UNDERSTANDING GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Fieldwork Issues, Experiences and Reflections

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT FIELDWORK: A RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Global development research is, by and large, built on fieldwork undertaken by researchers who immerse themselves in the context they wish to study, and engage with people and their situated actions, relationships and ideas. With this book, we invite our readers to join us in an open-ended discussion on *how experiences of fieldwork-based research shape and inform our understanding of global development*. Following a relational perspective, and an inter-disciplinary and inter-generational approach, this volume aims at facilitating such a discussion by bringing into dialogue reflections on fieldwork experiences by leading figures in Development Studies and accounts from younger scholars currently engaging in the early years of their research.

We hope that this book will be useful in stimulating reflection on important issues that arise when undertaking global development research for a wide audience, and particularly for early-career researchers. However, we would like to note from the outset that this is not a research methods handbook or a guide on how to conduct fieldwork. There are excellent examples of such books available and we do not seek to replicate their coverage.[1] Instead, we take a much more personal and biographical approach by tapping into the wealth of knowledge of several generations of researchers whose lives, interests and methods of doing fieldwork have developed over several decades.

The idea for this book came to us following a series of events held by the Centre for Global Development (CGD) at the University of Leeds and its Researchers in Development Network (RiDNet). Such events are aimed at assisting doctoral students in the development of practical skills and methods for development fieldwork, usually in sessions where

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[1] See Desai and Potter (2006); Sumner and Tribe (2008); Laws et al. (2013); Lunn (2014); Scheyvens (2014); Hammett et al. (2015).

fieldwork experiences are shared through informal discussion and dialogue. In recurrent conversations amongst ourselves and with colleagues, we noticed that methods books only go so far in preparing early-career researchers for the actual experience of conducting fieldwork. They tend to be quiet about the emotional dilemmas and practical challenges encountered in the field, especially when navigating unfamiliar relationships in distant places or when dealing with the unexpected. We decided to address this apparent gap in the literature by inviting development researchers at different stages of their careers to share with us – and reflect upon – their experiences of undertaking fieldwork-based research on global development issues. We hoped that a volume presenting multiple and multifaceted accounts of fieldwork experiences would convey a sense of what it actually feels like to be out in the field. At the same time, we sought to stimulate reflection among relative newcomers as well as seasoned experts on the (changing) practice of fieldwork in development contexts.

In the ensuing process of developing and writing this book (which is discussed in greater detail below), as in our own research, we have adopted a *relational* perspective, empha-sising issues relating to *power*, *identity* and *ethics* in fieldwork-based research on global development. We have focused our attention on how the ways in which we conduct our research *with others* – and, most importantly, with those who we encounter in the field – informs our understanding of global development. We also decided to organise the book around six themes of particular relevance to fieldwork-based research in development contexts, namely: *freedom and participation in the field*; *using gender as a lens in development research*; *conducting research with marginalised and vulnerable people*; *researching elites*; *working in dangerous environments*; and *fieldwork in development practice*. Thus, the book is organised into six sections – each of which initiates a dialogue on one of these six themes, and is composed of three chapters. The first and key chapter of each section is based on an edited transcript of an interview we conducted with a leading figure in Development Studies whose work has explored the particular theme over many years: Robert Chambers focuses on participation (Chapter 2); Ruth Pearson on gender (Chapter 5); Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka on marginalisation (Chapter 8); Jean Grugel on elites (Chapter 11); Jenny Pearce on dangerous contexts (Chapter 14); and David Mosse on the aid industry (Chapter 17).

In these interviews, the six distinguished scholars recall their research experiences past and present. They articulate how they encountered and engaged with specific issues, and how the relationships they built in the field helped and hindered their research. Each conversation is followed by two shorter chapters (or 'fieldnotes') written by early-career scholars, who respond to key issues raised and reflect on how they have dealt with them in their own fieldwork. In this way, each section introduces a discussion that we hope to extend into a dialogue with our readership. In the remainder of this introduction, we introduce the overarching relational perspective that has guided our approach to this dialogue-based book. We then outline the aims of the book and provide a brief history of how it came about. We close with an overview of the contents of the subsequent sections and chapters.

A THREE-DIMENSIONAL RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: POWER, IDENTITY AND ETHICS

As reflections on experiences of conducting fieldwork-based research in global development contexts, the conversations and fieldnotes in this volume are based on what can be termed a *relational perspective* to development research. From such a perspective, research and fieldwork – and the knowledge they produce – are seen as embedded in social situations and in social relations. The researcher is not a detached, distant and impartial expert, 'an observer freed of personality and bias',[2] someone who can deduct truths about an objective reality, as the positivist tradition tends to uphold. Rather, the relational perspective is derived from the social constructivist or interpretivist paradigm that focuses on the socially constructed nature of the social world and our knowledge of it. This emphasises that research in global development – particularly research that entails in-depth fieldwork – should be based on an interactionist ontology that acknowledges the importance of *how researchers engage with and learn from people*. As Sophie Laws et al. succinctly state, such a social constructivist approach is people-centred and 'interested in *the ideas people themselves generate*' (emphasis in original),[3] and, we would add, is about how we engage with those ideas and co-create meanings. Thus, especially in fieldwork, the relationship is no longer between researcher as expert and passive research subjects from whom a professional detachment is maintained, as noted by England.[4] Rather the identities and cultural backgrounds of researchers and research participants, the methodology of the research, ethical considerations, as well as underlying power dynamics, all shape the ways in which researchers engage with their fields and generate knowledge.

This is of particular relevance for global development research, which is, by and large, based on fieldwork undertaken by researchers who go out and directly engage with a social field – be it in a village, or an organisation, a personal network or an entire people. Thus 'fieldwork' is far more than just 'data collection'. It generally indicates that researchers immerse themselves to a considerable degree in the field that they wish to study. They engage with people and their situated actions, interact in social relationships, gather information, and discuss ideas using different methods that include (but are by no means limited to) interviewing, surveying, participant observation and various participatory approaches. Thus, human interaction and social relationships in the field are crucial in global development research.[5] They not only determine technical issues, such as gaining access to the field and the methodological tools employed once access has been granted, social relationships also frame what researchers are permitted and able to discover, and, therefore, have tremendous significance for the epistemological underpinnings of any research that relies on empirical fieldwork as a source of data. Some researchers – in particular those who conduct ethnographic research – develop and maintain

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[2] England (1994): 81.

[3] Laws et al. (2013): 22.

[4] England (1994): 81.

