INTRODUCTION

The study of development has long remained “one of the last bastions of modernism in the social sciences” (Rapley, 2007: 185) and many of the practices of development agencies, the World Bank, and others are still conducted within the theoretical framework set up after the end of the Second World War. Yet empirical evidence of persisting global inequality, and skepticism about the idea of modernity as growth – as it is, for example, represented in the world community’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – in light of environmental degradation and serious post-colonial criticism, have put these visions into question both in theory and in practice. In the following, our first aim is to show the strong diversity of development theorizing and to understand the traditions that have developed.

International Relations (IR) as a discipline did not take sufficient account of development for a long time and had little substantive to say about states at the political as well as economic peripheries of the international system and even less about poverty as well as inequality within them (Neuman, 1998; Jones, 2005: 993). This trend reflected the tendency that “development has been consigned to the realm of low politics, except when the international order, as it has been constructed, is threatened” (Dickson, 1998: 367). IR has at times even denounced alternative approaches dealing with new issues, such as poverty, race or the environment, as non-IR (Smith, 2007: 6). Such issues were taken up in other departments, such as development studies, area studies, or comparative politics, where they tended to be compartmentalized in particular issue areas. Our second aim is to show that development practice and development thinking have, however, always been part of international politics, even though IR did not account for it. It is only recently that IR’s own diversity has reflected more and more the various critical, postcolonial, and poststructuralist tendencies of development. The discipline has changed over the last 15 years and has become less state-centric. Former ‘low politics’ issues have become more central in the study of international and transnational relations.

One of the reasons for this change is the rise of the BRICs economies (Brazil, Russia, India and China) that is shifting geopolitical realities and the practice of development. In particular, after the financial crisis of 2008/2009 the original core countries of the West are perceived to be in decline. Indications for the rise of the emerging economies are (i) the end of the G-7/G-8 and the establishment of the G-20 as the major forum for geopolitical and geo-economic discussions; (ii) the stalling of the Doha Round for World Trade, when in 2009 negotiations...
collapsed due to India’s veto against US and EU agricultural policies combined with issues of a strong growth of South-South trade and an increase of South-South development aid; and (iii) the realignment of quota shares in favor of emerging economies in the IMF and World Bank in 2010.

Our review is structured in two parts: The first part provides a genealogy of theorizing development. We start with a brief overview of the historical “forefathers” of development and then turn to three classic approaches: Modernization, Dependencia, Neoclassics. This is followed by an overview of the various streams of the so-called “Post-Washington” consensus that more or less reflects the current mainstream. We then proceed by focusing on newer developments that no longer view growth or even development per se as a positive concept, including, inter alia, works by post-Marxist and post-colonial authors. The second part analyzes three cross-cutting themes that discuss critical trends in development in practice: Poverty and inequality, security and development as well as the environment and development.

THEORIZING DEVELOPMENT

History of Development Thinking

The beginnings of development thinking are difficult to define. Yet one can distinguish between theories of development as an immanent process and theories that conceptualize development as intentional policy program. In understanding development as an immanent process, pre-modern theories deal with human progress and processes of change and the destructions such processes entail. Based on a linear understanding of historical change, such theories try to explain progressive change perceived as inherent in human history. Taking the idea of development as intentional policy program, development has been perceived as an intentional process of improvement, an improvement that in most theories relates to economic growth (Cowen and Shenton, 1996).

The idea of development can be traced back to the Enlightenment, to evolutionary theories in biology and sociology of the 19th century, and to colonial economics and the history of the empire. These currents replaced the previously dominant conception of history as being a series of repetitive cycles with the idea of a linear historical development. John Locke’s writings and especially Adam Smith’s “The Wealth of Nations” (1776) represent the emergence of a liberal doctrine, linking the idea of progress to economic growth in order to solve Hobbes’s problem of order. Ideas about teleological progress also appeared in other disciplines: The founding father of modern sociology Auguste Compte believed that human knowledge progressed through three subsequent stages of thinking. Under Darwin’s theory of evolution and social Darwinism, the idea of development as progress became what passed as common sense in mid-19th century Britain and beyond. Karl Marx’s early theory of economic development represents another case of thinking about human development
progressing through subsequent stages of economic production. Colonial economics are, finally, another source of development thinking that precedes post-war development studies. However, the term only referred to developing the exploitation of natural resources to effectively supply raw materials to the colonizing center and was not about industrializing the colonies (Pieterse, 2009: 5-6). Until World War II, development as a term did not appear in these discussions (Arndt, 1981). However, during the period of rapid industrialization in 19th century Great Britain, development was used with a very different meaning by some authors. It referred to dealing with the problems and shortcomings of industrialization: poverty, revolts, uprooted peasants, and social tensions, and thus with the destructive effects of progress on the community and on social values (Cowen and Shenton, 1996: 7,57).

Development as Growth: The Classics

The narrow use of the concept of development as economic growth – defined as an increase in real income per person – only came into use in the 20th century, when the first systematic ideas about how decolonizing countries could repeat the path of the industrialized and economically rich West sprung up. Much of this debate – at least in the North – was influenced by the rapidly achieved results of rebuilding Japan and Germany after World War II (Leys, 1996: 8). Furthermore, the rise of the US from a latecomer to the most industrialized country and the New Deal were taken as successful examples. Finally, the strong influence of Keynes on economic doctrine also inspired the focus of the early development theories on the role of demand and the possibilities states have to initiate it. In the South, however, the term development was closely linked with gaining political and economic independence.

The first development theories thought of the “Third World” as a more or less monolithic block with common features, problems and opportunities. Such a holistic perspective not only led to a very general diagnosis, but also to undifferentiated policy recommendations. The question of why some areas/regions/states did better than others was for the most part not raised, partly due to the fact that it was not yet empirically obvious that divergence in developing countries themselves would arise (Kohli, 2004: 5). The following three “classics” – Modernization, Dependencia and Neoclassics – all have a teleological assumption about a linear progress of development (Leys, 1996). These theories also share a common understanding of science according to which researchers not only explain the reasons for underdevelopment, but also advise policy-makers on how to advance development (Preston, 1996).

The Modernists

Modernization theory builds on the literature from the 1940s that analyzed how a “big push” could bring forward any backward region, be it in the North or the South (of particular importance is Rosenstein-Rodan, 1943). The theory identifies the reasons for development within the “traditional” structures of a society, and its main argument is that a modern form of
social organization and a complete transformation of a society can be achieved if developing countries were to follow in the same footsteps developed countries had taken. The primary instrument to initiate such a transformation is capital accumulation, originating either from domestic or international savings. Rostow (1960), for example, famously identified five stages of societal development ranging from the traditional society to the age of high mass consumption, which he believed were universally applicable. Investments and an infusion of new ideas initiated by the country’s elites can lead traditional societies to “take-off”. The approach is deeply connected to progressive readings of history as a constant move towards Enlightenment and its followers stress the importance of rationalization, technology and education. Modern ideas and values would be taken up by the elites in the developing world if they were properly transferred. The Modernists, therefore, relied on a positivist epistemology and hoped to formulate a scientific perspective of development as the “Mandarins of the Future” (Gilman, 2003).

