

Exclusion is **not** an option any longer: Theories of childhood within international development cooperation

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## Preface

### The Starfish

One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?"

The youth replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die."

"Son," the man said, "don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!"

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said..." I made a difference for that one."

Original Story by: Loren Easley

The story of the starfish has been an inspiration since my work in South Africa and the young people I have met there have taught me that little changes and the appreciation of these changes really makes a difference. I have to say thanks to them because otherwise I would have never started to think in depth about children's rights and develop concepts supporting young people.

Furthermore, I would like to thank denkmodell and especially Dr. Ulrich Erhardt for encouraging me to think about the inclusion of childhood studies within the context of development cooperation and actually giving me the time to do so. A special thank you note goes to all my friends who haven't listen patiently and discussed with me. Your thoughts have been fruitful.

Let's start to make a difference

Ilka Stein

## Executive Summary

Two point six billion people worldwide are under the age of 18 and more than 1.9 billion young people live in the so-called Third World. As a result, young people account for more than 60% of the entire population in some countries. In many regards young people have entered the discourse of global issues and they are internationally considered to be an important target group especially within international development cooperation. But only as a silent target group, it seems. The core thesis of this paper is based on the conviction that it is important that young people be removed from their position as a mere target group for which concepts and programmes should be developed and become acknowledged as active subjects within the transformation of society.

The thesis at hand aims to unveil analogies of childhood studies and theories of development by analysing the underlying structures, showing the limitations of the current paradigms, and prospecting innovative forms that scrutinize the prevailing approaches.

In the end it is shown that the new paradigm of childhood has direct and practical implications for the concepts and work of the international development cooperation as well as for societies in general, obviously. The final question is, in fact, whether adults are capable of permitting radically new approaches and are able and willing to adjust existing mental models and boundaries of generational categories. Since in the end that is the consequence of an inclusion of young people - the claim for a democratic citizenship, which implies more than the right to have a say or to be listened to.

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## Introduction

*The notion that this system can proceed forever, while excluding two-thirds of humankind is simply naïve.*

*(Castells, Manuel, 2001)*

Two point six billion people worldwide are under the age of 18 and more than 1.9 billion young people live in the so-called Third World<sup>1</sup>. As a result, young people account for more than 60% of the entire population in some countries for instance Afghanistan, Ethiopia or Egypt. As in many circumstances of modernity, we are globally facing contradicting demographic developments. While Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand have reached a status where the average population age is 35-41 years, Africa has received the surname “continent of the children” as its average age is currently 16-18 years. Populations throughout the world are growing older while young people dominate, quantitatively, the African continent – the continent that is currently placed in focus of the worldwide globalisation processes and development aspirations. Hence, during the past decades young people, especially in Africa, have distinctly become a matter of global interest.

The current focus on the UN millennium development goals and the huge international debate about aid effectiveness, which is fuelled by the input of both advocates of development cooperation (such as Jeffery Sachs, Joseph Stiglitz, and Bill Gates, etc.) as well as critics of development aid (Dembisa Moyo or Jagdish Bhagwati, for example), have returned the topic to the high priorities list of worldwide politics.

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<sup>1</sup> The collective term “so-called Third World”, and accordingly the “so-called First and Second World”, are part of the international colloquial. It is undoubtedly an ideological term that does not meet the scientific requirements. The initial conditions of the approximately 130 countries that are referred to as “the” so-called Third World could not be more different. Structural elements, social, economic, and political parameters differ within this group making a conceptual differentiation desperately necessary. The official UN language instead refers to the concepts of least developed, less developed, and developed countries. Within the scope of this paper this concept will not be followed, given that it inherits the hegemonic connotation of the Western model of development. The question of who determines the level of development and which concepts are applied has yet to be clarified in this context. Underdevelopment as reflected by these terms is a construction that has been established by Western societies and imposed universally. Further attempts to find a notation that overcomes the elementary criticism of discrimination and exclusion, “countries of the South” or “non-western countries” for instance, have also failed to develop a concept that is suitable for describing the diverse context. Instead, these notions are simply inadequate – the majority of countries referred to in this context are not even located on the southern hemisphere. The term “so-called Third World” is unsatisfactory and the evaluative connotations and discrimination that goes along with the terminology needs to be addressed and discussed. No suitable alternative to this term is currently available, however (the language of theories of development and international development cooperation generally reflects antiquated concepts and constructions). The endorsement of “so-called” to the expression “Third World” is used in order to reflect the underlying criticism of the term and acknowledge it as a mere linguistic crutch.

With regard to young people, the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) has provided a framework for establishing a worldwide social welfare system, compulsory education, child labour legislation, and health services. Countries that are facing economic crises and mismanagement, or fragile states such as most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, are said to not be able to fulfil the CRC framework's requirements and have been embedded into the universal programmes of development agencies. The combination of HIV/AIDS, poverty, orphanage, youth unemployment, and loss of future orientation, as well as armed conflicts and child soldiers all are matters of consideration within international development cooperation and politics. These circumstances clearly contradict the Western notion of childhood and youth as safe spaces of socialization and have thus been introduced as a priority in the development agenda (Christiansen).