[5] Beck (2005).

long-term relationships with research assistants and informants and their families, or in the communities and organisations where they conduct research. For them, a field can become a second home to which they return time and again. This opens up a view on development processes that is both close-up and long-term, but also one that calls for personal commitment.

From a relational perspective, data collection, data analysis and theorising on development appear dialectically interrelated; they emerge out of each other and are situated in the context in which they are accomplished, that is both in the field and back in the office of the researcher.[6] In the age of globalisation and increased global interconnection through the internet, both contexts can appear increasingly interrelated. They are subject to global and local forces,[7] and are informed by shared experiences and understandings, as well as misconceptions, ambiguities, power asymmetries and, potentially, conflict.[8]

Sharing personal experiences of conducting fieldwork in the Global South, the contributors to this volume adopt a relational perspective when reflecting on how their engagement with research participants has shaped their understanding of global development. Thus the relational perspective lends itself as an overarching framework for this volume – structuring the discussions it gives rise to and inviting us to reflect on how relationships in the field, and the power dynamics that they entail, are both defined by and simultaneously shape the methodological, ethical and identity-related issues that may enable or hinder successful development fieldwork. In the sections that follow, we introduce the relational perspective to undertaking global development fieldwork adopted by this volume, focusing on the specific dimensions of *power*, *identity* and *ethics*.

The Power Dimension

Power relations are pervasive in research, both between the researcher and the researched, as well as within the research setting.[9] Therefore, acknowledgement of, and reflection on, power dynamics is essential. Power is a multi-dimensional and complex concept.[10] Its significance in global development fieldwork can hardly be overstated, as Hammett et al. note: '[Power] pervades all that we do and every action in the field'. Importantly for the approach taken here, it is also noted that power 'is always *relational*' (emphasis added).[11] In other words, fieldwork is always embedded in power relations at various levels.[12]

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[6] Kapferer (2005).

[7] Burawoy (2009).

[8] Mosse (2005); Mosse (2006).

[9] Brydon (2006); Hammett et al. (2015); Mosse (2006).

[10] Foucault (1980); Rowlands (1998); Lukes (2005); Gaventa (2006).

[11] Hammett et al. (2015): 47.

[12] Mosse (2006).

Power dynamics are evident within the research process at a more personal or individual level between researchers and researched, especially given that research relationships are located within broader social stratification associated with gender, class, age, ethnicity, sexuality, and so forth. More broadly, power is inherent in the relations between relatively privileged researchers from institutions primarily based in the Global North and those being researched in the Global South, even where terminology has changed from research 'subjects' to research 'participants'. Such inequalities of power are especially pronounced where research participants are living in poverty or in conditions of marginalisation (as discussed in the conversation with Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka in Section III of this volume) and they affect the work of researchers as well as development practitioners.[13] Engagement with elites can reverse the roles, with early-career researchers and practitioners in particular finding themselves in relatively powerless situations in relation to powerful individuals and institutions, who can control (and deny) access to information and research data (see Section IV of this volume). However, it would be an error to assume that low-income research participants are without power. As others have noted, including Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka in Section III and Ashish Shah in Section I of this volume, research participants from any background can exercise a degree of control by withholding information or providing partial or misleading information.[14] Research participants can also seek to enlist researchers in their own causes, or use their relationship with researchers to enhance their own status (see Egle Cesnulyte in Section II and John Osburg in Section IV). As noted by David Mosse in Section VI, such attempts may or may not be noticed. The various ways in which our presence impacts on local power dynamics can be difficult to detect.

Awareness and acknowledgement of power dynamics at both macro and micro levels, and how they can affect research outcomes, is required when seeking to advance our understanding of global development through fieldwork-based research (see David Mosse in Section VI of this volume). At times, the immediacy and situational embeddedness of individual encounters in the field can distract our attention from how such encounters are shaped through power dynamics arising from *global* as well as local forces. Indeed, the power of Western knowledge has long been criticised. From a critical Marxist perspective, the Nigerian political scientist, Claude Ake asserted that 'Western social science scholarship on developing countries amounts to imperialism' and advocated for 'endogeneity' in knowledge production in Africa, based on an understanding of 'the historical circumstances of the society in which the science is produced'.[15] Ake also drew a parallel between the international division of labour in which African economies were producers of raw materials for export and manufacture into finished goods in Europe, and the global system of knowledge production where Africa is reduced to a source of data that is similarly exported to the West for the advancement of knowledge there,[16] an issue which we return to below.

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[13] Mawdsley et al. (2002); Anderson et al. (2012).

[14] Desai and Potter (2006); Scheyvens (2014).

[15] Ake (1979): i; Ake (1986): iii.

[16] Ake (1979), cited in: Arowosegbe (2008): 346.

In a similar critical vein, Edward Said's hugely influential work on *Orientalism* explored Western representations of the East, most notably in literature.[17] He examined how the Orient was represented by the West as 'The Other' during colonialism, with knowledge constructed about Oriental societies not being based on what they actually *were*, but on the basis of what they were *not* – i.e. what they purportedly *lacked* in comparison with the West. This representation was not based on 'reality', rather it was constructed through a dominant discourse that emanated from powerful actors, one that served to legitimise colonialism and its so-called 'civilising mission'. Said had little to say about development as such, given that his critique was based mostly on literary analysis, but his approach has been applied by many researchers to contemporary development contexts, most notably his emphasis on the power and significance of discourses and how ideational factors affected material realities. In particular, taking Said's work as his point of departure, Jonathan Crush's *Power of Development* introduces such a post-structuralist approach to global development that focuses on the language of development itself.[18] Also influenced by post-colonial and feminist critiques, Crush examines how dominant development discourses are constructed by powerful actors and institutions as a means of managing and reproducing the world based on their own interests, generally with damaging consequences for the majority population living in the Global South. For Crush, development is thus fundamentally about 'the spatial reach of power and the control and management of other peoples, territories, environments, and places'.[19]

In *Encountering Development*, also published in 1995, Arturo Escobar outlined a similar approach to development as discourse linked to issues of power. Also influenced by Said's *Orientalism*, and Foucault's archaeological method and discourse analysis, Escobar highlighted how 'development' was constructed as a discursive formation by powerful institutions in the post-1945 period. This discourse of development shared similar features, and performed a similar role, to that of *Orientalism* in the colonial period: Third World societies were represented as underdeveloped in comparison with the West, thus legitimising systematic intervention in the name of development. In Escobar's words: 'Development constructs the contemporary Third World, silently, without our noticing it. By means of this discourse, individuals, governments and communities are seen as "underdeveloped" and treated as such'.[20] Thus development came to be seen as 'an invention and strategy produced by the "First World" about the underdevelopment of the "Third World"'.[21] Escobar's particular concern is that the hegemony of development as a knowledge system promoted by powerful Western institutions (for instance, the World Bank, United Nations institutions and bilateral aid agencies) has served to marginalise and disqualify any alternative non-Western knowledge system.[22]

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[17] Said (1978).