Modernization theory is the first development theory that explicitly tries to explain why developing countries are economically underdeveloped (good overviews can be found in Huntington, 1971; Gilman, 2003). The concept was part of the ideological battle of the Cold War over how Europe and Japan could be rebuilt after World War II and whether capitalism or socialism would bring about development and poverty reduction in the global South faster and better. The beginnings of the theory can be identified in the discussion about the role of the Bretton Woods institutions (Helleiner, 2010), in the Truman doctrine and the 1951 initiated UN program for development (Slater, 1993). Modernization theory can therefore be understood as the “American response” to the problem of underdevelopment (Leys, 1996: 111). For good reasons, Rostow’s book’s title included the term “A Non-Communist Manifesto” (Rostow, 1960) and can be described as a manual on how to fight the Cold War in the global South. Besides Rostow, authors like Gabriel Almond, Myron Weiner, Karl Deutsch, Albert Otto Hirschman, Bert Hoselitz and Daniel Lerner have contributed to the theoretical development, among others (Gilman, 2003: 2).

Modernization theory has been criticized on several counts: First, the stress on capital accumulation is seen as too narrow, as sometimes even accelerating growth rates can lead to instability (Olson, 1963). Second, the theory is highly teleological, as it has a strong evolutionist tendency and strong hopes for progress. Furthermore, the theory is criticized for being ahistorical: it perceives the development of all states to be alike, although this is certainly neither true for Western Europe (Tilly, 1975) nor for developing countries (Cardoso and Faletto, 1979). Third, not much attention was paid to social issues. Finally, conservative authors strongly warned that the policy advice of the Modernists – to provide massive foreign aid in order to push the take-off phase – was against the interests of the US (Banfield, 1962; Morgenthau, 1962).

The impact of the Modernization school was initially much stronger on the academic discourse than on the practice of development institutions like US Aid or the World Bank (Leys, 1996). It was only in the late 1960s and 1970s that Modernization theory had triggered down to the policy level. Ever since, its evolutionary paradigm has been an important and sometimes still dominant approach in development agencies as well as in planning ministries
all over the world. This is of no surprise, as it neither questions the North’s attempt to use foreign aid as a tool of development, nor does it rule out the fact that the South will eventually catch up (Rist, 2002: 109). Many of these aspects were taken up again in the neoclassical approaches at the end of the 1970s and in the 1980s (see below). Another revival occurred in the approaches to “modernize”, for example, the post-communist transition countries after the end of the Cold War (Fukuyama, 1992).

**Dependencia**

The core idea of Dependencia is that Western Imperialism did not bring about economic progress and industrialization but rather the “development of underdevelopment” (Baran, 1957). It is the rise of the metropolitan industrialized center which led to a structural lock-in of exploration and unequal exchange with the agrarian periphery (Dos Santos, 1970; Amin, 1976). Unequal exchange refers to the huge profits of capitalist consumers and workers, which are obtained at the expense of producers and consumers in developing countries due to the latter’s structural weakness within the international system (Emmanuel, 1972). This leads to a transfer of resources, wealth, ideas, and people from the developing to the developed world reifying the dependency of the periphery. Particularly in international trade, the Singer-Prebisch thesis postulates deteriorating terms of trade for the South. The latter implies that developing countries depend on exporting primary, principally agricultural, products, whose prices are bound to decline in relation to the price of manufactured goods of the North. Therefore, over time the South will gain less and less for its exports (Prebisch, 1950; for a good analysis of the terms of trade over almost two centuries, see Ocampo and Parra-Lancourt, 2010). Contrary to the Modernists, Dependencia authors perceive foreign investments in the periphery and the integration of developing countries into the international trading system as a means of exploitation and not one of initiating growth. Especially in Latin America, the incorporation of local societies into the international system led to the underdevelopment of the most productive sectors and has been a cause for the economic backwardness of the region from the sixteenth century until today (Frank, 1967). Contrary to Marx, Dependencia did not value capitalism as a necessary step of “progress”, but rather focused on the imperialist tendency of the capitalist core to look for new markets and exploit them (for a Marxist critique, see Warren, 1980).

Whereas the Modernist school stressed the endogenous factors of development, Dependencia stressed the external factors: the history of colonization and the dominance of the North as being structurally responsible for the underdevelopment of the South (a good overview is provided by Palma, 1978; Caporaso, 1980). Dependencia developed out of the embitterment that arose from the failure of most newly independent countries to experience anything like the “take-off” the Modernists had envisioned. Furthermore, with the rise of the Soviet Union as an economic power, the perceived decline of US hegemony after the end of the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate system, and the first signs of stagflation in the industrialized world, a general skepticism grew towards the Western development path. The goal of development as growth was not questioned. However, the idea that the South could
repeat the Northern trajectory was put into question. Many, although not all, of the major figures of Dependencia came from the Global South (Samir Amin, Fernando H. Cardoso, Teotonio Dos Santos, Enzo Faletto, Raúl Prebisch) or had settled down in the South (André Gunder Frank). The theory had, however, many followers in Marxist and neo-Marxist circles in the US and in Europe, in particular within the student movements (for the US, for example, see Baran and Sweezy, 1966).

Dependencia has been much more diverse than the Modernist school. Various authors have, for example, highlighted that internal factors must also be taken into account as an “internalization of imperialism” can be witnessed (Evans, 1979). This was also emphasized by Cardoso and Faletto who argued that with a stronger involvement of the US in Latin America, multi-national companies, the public sector, and some larger domestic entrepreneurs became part of a capitalist alliance (Cardoso and Faletto, 1979). There was, however, not much epistemological differentiation and similar to Modernization theory, a positivistic approach dominated.

The practical corollary of Dependencia’s theorizing was the advice to dissociate Southern countries from the international economic system and to search for South-South cooperation, at least until a similar level of economic development as in the North is achieved (Sunkel, 1969; Furtado, 1970; Cardoso, 1973; Senghaas, 1977). Dependencia, thus, took up the ideas of authors like Friedrich List or Alexander Hamilton, who argued for state-led industrialization and the protection of nascent industries. The practical corollary to the infant industry argument was the strategy of Import Substituting Industrialization (ISI). This became the theoretical cornerstone of the United Nations Economic Council for Latin America and the Caribbean (better known by its acronym, ECLAC, or CEPAL in Spanish). ISI led to the protection of local industries and markets as well as strong protectionist measures against exports. The strategy was supported by extensive government programs and became one of the main reasons for high budget deficits in most developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s (Brutton, 1998).