In this regard, young people have obviously entered the discourse of global issues and they are internationally considered to be an important target group within international development cooperation. But only as a silent *target group*, it seems. Aside from acknowledging that young people are an important target group with numerical significance, the designed programmes are always based on a perception of childhood and youth that is bound to certain social situations. Hence, the prevailing Western notion of childhood is reflected in the work of international development cooperation. The universal approach of establishing childhood and youth as a safe time for developing skills and capabilities neglects the fact that these generational categories are social constructs. Childhood, youth, and adulthood are not biological, naturally formed categories, but rather socially constructed and therefore tremendously influenced by the socio-political and cultural context. Given that young people do not passively take part in socio-generational categories, but rather move within and navigate through them and even change them, we should start to acknowledge young people not only as a target group but also as an active part of a changing society. The urge of young people to position themselves in their society and find their own ways to navigate through its social-cultural and political context actually positions them as "social shifters". The boundaries of the socially constructed categories may be shifted, extended, or minimized. Dynamics of the generational interaction might change and the interdependent issues of power, authority, and social position might need to be redefined.

It is important that young people be removed from their position as a mere target group for which concepts and programmes should be developed and become acknowledged as active subjects within the transformation of society.

In this sense, it is important to begin to include young people as active parts of society as well as in the concepts of development cooperation. Exclusion and inclusion are topics that are being dealt with by both theories of development and childhood studies. Both discourses are based on the same power-hierarchy principles that are determined by the Western cultural hegemony, and both are determined by a universal definition of development and the accompanying incompetence prediction. The "catch-up mentality", an expression mainly shaped and introduced by Habermas, is a prevailing variable that underlies both discourses. The

expectation of developing towards an advanced state is mostly linked to a linear thinking of development. Thus, development is regarded as striving towards a higher, better end, which is still marked by Western adult societies. This process-oriented approach is combined with an often unspoken precondition, namely that cooperation, partnership, and hence full respect can only be received once the final state of development has been reached. Young people must therefore reach the stage of adulthood, and so-called Third World countries must rise to the levels of the Second and So-called First Worlds. The first hypothesis of this paper is in line with Habermas' conception of catch-up mentalities and concludes that *"childhood studies and theories of development<sup>2</sup> are based on similar mental models<sup>3</sup> of a "catch-up development"*.

It is the conviction that mental models are constructed and can therefore be deconstructed, implying the ability to compose them newly. This strongly fuels the belief that change is possible; change not only on the individual level but also on the institutional and political levels. The concept of mental models is accompanied by the understanding of seeing "circle of causalities" instead of linear processes. System thinking can therefore be regarded as an axiom that every influence is both cause and effect, so that nothing is ever influenced in just one direction (Senge, p.75). Deconstructing existing mental models in order to compose them differently will have an effect on childhood and young people's lives, given the direct impact of international development cooperation in this respect (this text will always refer to development cooperation and not aid, hoping that the model of development aid has become obsolete').

In general, it can be said that the prevailing models of linear process are obsolete and inadequate in order to understand and solve the actual problems of today's reality. Constructing reality has become a prominent issue within science, even interdisciplinary. This might be interpreted as further evidence of the strong relationship between knowledge and power, and thereby the significance of the power to determine what is regarded as right knowledge. Linear mental models are useful in reducing complexity and may in some situations be essential in order to be able to take decisions at all. These scaling-up models are not suitable for capturing complex relationships and interferences of today's globalized world, however. They even maintain existing structures, offering a reciprocal legitimation of many concepts and paradigms. As long as young people continue to be referred to as an important target group and are not acknowledged as individual active subjects and integrated as actors in

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<sup>2</sup> Theories of development in this text always refer to the theories of international development that are closely linked to the politics of international development cooperation. Given that the term development is widely used throughout various sciences and schools of thought and is further used to describe nearly every process of change, it is a terminology that leads to diffuse and indistinct statements. The aim is therefore to always use the term "development" with a specification that clarifies the context. Due to the fact that "development" is also regarded as one of the most essential attributes of childhood however, precise usage of the expression may not always be possible.

<sup>3</sup> The concept of mental models in this text is based on the definition of this term by Peter Senge. He defines mental models as "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (Senge, p.8).

theories of development, these concepts will fail to correspond to the requirements of today's societies. The concepts will therefore be incapable of reflecting a realistic picture of the actual problem and will fail to be sustainable. The second hypothesis of this paper therefore claims that *“the inclusion of young people as active subjects requires the radical adjustment of the current theories of development, which need to provide innovative alternatives to the conservative development models”*.

It has already been announced by scholars that development theory is a cul-de-sac or that the “analyses have come to a dead end” (Escobar, p. 27). Concepts have been tested, adjusted and withdrawn, have been renewed and revised, but still fail to produce promising results and groundbreaking success. The voices of scholars from the so-called Third World have begun to sound in Western societies – “rather than searching for development alternatives, they speak about “alternatives to development” (Escobar, p. 27). In this regard, civil-society groups, grass-roots initiatives and various forms of social movements capture the interest of development critique and are regarded with particular interest. It is clear, however, that these approaches operate still relatively isolated and as “standalone initiatives” they will not be able to provide the solution or have a sustaining impact. The question is whether we are capable of imagining radically new concepts, of adjusting the development paradigm. The third hypothesis therefore addresses the issue of alternative concepts: *“Endogenous processes of change that include young people<sup>4</sup> on all three levels (micro, meso, and macro) lead to an emancipation of so-called Third World countries and young people from the Eurocentric hegemony”*.

The thesis at hand aims to unveil analogies of childhood studies and theories of development by analysing the underlying structures, showing the limitations of the current paradigms, and prospecting innovative forms that scrutinize the prevailing approaches.