[18] Crush (1995).

[19] Crush (1995): 6–7.

[20] Escobar (1995): 213.

[21] Escobar (1995): 212.

[22] Escobar (2012): 13.

The post-structuralist (or post-development) approach introduced in the 1990s by writers such as Crush and Escobar raises two important points concerning power and knowledge construction. First, post-structuralism emphasises how knowledge about global development is not objective or neutral, but influenced heavily by those powerful actors and institutions that benefit from the current global (dis)order characterised by gross and persistent social and economic inequalities, both between and within societies. Second, it highlights the significance of discourses in knowledge production. Following Foucault,[23] this approach adheres to the belief that there is no such thing as an objective reality that we can seek to comprehend. Rather, reality is defined and understood precisely through discourses, themselves made up of bodies of ideas. As Escobar succinctly puts it: 'development colonized reality, it became reality'.[24] The two points come together in the ability of powerful institutions to largely determine what counts as knowledge through control of dominant discourses, with their consequent deployment and material impact through 'development' practices.

While most post-structuralists focus on the role of development discourses in the post-World-War-II period,[25] Crush indicates that the language of development has performed such functions from the colonial period onwards, through independence from colonial rule to the post-colonial period, thus demonstrating continuity over time as well as changes in the content of development discourses that are linked to material economic and political changes in who holds power over whom.[26] Such analysis leads to an emphasis on the need to 'decolonise' research in development contexts.[27] A particular concern has been about how third world 'others', especially subaltern or marginalised groups, have been represented in academic writing.[28]

There are clearly important implications here for how we undertake research and attempt to contribute to knowledge, which we return to later. Such critiques of the power relations in development discourses and their use in maintaining unequal and exploitative global relations, inclusive of the continued dominance of researchers from Northern academic institutions in knowledge production about Southern peoples, has led to what Richa Nagar and Susan Geiger term a 'crisis of representation', with doubts about the possibility of truthful representation of others leading to a degree of paralysis in fieldwork-based research.[29] Similarly, Scheyvens refers to a 'crisis of legitimacy' for development researchers, with possible responses varying from abandoning development research altogether; privileging the knowledge and understanding of those being

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[23] Foucault (1980).

[24] Escobar (1995): 214.

[25] Sachs (2009); Escobar (2012).

[26] Crush (1995): 7; Cowen and Shenton (1996).

[27] Mercer et al. (2003): 419–436; Power et al. (2006).

[28] Kapoor (2004).

[29] Nagar and Geiger (2007): 267.

researched; limiting research into the social situation of oppressed and marginalised groups to 'insiders' only; and adopting new approaches (notably participatory ones) to research design and implementation (see Section I).[30]

We concur with much of the critique above that issues of power are crucial in all global development research, and indeed that it is important to critically and reflexively acknowledge such issues. We are also of the view, however, that it remains not only legitimate, but also important for researchers in Northern institutions, in collaboration with those in Southern ones, to undertake research in developing country contexts. Indeed, we agree with Nagar and Geiger that 'the dangers of relinquishing responsibility [by abandoning fieldwork for instance] for acquiring, producing and disseminating knowledge about and by people inhabiting the rest of the world have never been greater'.[31] Such collective and collaborative research aims at bringing into dialogue Northern and Southern perspectives, and can also involve a shared political commitment that seeks to advance the position and interests of marginalised and oppressed groups (see Section III). However, the *reflexive acknowledgement and negotiation of power relations* must be seen as a precondition for any meaningful research on global development.

The Identity Dimension

Power relations in research are interconnected with the second dimension of a relational approach – that of identity, and the related concepts of positionality and reflexivity. As we have shown in the previous paragraphs, conducting fieldwork-based research in development contexts implies much more than just 'doing social research in the Global South', and goes beyond a mere shift in geographical space. It often involves communicating across multiple divides of power,[32] as well as across different languages and cultures. It requires researchers to manage perceptions, expectations and relationships – with research participants as well as collaborators, interpreters and assistants. Some fields react hostilely to the presence of a researcher; some are indifferent; while others are all-consuming, making it difficult to maintain scholarly distance, if this is indeed sought after. Fieldwork is always conducted by a person; a person with a particular identity, culture, set of life experiences and worldview. Those conducting and participating in research are never just researchers or research 'subjects': they are men or women, young or old, rich or poor, familiar or alien, friendly or disagreeable. Therefore, when working in the field, researchers and research participants invariably (re)construct and implicate personal *identities* and relationships. The importance of reflecting on these identities and relationships, and how they influence the research process and our understanding of development issues cannot be overstated.

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[30] Scheyvens (2014): 6.

[31] Nagar and Geiger (2007): 277.

[32] Nagar and Geiger (2007): 267.

The two principal concepts we use when discussing the multi-faceted implications of identity-related issues and personal relationships in development fieldwork are positionality and reflexivity. The contributions to this book all emphasise the important role that the researcher's position plays in the research process. *Positionality* concerns personal awareness of the researcher's own position in terms of gender, class, race, age, sexuality, religion and so forth, and how these aspects of identity and social position (or status) may affect the research process in general, and data collection in particular, including relationships with research participants. For instance, our gender may have a significant impact. In some contexts, it may be difficult or inappropriate for male researchers to conduct research on intimate issues relating to women's experiences of oppression, such as domestic violence. In others, female researchers may encounter challenges and discrimination specific to their gender that hinder data collection (see Section II).[33] Researchers' positionality within a specific social context may limit who they can talk to and the type of data that can be gathered, thus potentially shaping their understanding of a given social phenomenon in important ways. Positionality can also have a wider political dimension with reference to the researcher's own standpoint or worldview and how this influences their perceptions and findings (see Jean Grugel in Section IV). Having a standpoint is not necessarily negative, and a critical starting point may lead to deeper insights. However, positionality can be said to bias one's research, and it is thus necessary to be aware of and to acknowledge the likely ways in which aspects of positionality can affect research processes. This is, again, a very distinct approach to that of positivist social science, with its inherent assumption of the unbiased and neutral researcher with the ability to observe an external social reality from the outside, a perspective that we do not subscribe to.