During the late 1970s and more so in the 1980s a strong disillusionment arose with Dependencia (for a good overview, see Menzel, 1992): One of the main critiques is that it overestimated the role of North-South trade and that the theory’s claim of exogenous reasons for underdevelopment did not hold up to empirical testing (Larrain, 1989). Furthermore, it was never specified which class would bring about progress if not the Bourgeoisie. Dependencia also failed to take account of the role of state classes which, through their rent-seeking behavior, posed important barriers to economic development (Elsenhans, 1981). The practical implications have also been criticized, as wherever attempts were made to dissociate from the international economic system, they led to very problematic results (for a discussion of Latin America, see Edwards, Esquivel et al., 2007). For most practitioners of development, the economic rise of the Asian Tigers finally proved Dependencia’s reliance on non-integration wrong (see statist approaches below). The general consensus that emerged was that the Asian Tigers also initially pursued state-led development, but shifted from ISI to export-led strategies at the right time (Rhys, 2008).
It would, however, be premature to argue that the argumentation of Dependencia is without further influence: First of all, the mainstream took notice and the development institutions focused more on social issues as a response (e.g. the “basic needs approach” of the World Bank in the 1970s). Mainstream academia gave it attention until the beginning of the 1980s – a prominent example being a special issue of *International Organization*, which focused on Dependencia in 1978 (Caporaso, 1978). Second, various development approaches in developing countries themselves frame themselves still in a Dependencia discourse (see below). Third, World Systems Theory brought a more holistic and global perspective on development in the 1970s (Wallerstein, 1975). Wallerstein’s point of departure – partially going back to Frank – is that a global economic system began to emerge in the fifteenth century separating the world in three spheres: the periphery, the semi-periphery and the core. In the countries of the core, capital is accumulated, technological as well as sociological progress develops, and political power is situated. On the contrary, the periphery exports primary goods and raw materials at worsening terms of trade and people thus become more and more impoverished. Most mobility can be found in the semi-periphery and countries in this cluster sometimes move up to the core or down to the periphery. His theory has a strong structural bias, yet provided inspiration for later post-Marxist theories of inequality in the international system.

**Neoclassics and the Washington Consensus**

Following such prominent thinkers like Friedrich von Hayek or Milton Friedman, a neoclassical revolution in economics had profound effects on development thinking. At the end of the 1970s, neoclassical economics delegitimized positions that favored a strong role of the state, arguing that state failure is just as likely as market failure. According to these theories, political elites do not regulate markets for the “common” good but for personal gains, e.g. to become reelected. Thus, the best way to initiate growth is not state intervention but to reduce the role of the government. Such reasoning found not only strong believers in the industrialized North (e.g. in the deregulation policies of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan) but also in the theory and practice of development, as authors like P.T. Bauer, Deepak Lal, Bela Balassa, Ian Little, and Anne Krueger argued for a deliberate retreat of the state in the global South (for a good overview, see Rapley, 2007: chapter 3).

Similar to Modernization theory, the Neoclassics located the reasons for underdevelopment within the developing world. They stressed that by focusing on macroeconomic stability and good governance, growth would become possible and end rent-seeking behavior (a prominent example being Krueger, 1974). In particular, inflation would have to be curtailed by reducing state controls and by liberalizing trade, investment, and other financial flows. Import Substituting Industrialization was strongly condemned as it did not allow Southern countries to explore their comparative advantage (Little, Scitovsky et al., 1979). Developing countries should instead strengthen their export to escape poverty. Monetary policies should try to reign in inflation, whereas the strong role of fiscal policy should be reduced.
Never before did a single approach dominate the practice of development so strongly. The theory fell on futile ground, as state responses to the oil crisis, massive problems with Import Substituting Industrialization, and a deteriorating macroeconomic situation with extremely high rates of inflation were all too visible. This led to the initiation of the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) by the Bretton Woods institutions in the middle of the 1980s designed to reduce interventionist policies and fiscal imbalances of a country. Stabilizing the macroeconomic situation should initiate growth, lead to private sector development, and foster Southern countries’ integration into the international trading system. At its highpoint, these recommendations were summed up as the “Washington Consensus” (Williamson, 1990). In some countries of the South, the neoliberal approach was pushed by the elites themselves, particularly in highly authoritarian regimes like Chile under Pinochet, who was advised by Milton Friedman and his “Chicago boys” (Fischer, 2009). But also Ghana, Mexico or India adopted many of the recommended policies from the Bretton Woods institutions.

For critics, the neoclassical approach led to the debt crisis of the 1980s and the “lost decade of development” (Singh, 1992). They pointed out that the policy recommendations of the Washington Consensus were characterized by too much uniformity and did not do justice to the high variation found in the developing world (Toye, 1993). In particular, the SAPs were not adapted to the circumstances in most Sub-Saharan African countries and caused at least as much harm as good (Noorkabash and Paloni, 1999). The focus on more market and less government neglected the fact that for some private flows, public investments in infrastructure, safety, and business development must come first (Rapley, 2001). Furthermore, the neoclassical doctrine failed to provide a theory for institutions except for the claim that they were set up for rent-seeking purposes by elites. The theory was, thus, much more normative than its followers acknowledged. With hindsight, one can argue that the underlying diagnosis of many neoliberal thinkers was right regarding the classical development theories’ lack of understanding of the role of the state. For much of the developing world, state failure, or rather interest groups that capture government, was – and potentially still is – one of the strongest barriers against development (see, for example, Bates, 1981: for an analysis of how the urban sector in developing countries is squeezing out the rural one). However, the treatment that the Neoclassics recommended did not very often bring about growth, as there was a strong misjudgment about how markets depend on appropriate institutions (see below).

Current development thinking in various aspects is still embedded in the neoclassical, today often negatively connoted the “neoliberal” approach. In the academic debate, the rational choice and public choice literature are a case in point (for a good overview, see Leys, 1996: chapter 4) and is for many, in particular the IMF, the last bastion of the neoclassic (Stiglitz, 2002). The Poverty Reductions Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which are one of the cornerstones of current development practice, are also perceived as a continuation of the SAPs discussed above. Nevertheless, the mainstream has moved to a “Post-Washington Consensus”, which lays much more emphasis on governance issues, pro-poor growth, and social safety nets.
Development and Growth: The Contemporary Mainstream

Criticism about neoliberal development thinking and official development practices culminated at the end of the 1980s and led to various “Post-Washington” approaches. These did not entail a complete rejection of neoclassical positions or the market per se, but rather an attempt to modify development practices so that they would fit a more diverse set of problems. The 1990s and the early 2000s, thus, did not see the coming about of one single new paradigm within the mainstream, but a proliferation of theoretical developments. This reflects the highly differentiated reality of “developing countries”, which are split more and more between a bottom billion living in misery (Collier, 2007) and emerging economies, in particular Brazil, India and China, that are not only characterized by high growth rates but also by strong geopolitical ambitions. A certain theoretical consensus, however, has emerged, that in order to understand development one has to focus more on the state and institutions.