The first chapter outlines the “catch-up” mental models of both childhood studies and theories of development. It will first provide a brief review of both fields of discourse. Starting with an introduction into the theories of development from an economic (1.1) as well as a sociological perspective (1.2), both trains of thoughts are summarised in Section 1.3. A review of childhood studies is then presented (2.0) with a special emphasis on understanding aspects leading to an exclusion of young people from society (2.2). The similar conceptions and underlying mental models of

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<sup>4</sup> The term young people is deliberately chosen to represent the group of children and adolescents and will be used throughout the text. The age range used by the CRC is also used here and refers to people who are 18 years old and younger. The usage of young *people* reflects the author's perspective of respecting them as active, individual subjects. The association of the word *people* is expected to reevaluate their status within societies. Furthermore, this reflects the attempt to acknowledge the diversification of childhood(s). Childhood in general (in common parlance as well as in scientific discourse) is referred to as a period, ending with the transformation into adulthood. The new paradigm of childhood studies however focuses on the development of childhood rather than child development (see, Qvortrup et al.). In this sense, it is regarded not as a period but as a permanent form. The terminology of young people aims to contribute to this differentiation and regard childhood as a permanent form that is detached from the concept of child development.



both discourses are then analysed (2.3). Given that the scope of this paper does not allow for a full comparison on all dimensions of these wide theoretical fields, the comparative analysis concentrates on a total of four elements.

- ◆ *postponement to the future,*
- ◆ *power hierarchies,*
- ◆ *economic dependency, and*
- ◆ *homogenization and universalism*

The results of the comparison of the parameter yield interesting similarities.

The first chapter is concluded by bridging the analysis to the overall assumption of this thesis that “exclusion is not an option any longer”. The second chapter focuses on the new paradigms of childhood studies and development theories and bridges the previously conducted analysis to the core issue of this thesis, namely that “exclusion of young people is not an option any longer”. The following section outlines the opportunities that the new paradigm of childhood studies offers to development theory regarding the inclusion of young people (3). This section indicates the issue of marginalisation of young people in the so-called Third World countries. An illustration of the direct structural implications of their exclusion leads to the claim that the inclusion of young people is not an option but a necessity. This claim implies that the current theories of development need to be adjusted and alternative concepts need to proceed (3.3). It should be acknowledged that the claim of the inclusion of young people as fully accepted citizens in society is not bound to the field of development cooperation as such; rather the opposite is true, this claim should be considered as a universal necessity (3.3.1).

Bearing in mind the criticism and the analysis revealed in the preceding sections, the fourth section considers the practical implications of development theories. Here the concept of social entrepreneurship is introduced as an alternative approach to the conservative development cooperation (4.1). The vivid example of a project provides insight into this alternative approach, breaking through the cluster of development cooperation, based on the assumption that change is an endogenous process and needs to foster from insight.

The final section presents an outlook as well as critical remarks on the scope, scale and capabilities of this thesis (5).

## Chapter I - Mental models of a catch-up process

## **Chapter I - Mental models of a catch-up process**

### **1 Including childhood studies in critical modernist development theory**

Literature on young people, childhood studies, and children's rights has begun to appear in common bookstores. In addition to questions of raising children, pedagogy and educational approaches, information on issues such as children rights and children's participation as well as social exclusion and the marginalisation of young people can easily be found nowadays. The discourse on children's rights and children's participation has also begun to be recognized outside of the academic sphere. These discussions take place both in rich, So-called First World societies, where child poverty, failure of educational systems, and diminishing future perspectives are the crucial topics, as well as in debates about the issues of so-called Third World countries. Here, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have accelerated this discussion. In addition to child poverty, the fight against HIV/AIDS, basic health and living conditions, and the demand for basic education for every young person, topics such as street children, child labour, and child-headed households determine the agenda of international conferences (often without or with only scant participation of young people themselves). Eight of the ten MDGs refer directly to the situation of young people (United Nations).

By the same token, theories of development have been heavily debated ever since their beginnings in the early 1950s. International development cooperation has always been in the crossfire of critiques of various schools of thought and fields of interest. Discussions about development cooperation, its form, its impact, and its effects, are carried out regularly. They seem to be inevitably linked to the yearly rhythm of elections so that at least every four to five years the debate is fuelled again and the scope of the discussion ranges from "aid is dead" (Dembisa Moyo et al., for example) to "we have the chance of ending worldwide poverty" (Jeffery Sachs). Due to very different lines of argumentation, the debate is often lead as an either-or-discussion or in this regard literally as either black or white! As Peet recently concluded, "when something is heavily criticized yet persists, it probably has real content" (Peet, p.3). Accordingly, the question is not whether development cooperation is to take place or not, but rather what form of development cooperation we agree on and which conditions, guiding principles, and underlying theories will the global community of policy makers follow in carrying it out.

Although discussions about childhood studies as well as theories of development, are constantly being carried out, they are hardly ever combined. The two fields do not appear to have too much in common, as theories of development are played out on the grand field of international politics, economics, and society whereas childhood studies seems to have found its place rather on the local if not even the individual level (Ruddick).

It is true that childhood studies, and thus young people, have not yet entered the sphere of development theory as independent actors and subjects of change and transformation. The first section outlines the primarily economically-driven basis of development theory (1.2). The

interaction between economic development theory and the social aspects of this discourse indicate that a mere reduction to one of these perspectives is not at all possible. Given that development cooperation has a very direct effect on society, including the lives of young people, conducting a coherent contemplation of both perspectives should actually not be a surprising endeavour.

The necessity of including childhood studies, and therefore young people, in the train of thought of theories of development is the logical consequence of three main arguments.