Positionality also raises insider/outsider issues that reflect the distinction between the *emic* and *etic* approaches to research most commonly found in anthropology.[34] An emic approach is that of the insider, where research is ideally undertaken by someone from within the social group, and develops accounts and analyses based on the perspectives of the research participants. In contrast, an etic approach adopts a more positivist epistemology where an outside observer tests the applicability of hypotheses, based on existing theories, to a new research context. Much ethnographic research favours an emic approach, and likewise researchers in development contexts often seek to adopt an insider perspective. However, emic/etic or insider/outsider distinctions are not so clear-cut in practice and researchers often face challenges in adopting one position over another in their methodology.

As highlighted by contributors to this book, including David Mosse (Section VI), there are relative advantages and disadvantages associated with adopting the role of an insider or outsider in different contexts. When working with marginalised or oppressed groups, 'native' or home researchers may well be better placed, as they are able to speak the local languages and are aware of cultural nuances. They may have greater legitimacy in negotiating political spaces, and be more acutely aware of the complex and hidden political

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[33] Simelane (2014).

[34] Headland et al. (1990).

machinations among elite fractions, of which the outsider may be relatively oblivious.[35] Yet, it is important to note that 'insiders' can be simultaneously 'outsiders' in the eyes of people from researched communities, as Farhana Sultana and Njoki Wamai experienced in their research in Bangladesh and Kenya respectively, and as Swetha Rao Dhananka notes in Section III of this volume.[36] Wamai, for instance, was an outsider in terms of ethnicity, coming from a different ethnic group to those being researched; as a woman researching into 'male' politics; and as a researcher based in a foreign Western university. In research on elites, outsiders may be in a more advantageous position to extract information from political or economic elites, being perceived as external and non-threatening in the context of national politics (see the chapters in Section IV of this volume).

While there has been much greater recognition of the significance of the researcher's positionality in recent literature,[37] the relationship between outside researchers and local assistants continues to be presented by many as a mere technicality. In our view, this is inherently problematic. Just as our own identity, power and status can affect the research process, so too can those of our assistants and interpreters. Their positionality can potentially hinder as well as facilitate building rapport with different groups of research participants (as illustrated by Ashish Shah in Chapter 3). Brendan Browne and Luke Moffett comment on challenges associated with using translators, including those that stem from the positionality of the translators themselves, causing them to shape 'answers to conform to their own views'.[38] Their observations indicate awareness of how the positionality of all those involved in the research process can affect outcomes. Additionally, as Scott Naysmith shows in Chapter 15, researchers undoubtedly have a responsibility for research assistants and their well-being – raising important ethical issues (see below), and shaping data collection.

With awareness of positionality dependent on 'serious self-reflection',[39] the recognition of positionality and its potential implications leads us to the concept of *reflexivity*. In general, reflexivity refers to 'reflection on self, process and representation, and critically examining power relations and politics in the research process'[40] – particularly with a view to one's positionality and how it may affect the construction of knowledge. It is important that such reflection occurs throughout the entire research process. Reflexivity is essential to a social constructivist perspective that acknowledges that no research is unbiased or value neutral, but nonetheless wants to avoid the extreme relativism of some post-modern approaches where 'there can be no knowledge beyond the opinion of an individual'.[41]

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[35] Wamai (2014).

[36] Sultana (2007); Wamai (2014).

[37] Lunn (2014).

[38] Browne and Moffett (2014): 228–229.

[39] Scheyvens (2014): 6.

[40] Sultana (2007): 376.

[41] Laws et al. (2013): 47.

Reflexivity enables researchers to question how their positionality and personal views may have affected or biased their research. A reflexive approach to fieldwork-based research can be seen as potentially increasing rigour, and enabling others to evaluate findings in that light.[42] Although issues of identity, positionality and reflexivity in fieldwork have been widely acknowledged, Nagar and Geiger argue that engagement with reflexivity has often 'focused mainly on the identities of individual researchers rather than on how such identities intersect with institutional, geopolitical, and material aspects of their positionality'.[43] Hence they put forward an approach that aims to extend reflexivity from an emphasis on researchers' identity to social relationships in the field and the ways in which these are embedded in wider economic, political and social processes that shape the form and effects of fieldwork in development contexts. We agree with this approach and would like to add that such reflexivity is also crucial to addressing the issues related to knowledge and power relations that lie at the heart of the post-structuralist perspectives outlined above.[44]

Drawing on the work of Gayatri Spivak, Ilan Kapoor similarly encourages development researchers to engage in 'heightened reflexivity' with the aim of becoming more aware of how 'our discursive constructions are intimately linked to our positioning (socioeconomic, gendered, cultural, geographic, historical, institutional)', and in this way 'cannot escape othering', most notably in representations of the marginalised and subaltern.[45] He advocates a three-fold process of, first, acknowledging that 'our personal and institutional desires and interests are unavoidably written into our representations'; second, unlearning dominant, and as such familiar, systems of knowledge and representation; and, third, 'learning to learn from below' in a way that knowledge flows from South to North as well as the other way around (although instigating these flows of knowledge can be problematic in and of itself, as Lata Narayanaswamy shows in Chapter 19).[46] While such heightened reflexivity can be very demanding, it bears the promise of enabling us to conduct research that is characterised by dialogue and a more *ethical* engagement with the subaltern as the subject – and not the object – of development.

The Ethical Dimension

Reflexivity is of critical importance within our overarching relational approach, not least because ethical issues can be difficult to identify and respond to without a reflexive understanding of fieldwork and the social relationships it entails. The importance of doing research ethically has always featured in development research, given that development fieldwork often takes place in environments that are characterised by poverty, extreme

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[42] Laws et al. (2013).

[43] Nagar and Geiger (2007): 268.

[44] Moore (1996).

[45] Kapoor (2004): 644.

[46] Kapoor (2008): 55.

social inequality and human struggle. Issues of power are also closely linked to ethics. Depending on the situation, researchers may find themselves in relatively powerful or powerless positions in relation to different research participants. The ethical dimension of doing social science research has loomed ever larger in recent years, with the expansion and regularisation of ethical review procedures within universities for all research that involves 'human subjects'. In some respects this development seems to have given rise to a divide between looking at ethical issues in a relatively narrow or broad manner. On the one hand, there is the more standard set of questions that concern university ethical review committees; while on the other hand, there is a wider set of ethical issues that arise when undertaking research in contexts of poverty and deprivation, including how research can contribute to social change and social justice. We consider both narrow and broad aspects here, while concentrating on the latter. Again, the interlinkages between questions of ethics, power and identity are evident.