Statist approaches

A first line of criticism of the neoclassical approaches stresses that the state has been neglected in international politics in general (Skocpol, 1985) and, in explaining successful economic development, in late-late industrializing countries in particular. The role of bureaucracy has especially been explored by Johnson whose ground-breaking study of the MITI, the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry (Johnson, 1982), has been highly influential. Many authors focused on East and South-East Asia, arguing that effective and to a large extent highly repressive states precede successful industrialized economies (Amsden, 1989; Haggard, 1990; Evans, 1995; Wade, 2004). The statist approaches have also led to a new focus on the importance of the “developmental state”, something that Rosenstein-Rodan had perceived in the 1940s and Gunnar Myrdal had already advocated in the 1960s (Myrdal, 1968). The economic crisis of 1997 only temporarily challenged the appeal of the developmental state with the criticism of “crony capitalism” (Kang, 2002), but overall the consensus is that the state can, and even has to, foster economic development, for example through promoting the rule of law, education or health services (World Bank, 1997). Much more controversial today is whether the experiences of East Asia can be replicated, for example, in the African context (Rapley, 2007).

Neoinstitutionalist approaches

Neoinstitutionalist approaches analyze the role of non-market institutions on economic behavior. In contrast to “old institutionalism” (e.g. Gustav Schmoller in Germany and Emile Durkheim in France) and the statist perspectives described above, Neoinstitutionalism builds
much stronger on rationalist assumptions, starts with individual logics to describe social outcomes, and focuses almost exclusively on transaction costs as the barrier to development. Prominent early representatives of the approach are Douglass C. North, Ronald Coase and Oliver Williamson (for a good overview, regarding development theory, see the contributions in Harriss, Hunter et al., 1995; Shirley, 2008; Booth, 2011). In the 1990s, these authors were taken up by various historical, rational choice, and sociological approaches (Hall and Taylor, 1996).

In neoinstitutionalist approaches, the fundamental issues for initiating growth are the characteristics of institutions present in a country (Rodrik, Subramanian et al., 2004; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008). The same can be said for the level of development assistance a country receives (Doucouliagos and Paldam, 2009). Neoinstitutionalism, therefore, transcends the debate of market failure vs. state failure, focusing instead on institutional designs that reduces uncertainty (Toye, 1995). In particular, property rights and the rule of law are stressed as perquisites that allow countries to foster technological progress and to accumulate more investments, which in turn lead to higher growth rates (Klasen, 2008; Tebaldi and Ramesh, 2010). Better institutions are also correlated with less inequality (Chong and Gradstein, 2007). Corruption, ineffective governments and political instability lead to increased income inequality and more poverty (Tebaldi and Ramesh, 2010). More recently, the focus on formal institutions has been complemented by analyses of informal institutions and culture showing that growth also needs trust and reciprocity (Greif, 2006).

One important question that the neoinstitutionalist literature is debating is how far one has to go back in time to explain the stickiness and path-dependency of institutions. What role, for example, do early settlers play in the colonies as they organize wealth transfer in some areas (primarily Latin America and Africa) and much less so in others (North America and Australia), where checks and balances could be established resembling the mother country that allowed the prospering of private enterprises (Acemoglu, Johnson et al., 2001; for a different perspective, see Mahoney, 2010).

Another particularly interesting spin-off of the neoinstitutionalist debate is whether democracy and democratization are good for development. Some argue that it is more than a correlation that industrialization took place when the United Kingdom became a democracy (North, 1990) and that the relationship between democracy and strong growth rates also holds true for modern societies (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006; Persson and Tabellini, 2007). Others have, however, stated that modern growth was initiated under an autocratic system, in particular at the very beginning (Clark, 2007). The latter goes back to Huntington who in the 1960s argued very prominently that modern societies also need to undergo a period of authoritarian ruling in order to kick-start growth (Huntington, 1968). The developing consensus suggests that democratic liberalization is not correlated with economic growth, whereas democratic consolidation is (Przeworski and Limongi, 1993).

The focus on institutions clearly dominates current mainstream thinking about development (World Bank, 2002). It is evident that there is no single best practice of which institutional
design is optimal for development (Rodrik, 2007). A consensus is, however, developing that countries need to find their own institutional path and no single best practice can be prescribed from above as this would result in “kicking away the ladder” of development (Chang, 2002).

*Human development*

Contemporary conceptualizations state that development is more than growth as the diverse non-economic needs and interests of people also have to be included. Development is thus about people-centered politics and the capacities that enable this (UNDP, 1990; Haq, 1995). The approach goes back to the theoretical work of Amartya Sen, Nobel laureate in economics in 1998, who might be characterized as the most important contemporary development theorist. What initiated Sen’s fame as a development intellectual was his finding that there has never been a famine in a democratic country and that, thus, hunger is not due to food scarcity per se but due to poor food distribution (Sen, 1982). He stressed the importance of developing individual capabilities in order to achieve “substantive human freedoms” like being able to avoid starvation or premature mortality. But also the achievement of being literate and enjoying political participation constitute development (Sen, 1999).

The practical importance of Sen’s work cannot be overrated. He played, for example, a crucial role in devising the Human Development Index of the UNDP and in further developing it as an authoritative measure for development that includes not only income or growth patterns, but also life expectancy and literacy rates, and since 2010, new measures of inequality.

*Development and (global) governance*

The notion of governance has been prominently used in development theory and practice since the 1990s. Having many different meanings, however, one needs to distinguish a normatively loaded, state-centric notion of ‘good governance’ from the more analytical uses of the term on which we focus below. In this latter sense, governance has been defined in IR as a system of rules performing the functions usually associated with government, but no longer necessarily through hierarchical steering by government, but through non-hierarchical modes of governance by non-state actors with and without government (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992). Others emphasize that beyond rule setting, governance refers to the intentional provision of collective goods (Risse and Lehmkuhl, 2010). The concept has provided an analytical framework for studying actor constellations and modes of managing collective issues by state and non-state actors.
Where does this interest in governance in development studies come from? Since the 1980s, development practitioners have turned to the private sector and to social organizations for implementing development programs. In the academic world, methodological nationalism – taking the unit of the state for granted and as starting point for the analysis of political processes – has evoked criticism from different corners since the 1990s (Agnew, 1994; Brenner, 1999). In this context, governance was introduced to integrate 'new' actors so far overlooked into the analysis of governing, such as companies, NGOs, private and public-private mechanisms of transnational regulation, as well as non-state actors at the local level, such as traditional authorities or social groups. In IR, this translated into research on global governance and new spheres of authority at the transnational level (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992; Held and McGrew, 2002) and debates about global public goods provision in the absence of a (world) state (Reinicke, 1998; Kaul, 2003). In various subfields, public-private partnerships and new forms of transnational regulation are explored and the effectiveness and legitimacy of such privatized forms of governance discussed (e.g. Haufler, 2001; Avant, Finnemore et al., 2010).

There are a number of limitations to this new turn in development research. It tends to focus on potentially positive contributions to governance, i.e. to collective goods provision, while neglecting the negative effects and dynamics of these new forms of governance. Top-down approaches to governance often do not pay attention to local norms and bottom-up dynamics within local contexts in Africa, Latin America and Asia (Hönke and Börzel, fc.). Governance for development has, in addition, largely remained a technocratic perspective neglecting (structural) power effects and inequality (Barnett and Duvall, 2006). Finally, in many studies its heuristic value for understanding politics is limited, because the author’s notion of governance rests on assumptions rooted in the Western-liberal conception of the state, namely that where there are distinct public, state actors and private, non-state actors, as well as separate political and the economic spheres.