Firstly, there is a *social aspect*; young people are directly and severely affected by the consequences of development. On one hand, these consequences are structural changes, such as increasing poverty, migration, youth unemployment, and a blurring of the boundaries between traditional and modern societies. It is essential that their voices are not only heard, but also have an impact on decision making. On the other hand, social implications such as child-headed households, street children, and the individualisation of life paths are building the framework of today's young people. De Boeck describes the current challenges vividly by stating that "young people are frontier characters eking out their living in marginal areas (both geographically and socially). They are both, social navigators of the present and social generators of individual and collective futures" (Christiansen, p. 21). Young people might not be the direct recipients of "development", but they are the immediate recipients of its consequences.

Secondly, there is a *compulsive aspect*. Although there is a great temptation to refer to it as an economical aspect in acknowledgment of the omnipresence of economic reasoning, this aspect implies that young people in the so-called Third World comprise between 50 and 60 % of the population, making it simply essential to include them in development theories. It is neither sustainable nor responsible to exclude the majority of the population, especially given that they have the inherent ability to transform the system. As Peet mentions "it is clear (...) that the currently reigning neoliberal model of development does not fit all circumstances. After 200 years full-steam operation, industrial capitalism leaves 2.8 billion people living in poverty" (Peet, p.278). Of these 2.8 billion, approximately 1.9 billion are young people under the age of 20 (population databank UNEP). Their exclusion is visible in all aspects, be it society, politics, or economics. Their voices are not incorporated, their ideas are neglected, and most importantly their needs are not satisfied despite the fact that these needs are primarily determined by adults in the first place. Moreover, their voices have no economic power in an official way. They are not allowed to vote and their voices therefore do not count and do not offer a high potential to be included in political decision making. Their labour is not counted as work, primarily due to the fact that young people mostly find employment in the informal sector or accomplish tasks and duties within the household, work that is also not represented in official statistics or valued as economically relevant income. As labour impact is measured according to wage, young people working in the informal sector,

„Children have voices, yet adults have opinions“

(Personal interview at a children's rights conference in Bregenz 2009)

or what is regarded as contribution to moral economy<sup>5</sup>, for instance, supporting their families at home, heading households, and taking care of siblings or parents, are not taken into account as economic labour, which deeply undermines their economic status within society (see for example Zeiher or Whistutz).

Thirdly, there is an *idealistic aspect* to the inclusion of childhood studies in the development theory discourse. Young people offer an enormous potential and contribution to a theory that is begging for transformation. This potential for a new perspective and powerful ideas should not be ignored any longer. Furthermore, the idealistic aspect appeals to the human rights and universal democratic conviction, implying that every human being is entitled to the same rights and an active citizenship within society.

Currently, theories of development consider young people as an important target group and primarily see them as the recipients of education in an institutionalized system. Young people are said to be the beneficiaries of a trickle-down effect. By concentrating on good governance, democratization, and sustainable growth conceptualised for adults, young people will benefit from the overall result of development cooperation as well. The Western notion of a mandatory, institutionalized education is therefore considered to be the ultimate goal for young people's development.

Note: it is quiet significant that the "current" and only strategy paper of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) that is directed at youth is focused on "youth furtherance and overcoming of child labour" and was compiled back in 1997. This, although the BMZ simultaneously indicates that a focus on young people is essential to fulfilling the UN's MDGs! Placing young people at the centre of attention might seem a bit askew in this regard.

It is therefore time to understand the coherence of the two different fields and analyse their similarities and differences in order to include childhood studies in a new, critical modern development theory<sup>6</sup>.

The first chapter will therefore briefly review both discourses, beginning with development theory and outlining the correlation between the economic consideration of growth and development and the implications of such a perspective on sociological considerations of development. A review of the process of childhood discourse is then provided and obviously linked to the previous concept of economic and social development theory. These two summaries already point to the similar structures and key concepts underlying both theories. This analysis is intensified in the Section 2.3, which highlights a total of four aspects that

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<sup>5</sup> Moral economy refers to an "economy which is most visible where, in the absence of a strong state, the extended family is the sole source of support and long term security (Nieuwenhuys).

<sup>6</sup> Critical modernism is understood as an "alternative to uncritical modernism and overly critical (post)modernism" (Peet, 275). It offers a combination of criticism and the introduction of practical alternatives. Compared to the invariable rejection of development as postulated by (post)modernism, critical modernists strive to transform development. The concept of critical modernism is outlined in further detail in Section 1.2.4.

are common to both theories of development and childhood studies. This leads to a strong argumentation of why childhood perspectives and young people should not, or even may not, be excluded any longer, neither in the theoretical discourse nor in society.

## 1.1 Economic dominance – from neoclassical to neoliberal

In order to understand the dominance of the Western mental models that continues to prevail in most scientific discourses and political decision making, it is essential to draw a bow from the beginnings of economical theories to the present. Discovering the process of economic thinking and linking it to different scientific streams such as sociology unveils a comprehensive picture, underlining the dominance of the “minority world” (Europe and the US considered by population size).

There is a direct line of thought based on Adam Smith’s rationalisation of human selfishness, to the political philosophy of modernization and today’s aspirations of neo-liberalism. Since the discoveries and conflicts of the European Enlightenment (basically located in England in during the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries), the economic principles, more than any other social science, raised the claim of inheriting the status of “the true science”. Economic theories hold the perception of mathematical objectivity and logical sophistication.

### 1.1.1 Classical economy

The roots of classical economy as represented by Adam Smith can be summarized as legitimating selfishness with competitive markets at the heart of every economy that naturally take care of regulating market activities by means of the “invisible hand.” Smith described human beings as “possessing an inherent urge to trade”. As traders, humans were also inherently “self-interested, with their interest focused on (naturally) making money” (Peet, p. 31). The introduction of labour and production, whose importance is globally accepted today as the core variables of a stable, flourishing and thus prosperous economy, is in line with this reasoning. The concentration on work defined as paid labour had its foundations in the classical economy right from the start.