University ethical review procedures are generally motivated by the principle that research should 'do no harm' to participants and that the latter should not be exposed to risk of any sort. Therefore, in most universities, it has become compulsory to obtain ethical approval before fieldwork can be commenced. Most ethical review procedures involve the preparation and formal review of detailed proposals and application forms, information sheets and consent forms for research participants. There are different views on the benefits and limitations of such an approach.[47] The main issues under consideration are usually those of 'informed consent', where participants are fully informed about the nature of the research project and freely agree to participate; and 'anonymity and confidentiality', where research participants are guaranteed that their identity will not be disclosed (unless they so desire), and that information given will remain confidential beyond its anonymised use in the research project.

At times, global development researchers may feel that university ethics committees adopt an inflexible 'absolutist' stance that stems from medical research, and which does not fully understand the challenges associated with cross-cultural research.[48] Such challenges may be practical (e.g. gaining written consent from participants in certain cultural contexts or from non-literate participants), as well as more substantial. For instance, research participants who find themselves in a vulnerable position may 'volunteer' their time because they do not see themselves as able to decline a request for participation from someone they regard as more powerful. As noted by Swetha Rao Dhananka in Chapter 9 of this book, sometimes it can also be difficult to explain the nature and purpose of academic research on global development without raising unrealistic expectations on the side of research participants. These and other examples show that ethical review procedures, when carried out mechanistically and without reflexivity, can lead researchers to ignore (or even reinforce) unequal relationships of power.[49]

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[47] Scheyvens (2014); Hammett et al. (2015).

[48] Banks and Scheyvens (2014): 163.

[49] See Ruth Pearson in Section II for a discussion on the unequal power relationships between researchers and respondents.

In addition, there is the danger that researchers may feel that once they have acquired 'ethical approval', they have dealt with ethics, with a tendency to then give limited attention to real challenges in the field associated with navigating ethically sensitive situations. While university ethical guidelines are important in informing the ways in which researchers approach their fields, there is a need for more flexibility and reflexivity in challenging situations where guidelines can appear distant and inapplicable, and difficult decisions have to be taken on the spot. Such situations can vary from a desperately poor person asking for money in exchange for access to information, or the researcher exiting from a potentially dangerous situation while leaving participants/assistants behind, or being faced with a family suggesting the adoption of their sick child, all of which contributors to this volume have experienced. As these examples illustrate, the relevance of ethical considerations in development contexts are not only heightened, but also difficult to resolve in many instances. This is particularly true when conducting fieldwork in dangerous contexts, a topic addressed in Section V of this volume, notably in the interview with Jenny Pearce.[50]

Global development researchers are acutely aware of the importance of ethical research, and indeed reflection on a range of broader ethical issues pre-dated the more recent establishment of university ethical review procedures for the social sciences. Ethical guidelines have also been drawn up by relevant professional associations, for instance those of the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (see www.theasa.org/ethics.shtml). In contrast to institutional procedures, which can at times seem like a hurdle to be successfully negotiated, such guidelines are generally aimed at helping researchers to satisfactorily resolve potential ethical dilemmas. In accordance with the approach taken here, such guidelines generally acknowledge the need for researchers to reflect on their own position in the research process at all stages and thereby improve their research practice. Again, we are reminded of the interaction between issues of positionality, reflexivity and ethical research.

As Laws et al. state, 'questions of ethics are embedded in every aspect of the process of research for development work'.[51] Research on global development, and the role of fieldwork within it, is concerned with understanding, communicating and changing conditions of human existence that are experienced as highly problematic and at times inhuman. Therefore, many of us not only aim to 'do no harm', but also to 'do good',[52] and ethical questions surround our work in the field as well as back in the office. The interconnection of identity, power and knowledge highlighted above suggests that development discourses and related practices of international development cooperation can be (ab)used to stabilise rather than confront unequal and exploitative global relations. Thus, the broadest ethical question concerns the *purpose* of our research and the extent to which it can realistically

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[50] Also see, Lee-Treweek and Linkogle (2000); Tomei (2014).

[51] Laws et al. (2013): 163.

[52] Madge (1997): 114.

contribute to progressive social change that improves the situation of people living in poverty or who face marginalisation and oppression.[53]

Another key issue, with reference back to Ake's thesis on academic imperialism,[54] is that research should not mirror the much-criticised extractive industries in removing valuable commodities from less developed contexts – in this instance information and data – and exporting these to the North for the benefit of the already wealthy and privileged – in this instance ambitious academics intent on advancing their careers.[55] We concur that development researchers have to make significant efforts to ensure that research is not exploitative in the way that it can be construed as yet another form of imperialism.[56] This view raises questions regarding the purpose and practice of fieldwork-based research as well as research design and *methods*, especially concerning participatory research and the co-production of knowledge by researchers and research participants with the aim of 'putting the first last'.[57] Participatory research, inspired by Paulo Freire and pioneered by Robert Chambers in the development context (see Section I),[58] aims to engage local research participants in ways that enable them to contribute to the (co-)production of knowledge, and to utilise that knowledge to advocate for positive change to their living conditions.[59] This is of particular relevance when undertaking research with marginalised and oppressed people and implies the creative use of methods that enable a more active involvement of research participants who – depending on the research design – may come to lead the investigation (see Section I and Chapter 14 of this volume).[60] Knowledge production can be linked in this way to advocacy and action, and is aptly known as Participatory Action Research (PAR).[61] However, such participatory co-production of knowledge with local communities, while aiming to be non-extractive, is not immune from criticisms that benefits still flow predominantly to the Northern researchers through academic publications, so essential for career progression. As Paul Chatterton, Duncan Fuller and Paul Routledge have noted, on too many occasions 'participatory researchers have been more interested in the "R" than the "A" in PAR'.[62] Others have emphasised that participatory research requires a high degree of reflexive awareness, in particular regarding the relationship between researcher and research participants.[63]

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[53] See Sections II, IV and V for discussions on the role of research in responding to social injustice.

[54] Ake (1979).

[55] Hammett et al. (2015).

[56] Spivak (1988): 290; Kapoor (2004): 632–633.

[57] Chambers (1997).

[58] Freire (1970); Freire (1972).

[59] Chambers (1997).

[60] Mikkelsen (2005); Narayanasamy (2009).

[61] Reason and Bradbury (2013).