Some literature can be identified that has started to overcome these biases. Governance has, for instance, been used as a lens through which to study transnational and local, formal and informal configurations of systems of rule and collective goods provision in Africa, Latin America and Asia (Draude, 2007; Blundo and Le Meur, 2009). Abandoning the bias towards ‘positive’, liberal-democratic norms (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001) and collective goods provision, others use the notion of governance for reintegrating indirect and coercive modes of governance, including violence, and focus on issues of inequality, exclusion and conflict within and between different local, and between local and transnational governance arrangements (Menkhaus, 2007; Hönke, 2010). Research is also slowly starting to pay attention to the ineffectiveness and unintended effects of the (global) governance of development in local contexts (e.g. Mosse and Lewis, 2005; Daase and Friesendorf, 2010). Finally, some focus quite practically on “good enough governance” stressing that the ideals of good governance and best practice cannot be achieved in a short-term perspective (Grindle, 2007).
Beyond Development: The Critiques

Since the 1970s, doubts about the possibility of development have increasingly been pronounced from different political and theoretical camps. Confronted with the neoliberal orthodoxy and its failures observed since the 1980s, many identified an ‘impasse’ of development (Schuurman, 1993). The end of the Cold War profoundly changed the international relations between ‘North’ and ‘South’ (Clapham, 1996) and in the course of political liberalization, critical voices emerged from these countries themselves. In particular, the creation of the World Social Forum signifies a new quality of the transnationalization of social protest, giving voice to the disempowered in global politics. Furthermore, the critiques have been strongly influenced theoretically by the linguistic and cultural turn that has reached the social sciences since the 1970s. New ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches have opened the field for new research questions and critical perspectives.

Critical stances towards development have proliferated: taken by authors drawing on neo-Marxist and post-Marxist theories, postcolonial positions largely based on poststructuralist theories and critical ethnography, by a more activist and theoretically eclectic group of anti-development authors, and by feminist theories. Questioning the objectivity of scientific measurements and criticizing the distorted presumptions of comparative analysis of ‘developing countries’, they provide a critique of development understood as a hegemonic discourse that materializes in the particular institutions and forms of knowledge dominating the international relations of the non-OECD world. These approaches address a number of common issues discussed below: the nexus of power and knowledge in developmental discourse, the problematic construction of identities, and the potentials for resistance and agency.

Critical International Political Economy (IPE)

In contrast to realist and liberal theories of IR and development, neo-Marxist and post-Marxist approaches in IPE radically question the conceptualisation of the nation state as autonomous and central actor in IR, as well as the focus on domestic factors in development. Instead of focusing on actors, the economic, social and ideological structures are central for understanding underdevelopment. These theories emphasize the hierarchical and uneven nature of economic globalisation, concentrating economic power in a few core states (for overviews see Overbeek, 2000), and also contest the idea of state and civil society being separate spheres that is so central to liberal state theory and governance approaches.

Firstly, in the light of neo-Gramscian theories – theories that emphasize the role of ideas and social forces within historical materialism (Hall 1989) – the discourse of development is an expression of the hegemony of a particular transnational class formation that has been able to universalize and globalize development as capitalist economic growth (Cox, 1987). Hegemony therefore depends not only on economic and military strength, but also on the support of civil society; discursive strategies and intellectual knowledge production are
necessary enabling conditions for turning such strength into hegemony. Studies demonstrate how the particularistic interests of US politicians and business linked up with their counterparts in Europe and the ‘Third World’ after World War II (van der Pijl, 1998). Secondly, theories of empire link the new, transnational modes of governance towards the South to the globalised nature of capitalist production, not only making new, far-reaching regulatory mechanisms necessary, but also giving rise to new forms of subversion and resistance (Hardt and Negri, 2000). Finally, authors drawing on Nicos Poulantzas emphasize the internationalisation of the state and the relative autonomy and importance of this state, because and despite of transnational social forces. The state is not understood as an autonomous and neutral steering mechanism acting in the interest of development for all, but to the contrary, is conceptualised as the ‘material condensation of social forces’ that has been internationalised since the 1970s (Poulantzas, 1980; for an application to the non-OECD world see Müller, fc). Understanding the interpenetration of ‘civil’ and ‘political’ society from this perspective seems particularly fruitful for a critical analysis of the current increase in ‘public-private co-governance’.

These theories have received two main critiques: Orthodox neo-Marxists claim they do not take adequate account of the structural determination of politics by the capitalist system of production. By contrast, post-positivist authors in the Marxist tradition argue that these approaches do not go not far enough in leaving economic and statist determinism behind. According to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, for instance, class and class interests cannot be taken as given and instead need to be understood as being produced through practices of articulation (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Post-Marxist authors in fact share this interest in the construction of hegemonic knowledge and its effects with postmodern and poststructuralist critiques.

The postcolonial critique and the unintended effects of development

Postcolonial theories emerged in literature and cultural studies in the 1980s and have since made their way into various fields of the social sciences. Authors in IR have, however, only just begun to explore their potential. Scholars draw on them to question dominant knowledge production about ‘the South’ and to look at the new forms of exclusion and resistance by the disempowered in international and transnational governance and development. Chapters on this literature have recently been incorporated into introductory books to IR (Abrahamsen, 2002; Grovogui, 2007).

Shifting research questions from how development can be achieved, or why it fails, the lens of postcolonial theory focuses on questioning its dominant cultural representations and practices, and on the power and effects of such biased practices (see e.g. Loomba, 1998; Kapoor, 2008). The term ‘postcolonial’ refers to a historical and a theoretical juncture: Historically, it refers to the legacy of colonial rule, notably in maintaining hierarchical and biased forms of knowledge about the postcolony. Theoretically, postcolonial theories deconstruct the objectivity claims of Western expert knowledge and analyze indirect forms of power inherent in modern development discourse. Historians have produced alternative
representations of non-western historical narratives that both de-colonize the concepts used for analysis and shift focus from the role of Western interveners and elites to local narratives and the history of the disempowered (Scott, 1998; Conrad and Randeria, 2002). Others emphasize the mutual constitution and entanglement of ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ histories (Stoler and Cooper, 1997) and describe multiple, ‘subaltern modernities’ (Coronil, 1997). Reconstructing the establishment of the West/the rest divide, Edward Said’s study of “Orientalism” (1978) is one of the founding books of postcolonial studies providing a fundamental critique of Western constructions of non-western societies. Others demonstrate how a positive ‘occidental’, Western identity has been constructed against the negative images of Africa and Latin America (Mignolo, 1995).

A second topic postcolonial studies raises for development and IR is to make visible and discuss potentials for subaltern agency. The concept of the subaltern was introduced by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and the Subaltern Studies Group. It is a term that refers to people who are not part of any hegemonic class and who are politically unorganized (Guha and Spivak, 1988). The group studied the history and the repertoires of action of such marginalized people in South Asia; other scholars have adapted the approach to Latin America. The concept of ‘epistemic violence’ has been path-breaking in this regard: the subaltern speech and political practice are not being heard or seen because of the power of the hegemonic liberal discourse to define what is being recognized as political (Spivak, 1988). James Scott (1985) in turn opened analytical space for seeing “the weapons of the weak” that often remain unnoticed in IR and political studies.