The further development of these theories led to a common understanding of economy as markets being maintained by self-interested, rational capitalists, striving to enhance their personal competitive advantage by trading within intertwining markets (see Peet). In doing so, the classical economy laid the foundation for the reinforcing circle of production and consumption and can therefore be regarded as the preliminary mental model for industrialisation in its entirety as well as modernization in theory and practice.

The point of dealing with the beginnings of economics within the scope of this paper is not to rephrase its theories, but rather to outline the assumptions that lie at the heart of the “true science”. It is important to note that economics, regarding itself as *the* science, is socially constructed (Peet, p.44). What has been determined as universally applicable and true to all humankind is based on the perspective of

Western, white, upper-class entrepreneurs, who aimed to liberate themselves and society from the feudalist system of the previous centuries.

Claiming themselves to be the guiding elite, these entrepreneurs aspired to establish a solid foundation for their economic and intellectual growth, reassuring their personal increase of power. It is important to note that all economic theories rest on these circumstances and their claim for universalism has never been scientifically proven (Peet).

Above all, economists declared the “fair and invisible” distribution of wealth due to market activities and trading. Yet, how is it possible that the situations of workers and owners/managers have always been fairly different? Why is it explained as naturally correct that the investment risk an entrepreneur or manager takes is more valuable than the labour that a worker is able to adduce? The answer is that economy as a science is not based on class-neutral variables or conditions; it is rather a class-committed framework (Peet, p. 42). This claim of scientific neutrality is a core economic principle and a key aspect in explaining its power as a universally applicable concept. At the same time, it is also the aspect that should be dealt with most critically.

One of the major critiques of the classical and neoclassical theories is their attempt to capture complex interdependencies and correlations in simplified theories. Especially the variable “human being” is extraordinarily simplified in these theoretical frameworks, implying that all human beings act rationally and that their decisions are solely based on the intention of generating personal wealth.

These assumptions play a major role in all aspects of modernization. Focusing on technique, process, and growth, as well as on deliberate, rational decision making are declared as the premises of modern society. The *homo economicus* is turning into a universally applicable prototype human being. It is this perception of the rational human being that has remained unchanged after all these decades.

### 1.1.2 From Keynesianism to neoliberalism

After the downfall of the classical economy, the Keynesian model was presented as the salvation model for every market. The growth theory emerged along with it, primarily in the context of development theory. The premise of the growth theory is rooted in the importance of knowledge – or rather in inhabiting and developing the *right* (true) knowledge. Knowledge has been upgraded as the key driver of economic growth, given that it designs more efficient means of production that in turn allow for steady growth. The power of knowledge has been declared and it will remain one of the core arguments in the race of the catch-up models that is produced by the West. These Keynesian foundations have often been criticized especially in light of the corresponding development policies. As Johnson phrased it: “The problem of developing countries came neither from the legacy of colonial history, nor from global inequalities but instead from misguided Keynesian development policies” (Johnson, p. 232). The

Keynesian system was followed by the neoliberal approach, which still dominates global politics and worldwide financial decisions today.

Two central principles determine neoliberal decisions: the assumption that “factors of production” (labour and capital) are paid exactly what they are worth and the declaration that the resources for production will always be used in the utmost efficient way (Peet). Again, the theory is not backed up by examples from reality. Instead of *laissez-faire*, the wealth of the so-called First World was conducted by state intervention and planning. Polanyi brought this criticism to the point by explaining that “the road to the free market was paved with continuous political manipulation, whether the state was involved in removing old restrictive regulations or building new political bodies. Markets are social and institutional constructions that require rules and regulations to function effectively.” (Block, p. 56)

It was during this time that the abolishment of inequalities has been declared as political priority (beginning in the 1950s). Development politics entered the main stage and resulted in the Washington Consensus, a consensus of rich countries to help the poor get their development started. The foundations were not only deeply rooted in neoliberal principles, but obviously continued to apply the “classical” perception that economical theories are universally applicable, in accordance with a one-size fits all mentality and the proof of Western achievements (going back to the achievements of the Enlightenment period). Moreover, the Western strength in producing the right knowledge was considered to be the benchmark of every society longing for development. The Marshall Plan implemented after World War II has been cited as the proof of successful development aid *per se*. Even today this European and US success story is used as evidence for sustainable (another “catch all term” in this context) growth and utmost development.

The catch-up mentality was imposed by the So-called First World over the so-called Third World and it was scientifically proven by economics, the true science. It is worth noting once again that the variables of economic theories, especially related to human beings and society, have largely never been verified but assumed, completely neglecting the case of differences among human beings.

Furthermore, it has been and continues to be recognised that the so-called Third World countries seeking development are not comparable to the so-called First World (the notion of a different reality in these countries). This has never led to the formulation of different strategies of development for these “different” realities, however.

To summarise this short excursion into the theories of development from a purely economic perspective, it can be said that all progress that has been made in economic theory, from classical to neoliberal, has been and continues to be rooted in a system in which “a minority owns and controls the means by which the existence is collectively reproduced determining thereby the character and direction of development, the social relations with nature, and the way people are created as kinds of human beings (Peet, p. 102).