[62] Chatterton et al. (2007): 217.

[63] Campbell (2002).

While our attention is primarily focused on academic research in development contexts, doing research is also an essential part of the development work undertaken by many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other institutions involved in the global development project.[64] As highlighted by David Mosse in Section VI of this volume, practitioner research is based on different premises and pursues different purposes. Yet, it faces similar, if not heightened, ethical challenges when it comes to engaging with 'local beneficiaries' in ways that are meaningful to them as well as to the development workers seeking to support their 'case'. Notions of (under)development and the superiority of Northern knowledge continue to reinforce power dynamics that prevent such meaningful engagement.[65] Where scale-able models and efficient project implementation are valued more than 'time to listen', ethical issues and accountability paradoxes are bound to emerge.[66] In such contexts, development cooperation can 'aid' powerful elites more than those who find themselves at the margins, a point also made by Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka in Section III.

A related ethical issue concerns the question of reciprocity or 'giving back'. The most contentious, and probably the most concrete, example is the discussion around the bestowing of gifts or payments to research participants.[67] Cash payments are problematic for various self-evident reasons, including the potential for payments to skew research answers and findings. Research participants from poor communities should not suffer financially in terms of opportunity costs, however, and should be compensated for their time. Non-financial gifts and practical assistance may be more appropriate and avoid the creation of patron–client type relations.[68] It is probably safe to say that there is a consensus that global development research should ideally be of benefit to those communities who have participated and/or to people living in similar contexts elsewhere through advocacy of policy change. Achieving this, nonetheless, is a more difficult proposition. Different means of reciprocity are discussed in the literature, varying from more abstract to concrete, and from local to national, and even international. Less tangibly, at the level of the research location, there is the respect for and validation of local knowledge that is inherent in participatory research processes themselves, and can serve to raise self-esteem, especially among communities living in conditions of deprivation (see Section I of this book).[69] At the end of fieldwork, or as soon as possible thereafter, sharing the preliminary research findings with the research participants again serves to validate the local community's participation and to provide community members with food for thought, although some of the findings may

[64] Mikkelsen (2005).

[65] Mawdsley et al. (2002).

[66] Anderson et al. (2012).

[67] Banks and Scheyvens (2014); Hammett et al. (2015).

[68] Banks and Scheyvens (2014); also see interviews with Ruth Pearson in Section II and Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka in Section III.

[69] Banks and Scheyvens (2014).

not be received comfortably by all members in divided and stratified communities.[70] As noted by various contributors to this book, many researchers undertaking fieldwork in development contexts seek to listen to, and at times amplify, the voices of those who are silenced or oppressed. While such practice may be seen as a result of ethical concerns, it can also trigger a backlash from local elites (see Jean Grugel in Chapter 11).

Such discussions lead us to the question of the impact of global development research. Beyond the immediate research location, development research can aim to have impact through its findings being utilised in policy advocacy at local or central government level with a view to improving socioeconomic conditions. Likewise, some research may aim at influencing the policy direction of international organisations. However, we agree with David Mosse (Chapter 17 of this volume) that not all research can expect to have an impact on government or international organisations. This is especially true of critical research, which may be more insightful in digging deeper to reveal the structural and systemic causes of persistent social inequalities and deprivation, and analyses the need for substantive and transformative change in a way that does not lend itself to policy-oriented reforms. Such insights, however, may facilitate action and advocacy by affected groups in civil society, as discussed next, although this is dependent on academic authors' ability (and political commitment) to communicate in a way that is accessible to social movements and civil society organisations.

Here we come to the most direct, political use of development research to affect social change in a progressive direction. There is an honourable tradition of academic activism and political engagement,[71] notably in feminist research (see Ruth Pearson in Chapter 5).[72] This is particularly evident in the global development sphere, given that researchers are often motivated by a deep antipathy to global inequalities and injustices, which they seek to transform through a combination of research and activism (see Nelly Ali's account of working with street children in Chapter 16). Academic activism can take two main forms – either inherent in the research process itself, or through action based on the research findings. Action-based research (and PAR) has the specific aim of studying and analysing a particular context in collaboration with those affected, with the intent that research participants can then take action to improve the socioeconomic conditions in which they live.[73] This approach is strongly influenced by the work of Paulo Freire and his methodology of *conscientisation*, a process whereby research entails collective critical reflection upon oppressive social structures leading to social action that seeks to contest and transform such structures.[74] An example is research (such as feminist PAR) that aims to identify and challenge the negative gender-based power relations which marginalise and oppress women and girls. Critically engaged scholarship can also aim to contribute to campaigns

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[70] Mosse (2005).

[71] Routledge (2010); Chatterton et al. (2007).

[72] Nagar (2002).

[73] Kindon et al. (2007); McNiff (2013); Reason and Bradbury (2013).

[74] Freire (1970); Freire (1972).

for social justice (as noted by Jenny Pearce and Nelly Ali in Section V of this volume) through research that provides relevant evidence and a deeper critical understanding of processes of marginalisation. Such research, however, requires fieldwork that involves a high degree of openness and reflexivity – fieldwork that is conducted by researchers who carefully consider their own positionality, and that of their assistants and participants; who critically examine the webs of social relationships and power dynamics that constitute their fields, both in terms of local interactions and wider structural forces; and who are willing to continuously question the ethical soundness of their work, both during field-work and analysis.

This observation closes our brief introduction to the relational approach to undertaking fieldwork-based research in global development, inclusive of the dimensions of power, iden-tity and ethics. We hope that with this overview, and the broad variety of more specific examples provided, we have demonstrated how fieldwork is more than just data collection, and how relationships in the field are both defined by and simultaneously shape power, identity and ethics in development research in complex ways.

AIMS AND USES OF THE BOOK

From the relational perspective, research and fieldwork – and the knowledge they produce – are embedded in various kinds of social relationships, some of which are constituted in immediate and personal interactions between researchers and research participants, while others are construed from observations of patterns of exclusion and engagement of a more collective and structural nature. Much of the literature on development research approaches the relational dimension of our work as something that can be more or less managed through adopting the 'right' kind of theoretical framework, ethical guidelines and research methods. While we agree that the proficient use of appropriate theories, codes of conduct and research methods are of pivotal importance for undertaking development research, we also feel that there is a gap in the literature when it comes to the implications of the more specific and often personal ways in which researchers think about, engage with and learn from people before they even start thinking about data analysis.