Understanding postcolonial as a transhistorical term, these theories raise important questions for a variety of situations of political domination by external actors during and after colonial rule, such as in the contemporary field of development (Hall, 1996; see also Edkins, 2002). Postcolonial writers have been mainly criticized for their focus on culture and textuality. Some argue that their post-modern language stands contrary to political aspiration to create space for the agency of the disempowered. Others claim they generalized too much about development, and, furthermore, were not engaged enough in problem solving (Corbridge 2007). In particular for (critical) political economists, they greatly neglected the role of political and economic structures (Ahmad, 1992).

Related to postcolonial and poststructuralist approaches, the anthropology of development contributes in-depth empirical case studies of the encounter of international development policies with local contexts. The strength of this work lies in pointing to at least three problematic, unintended effects of development aid: de-politicization, the power effects of participatory development, and the strengthening of unaccountable, autocratic political structures at the local level. Concerning de-politicization, James Ferguson in The Anti-Politics Machine (1990) describes the power, ambiguous effects, and limits of development projects. Framed in a technocratic, a-political way, development interventions remove the debate about what development should be and how to get there from the political realm of debate into the sphere of expert knowledge and technocratic management (see also Murray Li, 2007). Moreover, this literature critically analyses the concepts of ownership and participatory development in international development. Privileging social cooperation and
harmony, they silence complaints about the growing inequality in the distribution of the means of power, production and distribution of goods (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). Finally, development projects reproduce local hierarchies and power relations. Projects often strengthen local elites who appropriate aid in various ways and foster exploitation of those at the bottom of the local hierarchy (Mosse, 2005).

Overall, these studies have drawn attention to the fact that, whilst many development projects are ineffective in attaining their self-defined goals, they have systematic effects on local social, political, and economic structures. Capable of ‘switching codes’ (Rottenburg, 2009) between different discourses, agents at different levels are able to actively appropriate and recreate development programs. Taking the co-existence of a plurality of powerful discourses and social fields within arenas of intervention seriously, scholars of IR need to account for heterogeneous, contradictory practices and effects of development projects, and global governance interventions more generally (e.g. Hönke, 2010).

Anti-development

The term anti-development refers to a group of theoretically eclectic authors who are sometimes grouped together with the above authors under the label of post-development, who each share some distinct characteristics. They share a critique of development as being unsustainable, undemocratic and repressive, and they all concentrate on suggestions for alternative ways of living beyond development (for an overview see Ziai, 2007). Arturo Escobar (1995) begins his famous critique of the current development model by showing how Africa, Latin America and Asia became defined as ‘underdeveloped’ and thus in need of development in the post-Second World War era. He proposes strategies against and beyond development drawing on anti-colonial activists, such as writers Amilcar Cabral and Aimé Césaire, and Mahatma Ghandi. He also returns to the idea of ‘delinking’ from the Dependencia School.

Economically, delinking from global capitalist production suggests localized modes of production and exchange. Exploring what an alternative mode of living could look like, authors argue for small-scale, subsistence-oriented modes of living and count on grass-roots movements of ‘ordinary people’ (e.g. Esteva and Prakash, 1999). Examples range from small farmers’ associations in India to the alternative structures being established by the Zapatistas movement in Chiapas. Many attach an intrinsic value to local communities and local knowledge: Direct democracy, local and culturally embedded knowledge and solidarity would characterize non-technocratic, non-industrialized politics and economies after development. The slogan “small is beautiful” captures well what is key to much anti-development thinking (Schumacher, 1973). The romanticized and essentialized view of the local community as “noble savage” (Kiely, 1999) in some of these writings has been strongly criticized, as the revalorization of ‘indigenous cultures’ and community can foster a neo-romantic, conservative turn (e.g. Rahnenma and Bawtree, 1997). Authors fail to discuss the hardship of such livelihoods and the emancipatory and positive aspects modernity may bring about (Corbridge, 1998), and overlook the power relations within local communities, which
effectively limit the chances of open, grass-roots democracy. However, distinguishing between reactionary tendencies and emancipatory approaches, the latter valuably shifted attention to local voices, arguing for grassroots democracy, communal norms and forms of justice (see Ziai, 2007).

**Critical feminist theories and development**

Various feminist theorists have also challenged mainstream development (see chapter by Sjoberg and Tickner in this volume). The liberal agenda of 'Women in Development' focuses on integrating women into the official (labor) market. The major critique of this liberal approach came first from neo-Marxist and feminist gender theories (for an overview see Saunders, 2002). Marxist authors provided a materialist theory of patriarchy; the women and gender agenda of the 1980s then shifted focus away from women as a natural reference point to the construction of gender roles. By the late 1980s, theories emerged that based their claims upon the particular experiences of Third World women, challenging the universalistic ambitions of liberal feminism and development. The particular life and work experience of poor, Third World women, they argued, made their needs and standpoints different from other (western, white, feminist) women (Sen and Grown, 1988). Social constructivist and poststructuralist positions have been instrumental in criticizing essentialist tendencies in such positions on women in development. Pointing to the production of different sexualities and gender roles, these theories have also opened new spaces for agency: If the subject position of women were produced – by hegemonic traditional as well as liberal feminist discourses and practice – they could be challenged. However, they also emphasize the significance of gender discourse, class, race and ethnicity in structuring individual subject positions and capabilities to change them (see Marchand and Parpart, 1995).

**CROSS-CUTTING THEMES**

There are a number of contemporary trends and problematic issues in development, and North-South relations more generally, that would merit being discussed here. However, we see three issues as being particularly central for contemporary development debates: First, the “classic” debate regarding poverty and inequality; second, the securitization of development thinking and practice; and, finally, the attempt to reconcile nature with human development. Whereas we deal with these themes separately, it is being increasingly recognized that inequality and (non) development, climate change and security are interwoven, and are a key challenge to international politics (Messner, 2009).

**The Economy of Development: Poverty and Inequality**
One of the major questions of development thinking has always been how can poverty and inequality be reduced and what role can economic growth play in this endeavor. Poverty reduction is the most important objective of all official development policies, as, for example, the MDGs first stated goal is to reduce poverty by half by 2015. Poverty, however, has to be perceived in a multidimensional way defined as a lack of resources. These include income and consumption, but also nutrition, drinking water, access to schooling, health services and possibilities of political participation (World Bank, 2000). Furthermore, one has to differentiate between relative poverty, which is measured using a poverty line that rises in the mean, and absolute poverty, which is measured using a poverty line with a constant value. In general, the measurement of relative poverty is of more interest to middle-income and high-income countries, whereas absolute poverty is of more interest to low-income countries and is, thus, more the focus of development economics. Absolute poverty is considered to exist when a person lives on less than US$ 1.25 a day at 2005 PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) for household consumption (Ravallion, Chen et al., 2009: 3). Absolute poverty has reduced quite dramatically in the past thirty years. Whereas in 1981 52 percent of the population of the developing world was living below the absolute poverty line, this dropped to 42 percent in 1990, and in 2005 the number was down to 25 percent (Chen and Ravallion, 2008). Nevertheless, in 2010 more than 1.4 billion people still had to live on less than US$ 1.25 a day and more than 1.75 billion people lived in poverty, according to the multidimensional poverty index (including education, living standards and health) indicators (UNDP, 2010). Two-thirds of these currently live in rural areas (Chen and Ravallion, 2007).