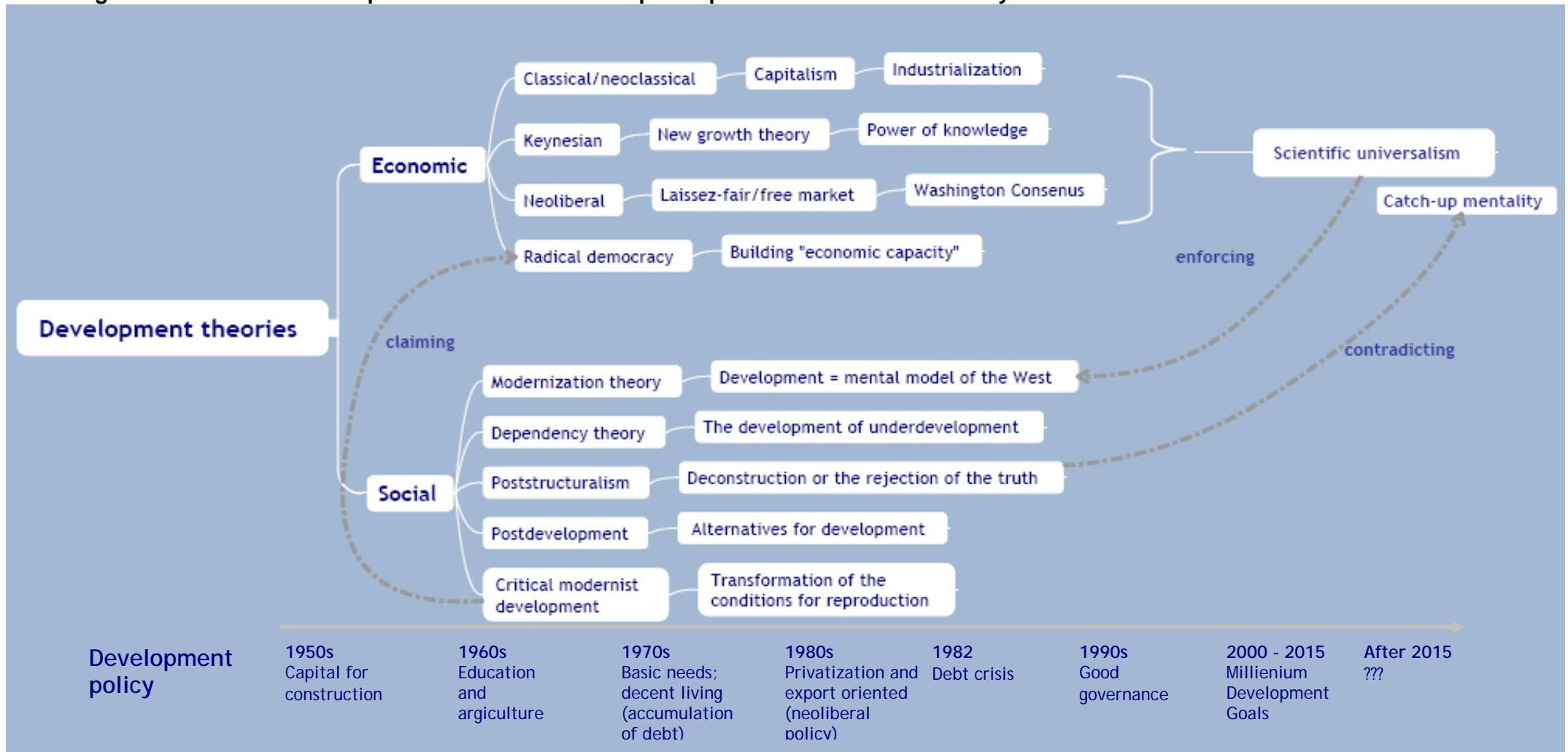


The key attributes that have been transferred from economic theory to the concept of development theory (at least until the post-modern perspective), can be summarized as follows:

- ◆ The omnipresence of rational thinking and deliberate decision making by human beings
- ◆ Reduction of development to the mere economic growth aspect (e.g. growth theory)
- ◆ Status of economics as *the* science, thus setting the priority of the elegance of mathematical logic above socially verified variables
- ◆ The claim of universalism, neglecting that the theories are constructed and are based on a class-committed framework
- ◆ Inequalities are manifested by the declaration of a natural distribution system that, if not disrupted, assures that everyone receives what he/she is entitled to (the difference between wage of workers and return on investment for managers seem to be natural)
- ◆ The thought of process and development per se

This construction of reality is mirrored by the social as well as the political perspective of development theory. The notion of universally applicable solutions, rationality, the function of knowledge, and a Western benchmark for development is found in the following models.

Figure 1: Overview of development theories and development policies from 1950 until today



This overview aims to present the various schools of thought within this discourse and the main hypotheses throughout the last 60 years. It is not the intention to display the various streams of discussion in detail but rather to highlight the most dominant arguments both from an economic and a sociological perspective. The overview underlines the linkages between the train of thought from early economic theory and that of the social development theories. Furthermore, the interdependency between the schools of thought and actual political action can also be seen.

## 1.2 Walk through the sociological theories of development

The hegemony of economic thinking has influenced the other sciences, whether directly or indirectly, subconsciously or deliberately. It is not impudent to claim that economic rationalism has imperialised our mental models. The dominance of the economic rational explanation of the world's turning, and with it the concept of process, persists today and contradicting attempts are only gradually beginning to flourish in reality. It is the claim of a (naturally) linear, straightforward process from "poverty, barbarism, despotism and ignorance to richness, civilization, democracy and rationality, the highest expression of which is science" (Shanin, p. 66). The notion of process established an entire machinery of new thought and theories and eventually led to a new categorization of societies. The advanced societies that have already encountered the most precious progress are eagerly willing to instruct others on their developmental paths. "Development is about paving the way for the achievement of those conditions that characterize rich societies: industrialisation, agricultural modernization, and urbanization" (Escobar, p. 25).