Fieldwork in global development research now builds on several generations of researchers whose lives, interests and methods of doing fieldwork have developed over a number of decades. Yet, this experience rarely seems to be tapped into beyond informal talks and pri-vate conversations. This is all the more surprising given that for most researchers and research students, conducting fieldwork in development contexts can be a rather intimidat-ing experience, and one that often requires them to take a leap out of their comfort zone. Students and researchers often wish to be better prepared for an experience that is, quite honestly, difficult (and at times impossible) to prepare for. Existing resources such as hand-books and textbooks provide useful advice about theoretical frameworks, how to apply different methods, related practical issues such as field entry, and rules of conduct. However, the reality of conducting fieldwork frequently turns out to be a lot more confusing and challenging than expected – methods need to be adapted to local conditions, and important

ethical issues cannot always be identified and addressed simply by following general rules of conduct. Fieldwork invariably involves making difficult choices – often in situations where there is little support and guidance available for the researcher. Development fieldwork, thus, requires a significant degree of reflexivity, and, ultimately, experience.

In this book, we seek to address exactly this side of fieldwork in an inter-disciplinary and inter-generational way by bringing into dialogue the fieldwork experiences of some of the leading figures in global development research with corresponding accounts from early-career scholars, thereby conveying a sense of what it actually feels like to be out in the field. We give development researchers the opportunity to share their reflections on the ways in which their fieldwork, and the choices they had to make, shaped their research and understanding of global development. In this way, we hope to provide a better understanding of how we gain knowledge of global development processes, as well as to make a significant contribution to the training and personal development of academics that work in development contexts, enabling them to better prepare for some of the challenges they may face, and to provide guidance as to how they can approach these challenges.

Finally, our relational perspective steers attention to the ways in which relationships in the field frame the social world that development researchers set out to discover, and of how power, identity and ethical issues shape the ways in which researchers encounter key themes of particular relevance to fieldwork-based research. We hope that an experience-led discussion of each of the topics provides readers with important insights and practical advice, while also contributing to a more in-depth understanding of fieldwork as a lived experience that ultimately shapes both research outputs and future research practice. By making public and bringing into dialogue experiences that span several decades of development research, we seek to encourage our readers to critically reflect on how they conduct fieldwork with others, thereby (re)constructing relationships in the field that can shape their research and understanding of global development in significant ways.

THE MAKING OF THIS BOOK

As noted at the start of this chapter, this book emerged from our involvement in the Centre for Global Development (CGD) at the University of Leeds, and especially the Researchers in Development Network (RiDNet) – a network of Ph.D. students and early-career researchers within the Centre. After organising and participating in multiple events on development fieldwork, we wanted to initiate a space where deliberations and reflections on the uniqueness of fieldwork experiences could be undertaken in a more systematic manner. We aimed to focus not merely on practical or technical issues, but on the bigger philosophical and methodological questions that arise when undertaking global development research, and which influence our understandings of global development processes. We thought it would be extremely valuable to involve distinguished scholars in these reflections and to benefit from their long experience of fieldwork-based research. We also felt that it would be appropriate to approach this undertaking from a conversational style reminiscent of RiDNet discussions, and thus the interview format was decided upon. We were aware of other

examples that had successfully used this method and favoured this format for various reasons.[75] One was that it would encourage a more candid discussion about the ups and downs of fieldwork, the moments of good fortune and serendipity as well as the calamities, something that is often missing from the drier and more technical accounts of fieldwork methods. Another was that it would bring alive the voices of distinguished scholars talking about their experiences in a way that would not be captured by a formal written chapter. In addition, we decided that it would be particularly appropriate to include two shorter fieldnotes in each section in which early-career researchers would have the opportunity to respond to the issues and dilemmas highlighted by the senior academics, and to discuss their own experiences of such challenges and how they had dealt with them.

Thus, we proceeded to select six key issues of fundamental importance to development research and to contact appropriate individuals who had devoted much of their careers to working in those areas, and were delighted with the enthusiastic response. We drew up lists of questions for semi-structured interviews, both a set of general questions for all interviewees and specific questions tailored to each issue-based area. Interviews were conducted by one of the editors, who assumed responsibility for editing the interview transcript, which was then shared with the interviewee who was given the opportunity to undertake revisions. We approached early-career researchers and asked them if they would be interested in reflecting on, and responding to, one or two key themes that emerged from the interviews based on their own more recent experiences in the field, and solicited 12 fieldnotes (two for each section). We hoped that in this way, each section would develop into an inter-disciplinary and inter-generational dialogue that could initiate and inform a wider discussion about the role that our experiences and relationships in the field play in shaping our understandings of what development means and how development progresses.

Finally, we also decided to solicit illustrations of fieldwork experiences in an attempt to further enhance what we hoped would become an engaging read. We asked all contributors to this volume to provide us with photographs relating to the material they covered in their respective section. Peter Seilacher kindly volunteered to turn these photographs into drawings that captured moments of fieldwork. As an architect and designer with a specialisation in visual communication, Peter sought to convey the essence of each picture with tremendous skill and empathy. We hope that his pictures transmit a similar sense of immediacy and involvement to our readership.

OVERVIEW OF CONTENTS

We close this introductory chapter with a brief overview of the six sections of the book. Each section includes an edited conversation between a leading figure in that particular area of global development research and one of the editors, followed by two fieldnotes from early-career researchers.

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[75] See Halliday and Schmidt (2009); Clarke and Keller (2014); Jarvie and Osorio (2014).

The opening section 'Encountering the Field' examines the choices involved in designing and conducting participatory fieldwork in development contexts. In the initial conversation with Nicholas Loubere, Professor Robert Chambers reflects on the role he played in the development and popularisation of participatory methodologies, and discusses how this 'participatory turn' has facilitated a shift in focus from researchers to the participants themselves. Professor Chambers emphasises the importance of maintaining an open and flexible mind-set while in the field in order to avoid 'premature closure' and to allow for the emergence of hidden or silenced voices and realities that are often overlooked by researchers employing traditional methodological approaches. Ashish Shah extends this conversation by outlining his own experience of using participatory mapping as a means of countering the domination of his research by local elites in a Malawian village. After discovering that he was receiving distorted information about the distribution of resources and power, Shah initiated a public mapping activity which uncovered previously hidden voices belonging to relatively powerless actors. In the second fieldnote, Sarah Milne reflects on her use of both participatory methods and traditional ethnographic approaches in her hybrid work as a researcher and advocate for social change. Using examples from fieldwork on biodiversity conservation projects in remote parts of Cambodia, Milne shows how participatory methods have successfully allowed her to broach difficult topics and start conversations that could then be continued using more 'traditional' ethnographic methods.

