally about 'big' issues and written with a broad brush, not based on detailed local fieldwork. While we now know that good articles based on small-scale field research, however solid and innovative, tend to be less-read than broad-sweep articles on global issues, we continue to consider this kind of work important and worth publishing, so long as it relates to, and uses results from the field to engage with, broader issues and debates.

Is There a Future for the Project of a Generalist, Interdisciplinary, Critical Journal of 'Development Studies'?

The future of academic journal publishing is full of uncertainties, but these can also be seen as opportunities because they force us to remind ourselves of the purpose of journals like *Development and Change*. Should we continue — or, perhaps, how long can we continue — to offer a hard-copy version to those subscribers who prefer it? The Editorial Board spends a small but significant part of its time deliberating, and negotiating with the publisher, about the type of paper (which should have the right feel, and not be too shiny), the colours used for the standard and *Forum* issue covers, and so on, while we are quite aware that probably more than three-quarters of our readers never see or touch a hard-copy version. Should we continue to be strict about length limits, now that e-publishing has eliminated part of the cost difference in delivering or accessing an article of 5,000, 10,000 or

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2 50,000 words? Or should we abandon the 10,000 word maximum (which
3 somehow seems to become also the minimum for nearly all authors) and re-
4 turn to the common nineteenth century practice of highly variable lengths
5 of contributions in a single journal issue, using our editorial influence simply
6 to ensure that each piece is just as long as, and no longer than, it needs to
7 be?

8 Questions like these are important, but not fundamental. The key issues
9 are first: how relevant is the whole concept of ‘development studies’ in
10 a globalizing world, and what rationale is there (if any) for delimiting its
11 regional focus? And second: how to safeguard, and find ways to pay for, the
12 value-added derived from thorough (and costly) peer-review and editorial
13 processes, the only truly indispensable element in our current publishing
14 model, in a world where more and more non-refereed or minimally-refereed
15 material is becoming available completely free?

16 Taking the second issue first, I am sure that currently promoted ‘author-
17 pays’ options — where authors or their research sponsors, not readers or
18 libraries, pay fees to publishers to cover the costs of editing, publication and
19 free access — do not provide a realistic or attractive option, at least in our field
20 of work and in the social sciences and humanities generally. Recent cases
21 where authors have intentionally submitted gibberish manuscripts and had
22 them accepted by ‘author-pays’ journals which claim to submit manuscripts
23 to peer review, expose the extreme tip of an iceberg of potential editorial
24 corruption. Besides that, who will pay for the publication of work by authors
25 based in poor countries and institutions, by unemployed or retired authors
26 all over the world, or by authors whose articles — like many of the most-
27 downloaded articles in *Development and Change* — were not supported by,
28 or the result of, specific funded research projects?

29 The question of the continuing relevance of a development studies journal,
30 is actually a question about the relevance of the project of development stud-
31 ies itself in a globalized world. Personally, I never believed in the so-called
32 ‘impasse in development studies’ which some of our colleagues proclaimed
33 in the 1980s, only to re-invent the discipline as ‘post-impasse develop-
34 ment studies’. This always seemed to me an in-growing, mainly northern
35 European debate which the journal, and our colleagues in the South, were
36 wise to give short shrift. So long as large numbers of people, anywhere
37 in the world, face problems of poverty and inequality, illiteracy, under-
38 employment, failed social policies, disenfranchisement and environmental
39 injustice, there is a place for a ‘critical development studies’ — which I un-
40 derstand, quite simply, as a field of study that continually questions prevail-
41 ing ideas of development, but without abandoning the idea of development
42 itself.

43 The journal has, since its earliest years, occasionally published arti-
44 cles about the underdeveloped regions or marginalized social groups in
45 wealthy northern countries (e.g. Furniss, 1976) and certainly on the circum-
46 Mediterranean region (e.g., Delivanis, 1969–70) and I see no reason why

we should not continue to do so. Recent years have seen a modest increase in submission of manuscripts on ‘the South in the North’ in countries like Canada, Norway and New Zealand. The key issue, as I hinted earlier, is whether the exploration of a local case study has broader implications for, and engages with, larger current issues and debates on development theories and policies.

As others have remarked in the current global economic slump, we should not let a good recession go to waste; as a ‘revelatory crisis’ it reveals the underlying bankruptcy of dominant ideas on how global and national economies should be organized, and opens up the possibility of a return to serious thinking about alternative models, which will make the work of editing *Development and Change* still more vibrant, more challenging, more satisfying and more important in the coming years.

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