What is no longer disputed is that economic growth is a necessary prerequisite for poverty reduction to happen and that the majority of states have experienced unprecedented growth rates over the last couple of decades. However, there are strong regional inequalities within the developing world due to strong growth rates in some countries. For example, China – and to some extent India – has achieved the highest rate of poverty reduction in absolute and relative terms, whereas progress in other regions, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, has been marginal. There is also a consensus that inequalities within countries – in particular inequalities in access and ownership of land – strongly correlate with low growth rates (Deininger and Squire, 1998). Similarly, there is broad agreement on the importance of gender disparities. On the one hand, they reflect global inequality patterns (Dollar and Gatti, 1999) and, on the other hand, gender inequality in education and employment clearly contributes to low growth rates (Klasen, 1999).

There are also some important controversies about poverty. A first issue is the origin of poverty, reflecting the debate between Modernists and Dependencia discussed above. For some authors, the existing poverty traps (e.g. geographical factors, like being landlocked) hinder poor countries to develop. These cannot simply be overcome by market-based approaches that primarily stress macroeconomic factors (see, for example, the conclusions of the Commission for Africa, 2005). Instead a “big push” from the outside – most likely in the form of development aid – is necessary for an “end of poverty” (Sachs, 2005). Such reasoning resembles the argumentation of the Modernization school and greatly influences pro-poor growth strategies as they are expressed, for example, in the MDGs. This approach
has been strongly criticized in the literature as the existence of poverty traps has been empirically questioned (Kraay and Raddatz, 2005; Easterly, 2006).

A second controversy is whether economic growth leads to more or less inequality within and across countries and is, therefore, systematically biased against the poor (for an overview of the debate, see Bourguignon, Ferreira et al., 2009). The liberal mainstream argues that growth is positively correlated with the rise in income of poor people too (Dollar and Kraay, 2002). This is supported by population-weighted studies that show that, within the last 30 years, global income inequality has fallen due to the growth of India and China (Sala-i-Martin, 2006). Critics of this perspective claim that the potential benefits of high growth rates do not materialize for the poor and lead to more inequality at least at the cross-country level (good representatives of this perspective are Wade, 2001; Pogge, 2005). For example, although most of the global growth in percentage terms has occurred in lower-income and poor countries, on a cross-country level the absolute difference to the OECD-world has not narrowed for most countries due to the gap that already exists. Thus, the “world’s largest inequalities are not defined by race, class, or gender, but by national borders” (Goesling and Baker, 2008: 184). In the majority of developing countries – excluding India and China – the relative income gap between the rich and the poor is also rising. Furthermore, one also has to consider the different access and distribution of (social) security as well as the political representation at the global level (Hurrell/Woods 1999). Similarly, inequality has also been rising in the health sector since the early 1990s, most likely due to the HIV epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa and the declining longevity in Eastern Europe and Russia (Goesling and Baker, 2008). In contrast, educational inequality has fallen sharply with the introduction of formal schooling in some of the poorest countries (ibid.). Inequality, thus, has to be analyzed in various dimensions and spatial aspects (in particular the worsening situation of Sub-Saharan Africa) have to be taken into account.

Overall, one can conclude that the current debate about poverty and inequality is far more nuanced than it was twenty years ago, and some of the more ideological controversies are no longer dominant. The interesting questions for the practice of development are what kind of growth, which sequencing in reforms is necessary to achieve it, and what kind of institutional context is helpful in jumpstarting growth, poverty reduction and more equality at the same time (for a good overview of the debate, see Rodrik, 2007).

**Development and Security**

Since the early 1990s, a merging of development with security agendas has taken place in the foreign policies of Western states. This security-development nexus has been promoted in various forms, but has also been fiercely criticized. The attempts at integrating conflict prevention into development – dominant in the 1990s – need to be distinguished from the various uses of development for security policies, in particular since September 11 (9/11), 2001.
The ‘widening and deepening’ of security (Buzan and Hansen, 2009) began with the promotion of the concepts of human security and of conflict prevention in the post-Cold War context. New kinds of threats, such as environmental degradation, underdevelopment, and human rights abuses were integrated into the definition of security. Focus shifted from the security of states to securing individuals (for an overview, see Owen, 2010). Development was first understood as being important for the prevention of conflict. In a moderate turn towards prioritizing security, it was then argued that security needs to be established first, before development can happen (Fukuyama, 2004). As a consequence, governments have promoted holistic policies combining diplomacy, defense and development in addressing weak state capacities and instability in otherwise marginalized regions. Tools of development were adjusted to address matters of security sector reform and civil-military cooperation in the realm of (state-building) interventions (Klingebiel and Roehder, 2004).

A more securitized justification of the development-security nexus emerged after 9/11 when the ‘developmentalization of security’ of the conflict prevention agenda increasingly turned into a ‘securitization of development’ (Kühn, 2008). Seeing ‘fragile states’ as a new security threat, new cartographies of the periphery have since emerged, which represent deficient statehood as dangerous, not only to their citizens, but most of all to Western states. This called for an integrated, global approach to address these new risks emanating supposedly from the ‘fragile states’ in ‘the South’ (Duffield, 2001). These tendencies are, in particular, evident in the military interventions in Iraq and in Afghanistan, and in the combination of state-building and counterinsurgency objectives. At its worst, development has become a mere annex to security policies in the field of anti-terror interventions (Bachmann, 2010). This trend is not only visible in the ‘winning hearts and minds’ campaigns in the War on Terror, but seems to be operating in many states perceived to be fragile but strategically important (Bachmann and Hönke, 2010).

However, despite these changes in policy, little is understood about if and how development and security are actually related, or whether empirical evidence supports the assumption that aid has a positive effect on reducing conflict, and vice versa. It has been argued that there is no such relationship between poverty (non-development) and conflict (in-security) (Collier, 2003). Others point to the limits and unintended effects of the development-security agenda in practice. One critique refers to the lack of actual implementation and spending on related policies (Carment and Schnabel, 2003; Chandler, 2006). Linking security policies to the goal of human development may have often been a labeling strategy in order to increase the political salience and legitimacy of a particular issue (Suhrke, 1999). However, the new holistic approaches combining security, development and diplomacy have been institutionalized and are now increasingly structuring Western policies towards areas of limited statehood (e.g. Patrick and Brown, 2007). Empirical studies on concrete cases of state-building interventions emphasize that there are powerful blueprints for development and state-building interventions, but these are based on flawed assumptions. One of these points to a paradox within liberal state-building: on the one hand, it stresses ideas of self-determination and democracy; on the other hand it focuses on state-building and stability, giving rise to policies at odds with the principle of self-determination (Jahn, 2007). In the
name of development (and security) technocratic development interventions not only depoliticize, they also actively reproduce inequalities within target societies as well as asymmetric power relations in international relations (for an overview see Paris and Sisk, 2008; Chandler, 2009).