Section II on 'Gender and Fieldwork' analyses the issues and challenges associated with using a gender lens within development research. In her conversation with Rosemary Morgan, Professor Ruth Pearson discusses how gender relations shape our interactions with people in the field and impact upon the lives and realities of our research participants in unique ways. Drawing on her research experience in South America and Southeast Asia, Professor Pearson considers the balance that needs to be struck between respecting people's choices, which are influenced by unequal gendered power relations and norms, and the importance of promoting gender equality and a universal equality of rights. In the first fieldnote Johanna Bergström looks at how gender and gender equality is understood differently depending on cultural, organisational and individual contexts. Bergström explores how her research in Guatemala led her to uncover different understandings of gender and gender equality among international, state, private, regional and local organisations, and shows that while a universal notion of gender equality is important, it is also crucial that researchers understand how local contexts affect understandings of gender and the struggle for gender equality. In the second fieldnote, Egle Cesnulyte reflects on the notion of 'constrained choices', and the importance of recognising and understanding women's agency in relation to these choices. Using examples from her fieldwork with female sex workers in Kenya, Cesnulyte discusses how the language of Western feminism does not always match the experiences of female respondents in contexts where women's choices are influenced by their constrained circumstances, and how unequal gendered power relations shape both our own experiences in the field and those of our respondents.

Section III – 'Fieldwork at the Margins' – considers the issues involved in conducting fieldwork in remote places, and/or with marginalised and vulnerable populations. The section

opens with Lena Kruckenberg's conversation with Professor Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka about her career of researching marginalisation and inequality in remote areas of Nepal. Professor Pfaff-Czarnecka elaborates on how global and local patterns of marginality manifest themselves at the peripheries, and contemplates the ways in which the relationships she formed during fieldwork at different stages of her career shaped her understanding of the field, her research and the (re)production of marginalisation more generally. Swetha Rao Dhananka responds to the interview by reflecting on her first fieldwork experience – an examination of issues around housing and marginal slum-dwellers in her parents' hometown of Bangalore, India. Dhananka highlights the ways in which her positionality shifted depending on which type of marginal actor she was working with, and the role this played in shaping her fieldwork and the research she was able to do in different contexts. In the second fieldnote of the section, Lorenza Fontana discusses fieldwork in remote areas of Bolivia. Through an examination of a local conflict, Fontana shows how the margins are not homogeneous spaces comprised of uniformly marginalised populations – rather, patterns of marginality form within the margins, reflecting unequal relationships of power.

The fourth section, entitled 'Engaging with "Elite" Actors', explores the challenges and opportunities associated with researching elites. Using illustrations from her research in South America and Europe, Professor Jean Grugel discusses the nature of elite power with Rosemary Morgan, and reflects on how this power gives rise to different types of elites, and shapes researchers' interactions and relationships in the field. Professor Grugel weighs the unique challenges associated with researching elites, such as going beyond scripted answers and dealing with criticism, and discusses how difficulties associated with fieldwork on authoritarian and political elites led her to recalibrate her research to focus on civil society. John Osburg continues this discussion by reflecting on the conflicted feelings he had while interviewing the head of a local criminal network in China. In his fieldnote, Osburg discusses how he found it difficult to reconcile the generosity and kindness shown to him by his respondent with this same respondent's violent activities, and how this impacted upon his ability to critically interrogate the narratives and discourses presented during fieldwork. In the second fieldnote, Karen Siegel reflects on the notion of power in relation to elite respondents. Using examples from her research on regional environmental politics in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, Siegel discusses how power manifests itself at two levels: first, in relation to the different types of power elites hold in different contexts and how this gives rise to different types of elites; and second, in relation to the researcher's relationship with elites and the differential levels of power that researchers and elite research participants hold.

Section V examines 'Danger in the Field' through an in-depth look at the different types of threats that arise during fieldwork – both for researchers themselves and others involved in, or affected by, research projects. The section begins with a discussion between Professor Jenny Pearce and Nicholas Loubere about how danger, threat and violence have manifested themselves during Professor Pearce's research career – spanning four decades in severely conflict-affected countries in Central and South America. Professor Pearce reflects on the ways in which danger, or the threat of danger, has shaped the type of fieldwork she

has been able to engage in, and how she has perceived the field and understood the nature of development more generally. In the first fieldnote, Scott Naysmith considers a very different type of danger – the threat of deadly disease in the field. He reflects on how the threat of infection loomed over his qualitative fieldwork into local understandings of avian influenza (bird flu) in Indonesian bird markets, and recounts the experience of a health scare with one of his research assistants. Nelly Ali returns to the theme of violence in the field with a number of heart-wrenching examples from her work with street children in Egypt. Ali gives an account of her transition from 'pure' academic research to impact-oriented social activism, and she details the challenges implicit in navigating a field characterised by extreme cruelty and suffering.

The sixth and final section on 'Development in Theory and Practice' looks at the distinct but overlapping issues involved in conducting research for academic purposes versus working as a development practitioner. In the opening chapter, Lena Kruckenberg interviews Professor David Mosse about his experience of transitioning from a development practitioner to an academic over the course of his career – and how this transition has necessitated very different conceptualisations of development. Professor Mosse discusses juggling and reconciling multiple positionalities during fieldwork in an attempt to theorise about development; and he reflects on the ways in which research is represented and narratives are formed. He also examines the ethics of consent and feeding research back into the field. In the fieldnote following the interview, Kathy Dodworth responds to Professor Mosse's discussion of switching between different positionalities by reflecting on the ways in which she was required to continually recalibrate her identity in order to maintain legitimacy during fieldwork with NGOs in Tanzania. Lata Narayanaswamy closes out the section with a rather (dis)spirited account of her research on knowledge-for-development projects in New Delhi, India. Through an illustration of the ways in which these supposedly publically accessible resources were actually locked away and hidden within gated communities, Narayanaswamy considers how researchers can, and should, understand and deal with development failure and irrelevance.

All six main sections draw on the relational approach when discussing the issues of power, identity and ethics in relation to the particular topic of the section. The book closes with a concluding chapter, entitled 'Towards a Relational Understanding of Development Research', in which we discuss crosscutting themes that connect the six sections to the overarching relational perspective of the book and identify key issues that emerged concerning the generation of knowledge about global development processes.

We hope that the unique form and content of this book will provide for an engaging and fun read – and we invite the reader to continue the conversations that we have begun in the pages that follow.