First hope and guidance was ascribed to the modernization theory, due to the fact that it began to (mildly) criticize the neoclassical economics surging for a change in the distribution of wealth and work. Modernization theory soon became an accomplice, however: "mainstream economics and modernization theories together see development as a uniform, unilinear "stage-type" process that was led by the historical example of the rise of the West" (Peet, p.22).

The major criticism of development theories has been and continues to be focused on the hegemony of Western perspectives that is those of Europe and the US, and the dominance of the Western concept in development discourse and actual implementation.

Before delving into the major criticism of development theories and therefore also the applied development cooperation, however, a brief review of the major schools of thought within sociological development theories will be provided.

### 1.2.1 Modernization theory

Sociological modernization theory dominated the conception of social structures until the 1970s. Following a rather structurally functionalist school of thought, it is based on a comparison of the level of advancement in a society and its prevailing structures. This social equation determined whether a society is advanced and modern (to make use of this common synonym) or traditional. This simple classification leads to a range of immediate conclusions. Modern societies are claimed to be able to deal with complex situations, navigate themselves in difficult environments, and solve the problems at hand as they occur. In line with these attributes, modern societies are regarded as avant-garde and their abilities assure a constant process. By the same token, traditional societies are seen as being limited by the environment that they could master. The characteristics of modern society all surround the aspects of being able to

cope with increasingly complex circumstances and technology. Mastering, enhancing, and refining new innovative forms of organisation and production are the main premise. Along with this demand, an urgent need for specialisation is addressed. Individual skills are valued and have to be specialised to the highest degree possible – experts become the new elite in society. It is not sufficient to be a farmer or craftsmen, it is essential that one is an expert in crop rotation, cattle breeding, and so on. Separation, exclusion, and differentiation have also become constantly growing variables in modern societies as a result of such specialisation. Similar to the notion of *laissez-faire* in economic terms, individual self-realisation has become the guiding principle within societies. The determination of one's own life path, blurring boundaries of formerly well-established roles, is a consequence or an effect.

The proportions of these modernisation theories are widely visible urbanization, mobility, the spread of education and democracy, and a highly differentiated system of cultural, political, private, and public spheres of life (Peet, 122). All these changes are accompanied by new technological devices and innovative forms of communication. The flow of information and access to information are the intangible values that determine social status and power. At the same time, scientific researchers, especially political scientists and ethnologists, became interested in analysing the visible differences between modern and traditional societies. These “studies concluded that development was an evolutionary process in which human capacity increased in terms of initiating new structures, coping with problems, adapting to continuous change, and striving purposefully and creatively to attain new goals” (Peet, 123).

It was mainly political circumstances such as the Vietnam War and the doctrines of Marx and Weber that instigated criticism of the explanations provided by the sociological modernisation theory. New explanations were said to be found in the dependency theory.

### 1.2.2 Dependency theory

Beginning in the mid 1960s, the dependency theory challenged every aspect of the assumptions of modernisation theory. Here, the main explanation for various stages of development is not regarded as mere backwardness in light of advanced standards that results from the inability to integrate into modernisation. The differences between the so-called First World and the so-called Third World are explained as a consequence of the highly efficient integration of so-called Third World countries at the peripheries of the capitalist market, which are determined and steered by the central power of the so-called First World (see Nohlen). Western development was therefore regarded as a consequence of external destruction and not of internal innovation or process per se. The favourable external factors are encouraged by a deliberate exploitation of the countries being peripheral satellites in the global market system. In other words, dependency theory claims the deliberate development of the Third World's underdevelopment by the so-called First World. As the Brazilian geographer Dos Santos (1970) phrased it, “[Dependency is]... an historical condition that shapes a certain structure of the world economy

such that it favours some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economies” (Dos Santos, p.226).

### 1.2.3 Post-development

Another major change in development theory emerged in the mid 1980s and remains valid today. The post-development discussion began to emerge in line with post-structuralism and post-modernism. Arturo Escobar’s call to stop looking for development alternatives and strive for alternatives to development captures the quintessence of post-development (Escobar 1995, p.215). It is a synonym for the rejection of the development discourse and therefore international development cooperation per se. This school is characterised by its reversion of modernization theory. Post-development is an accumulation of criticism of the development theory that exposes the discourse’s Eurocentric hegemony and imposes a critical stance towards the principles of the scientific discourse and the dominance of the economic and thus capitalist assumptions that are included in the theories of development as such. Post-development unveils the tremendous machinery that has been developed to sustain the concepts of progress, or machinery designed by the so-called First World to develop the so-called Third World. The implemented and maintained power relations ensure that “individuals, governments and communities are seen as underdeveloped (or placed under conditions in which they tend to see themselves as such), and are treated accordingly” (Escobar 1992, p.23). Three strategies are disclosed that keep the deployment of development going:

- ◆ The production of *abnormalities*, such as “the poor”, “the malnourished”, “the illiterate”, “the landless”, etc., which is required to fuel the reciprocal circle of finding the right treatment to cure these abnormalities (see Escobar)
- ◆ The *professionalization* of development. The development industry produces increasing numbers of experts to be led into the “field” in order to maintain and foster development. Here, the power of the right knowledge is again openly displayed.
- ◆ The *institutionalization* of development, which accelerates and preserves the “advanced nations” political power hold on the so-called Third World countries. It is a network that consists of governments, donors, the aid industry, agencies, and experts that holds the wisdom of knowledge and provides it in form of further development concepts, projects, and ideas. Furthermore, these institutions not only hold the knowledge, but also the financial means that are equivalent to occupying power according to the rules of the worldwide economic game.