Another strand of research focuses on how issues of development get constructed as security-relevant issues in the first place, and on how new perceptions of risks and security techniques affect local populations. Understanding security as a discourse, authors use the securitization theory (Buzan, Waever et al., 1998; Balzacq, 2010) and the Foucauldian governmentality analysis (Duffield, 2001; Duffield, 2007) for this purpose. Securitization theory focuses on how particular issues become security issues in the political arena through speech acts, images and other interrelated practices. The analytics of government in the Foucauldian tradition analyze the political rationality behind security governance and show the (often indirect) power of modern knowledge and techniques informing security actors’ practices, and how these affect populations. These theories have emphasized that, while everybody talks about the development-security nexus, different actors use this discourse for implementing different practices. Post-security and discourse-theoretical studies demonstrate in detailed empirical studies the disturbing effects of some of these uses, showing how the policies enacted in its name have harmful effects, such as increasing insecurity and (re)producing inequality (see Stern and Öjendal, 2010: 18-20). In managing risks perceived as emanating from weak states in order to protect Western societies, stability is valued higher than achieving equality and self-determination (Duffield, 2007).

Development and the Environment

Regarding the issue of development and the environment, three positions can be identified: First, the pessimists argue that current lifestyles and the still dominant growth paradigm cannot be sustained and will eventually lead to catastrophe (Lovelock, 2009). Such a perspective reframes the Malthusian argument that there is an eventual incompatibility between exponential growth and finite resources leading to “Limits to Growth” (Meadows, Meadows et al., 1972). Current work on the different sizes of the ecological footprint of diverse societies adds a North-South dimension to this general argumentation, particularly as the carrying capacity of the Earth is said to be overused. One practical corollary of this perspective is a complete delinking from the classical development paradigm (see above on anti-development). The other is a plea for environmental authoritarianism (for an overview of the debate, see Beeson, 2010).

Second, the optimists do not deny that environmental problems exist but their argument is that societies can outgrow them (World Bank, 1992). The argument rests on the notion of the environmental Kuznets curve, which is an inverted U-curve showing that whereas initial growth patterns lead to high environmental degradation, high-income countries have lower pollution rates (Grossman and Krueger, 1995) and lower rates of deforestation (Bhattarai and Hammig, 2001). Although it is true that some local pollution and deforestation rates are being
reduced in richer countries, there is some leakage and overall CO2 emissions are directly proportional to income and are thus much higher in the North than in the South (Arrow, Bolin et al., 1995; Dasgupta, Laplante et al., 2002). Nevertheless, the practical implication of the Kuznets curve argument – that economic development is at least partially not related to environmental destruction – is becoming part of the mainstream of “liberal environmentalism” (Bernstein, 2002).

Authors who argue for green growth take up the middle ground. They believe that eventually sustainable development “that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” is possible (WCED (World Commission on Environment and Development), 1987: 43). Many scholars, therefore, differentiate themselves from ecological doomsday scenarios and argue for pragmatic problem solving (Nordhaus and Shellenberger, 2007) and a “Green New Deal” (Barbier, 2010). Although it is still open how low-carbon-growth strategies – based on renewable energies and measured in green accounting schemes – will look in detail, the first conceptual as well practical steps have been taken (Weizsäcker, Hargroves et al., 2009; Stiglitz, Sen et al., 2010).

Finally, a consensus is developing that the North also has to follow different development paths, e.g. by breaking its current consumption patterns (Dauvergne, 2008) or by reinventing and ultimately overcoming capitalism (Speth, 2008). For the South, the practice of development will also have to take into account adaptation strategies, as the first effects of climate change are already materializing in many developing countries (IPCC, 2007). Water shortages, changed precipitation patterns, and decreasing crop yields will most likely lead to an increase in climate refugees, which in turn could lead to weaker governance structures in already very weak states and thus to new conflict patterns.

CONCLUSION

Development is a highly contested field. Zygmund Baumann (1992) has described (post)modern intellectuals as turning from legislators to either administrators or interpreters. In development studies, this is reflected in the somewhat bifurcated structure of the field which is divided between a practice-oriented mainstream and a critical, mostly interpretive stream (Corbridge, 2007; Pieterse, 2009). Development studies, as well as IR, are still primarily Western/Northern disciplines – Dependencia has been the exception to the rule. Both disciplines have, nevertheless, opened up to a certain extent to the fact that modernity has multiple forms, and for the “voices from below”. The new heterogeneity of the field reflects the opening up of the social sciences to new voices and different ontologies. It also reflects the skepticism towards large modernist schemes and the negative experiences that have been made with development policies. To conclude, two – partly contradictory – trends shall be stressed:

Firstly, various authors from the mainstream of IR, as well as from development studies, are showing a new interest in the theory and practice of the state as important institution. With
the financial crisis and the strong involvement of governments in solving it, the pendulum seems to be swinging back even more from markets to states (Pieterse, 2009; Wade, 2009). One can, however, argue that this renaissance of statehood is contradicted by the undisrupted transnationalization of economic, social, and political relations. It is, furthermore, characterized by a lack of social coherence within states and although states may provide stability, some show high degrees of repressiveness. Therefore, interest has grown in institutions beyond the state as well as in making government representatives more accountable.

Secondly, there is a new interest in the “local” and its interaction with the transnational and international. Studies that take local practices as their starting point show that development programs facilitate a hybrid range of practices. Instead of only focusing on ‘global’ programs or norms, IR and development theorizing engage with theories that explain the powerful negative effects of transnational discourses and organizational cultures. Another important point is that the distribution of development, poverty, and inequality is mediated through ethnicity, class and gender, producing and reproducing inequalities. These categories cut across different geographical levels and demonstrate that studying such global issues in IR needs to develop perspectives that overcome methodological nationalism and that integrate insights from other disciplines. Furthermore, the emerging economies of the South (BRICS) can no longer be perceived as pure rule-takers for they have become independent rule-makers. Whether this will open up political space for the people of the South remains to be seen.

In particular this latter trend might bring mainstream development theories and their critics, as well as critical approaches to development and IR closer together and potentially lead to dialogue. What nobody should expect, however, is that the dialogue will be coherent. If successful, it will have to amply reflect the strong diversity in both fields as well as the contestedness of their histories and central assumptions (see e.g. Grovogui, 2009).
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*We would like to thank Jan Bachmann, Harald Fuhr, Markus-Michael Müller, Andreas 
Obser, and the editors of the handbook for their very helpful comments on earlier drafts. 
A special thanks also goes to Pearl Wallace for language editing.