Post-developmental theories are often synonymous with the concepts of Michel Foucault, with his terminology (his ‘toolbox’, for example) being replicated especially often. His concepts of the archaeology of development, knowledge as power, the autonomous production of truth, and the insurrection of subordinated knowledge are have therefore been devolved to the criticism of development theory (Ziai, p. 1046). Although a

detailed analysis would reveal that the concepts of post-development do not fully live up to a Foucaultian perspective on development<sup>7</sup>, the limitations that have been addressed by post-development have led to a rethinking of the entire development discourse.

Post-development scholars openly denounce the effects of 40 years of glorious developmental achievements; namely the construction of poor and underdeveloped nations that are dependent on the benevolence of rich countries to provide them with development. Simultaneously, 40 years of development have achieved that the local perspective of the so-called Third World countries has been rejected, in the sense that farmers in Guatemala, a street child in Mozambique, and a single Nepalese mother are regarded as being identical – poor and underdeveloped (Escobar 1995). Post-development writers sedulously outline the reciprocal power hierarchies that are in place and will maintain the dependency that has (deliberately) been established by the so-called First World.

#### 1.2.4 Critical modern development

With the post-development discourse, various streams have evolved during the discussion, one of them being a critical (post)development discourse (Ziai). The critical post-development discourse disapproves of viewing solely the romantic aspects of traditional culture, referring to practices such as genital mutilation and forced marriage, which are harmful, unjustifiable, and unacceptable. At the same time, it emphasizes the achievements of modernization that are beneficial to society in general, such as electrification, hospitals and medical treatment, and decreasing infant mortality rates. The critical post-development discourse, which may also be referred to as the critical modernist view, therefore “emphasises the need to avoid both extremes: to embrace (local communities) uncritically as alternatives or to dismiss them as romantic expositions” (Ziai, p. 1051). In contrast to the post-development discourse, which mainly criticises and rejects yet offers no alternatives, the critical modern development school aims to present ways of transforming development. The overall tendency within this stream is to shift the power of defining problems and targets to the member of the society itself, thereby enabling local ownership rather than development by external experts. It therefore does not represent a complete rejection of development but rather the urge to transform it (Peet, p. 275). Such a transformation needs to include the language aspect (let development become a term with meaning again) and the belief in a different society and global system, one of equality and democracy and simply the belief in a saner world.

The premise of the critical modern perspective on development is that it asks to live with modernity by criticising it in order to change it. In

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<sup>7</sup> Foucault would reject major points of criticism made by post-development writers because they uncritically claim to have found “the truth” without taking into consideration the social, cultural, and historical construction of the context, for example. Furthermore, he has always concentrated on an analysis of power relations in the first place and acknowledges that there is no power-free space as such. A detailed analysis of Foucault’s thought in post-development writings can be found in the work of Aram Ziai, among others.

comparison to post-development voices, the critical modernist focus is therefore always guided by a changing momentum; it is the transformation that will make a difference to the two billion people living in poverty. Accordingly, critical modernist approaches are somehow pragmatic considerations of the discourse, stating that “science and democracy will not disappear simply because post-modern theorists are tired of them” (Peet, p. 276) and that modernisation has, in fact, led to a beneficial situation for a large number of people and should not be ignored.

The postulation of this train of thought is therefore to regard “democratic development as transforming the conditions of reproduction under the control of directly democratic and egalitarian social relations so that the needs of the poorest people are met” (Peet).

### **1.3 Major critiques of development theory**

Development and process are core constructs of Western societies and include the most significant points of criticism. Firstly, development as such always suggest that the outcome of the process is something that is more sophisticated and more advanced than it was at the beginning of the development process. Development, according to the general understanding, implies an improvement from something inferior to something supreme. The concept of development is therefore based on the principle of power hierarchies and a linear evaluation scheme – from bad to good, from poor to rich, from barbarism to avant-garde, and with regards to societies from “least developed countries” to “developed countries”. “Development assumes a teleology to the extent that it proposes that the “natives” will sooner or later be reformed, at the same time it reproduces endlessly the separation between reformers and those to be reformed by keeping alive the premises of the so-called Third World” (Escobar 1995, p. 93). This imposed balance of power is further supported by the construction discussed above of the economic rationalities; the Eurocentric universalism receives an even all-embracing denotation.

Furthermore, a system of development assures that the dependency of the so-called Third World countries is maintained, given that an entire network of aid needs to be nourished. Abnormalities are searched for, created, and located in order to be cured by external experts. Institutions are built and maintained in order to facilitate the development process. Evaluation and monitoring systems are implemented in order to display the process on the one hand, as well as the still visible shortcomings (abnormalities) on the other, which will obviously lead to further projects, concepts, and more expertise from the so-called First World. As such, theories of development are a self-fulfilling prophecy and an endless reciprocal cycle of the catch-up mentality.

Dominated by a discriminating language, mental models of dependency and inferiority are maintained. Even a shift towards more local involvement and ownership is accompanied by a supervision of the experts (see for instance the five principles: ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results, and mutual accountability, of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness - OECD). Moreover, the promise of a better future is actually a postponement towards the future that neglects the present tense – “they first need to be developed before things will start to normalize”. All of these characteristics of the mental model sound too familiar and could be ascribed to an entirely different field of study, namely the area of childhood studies. The analogies that will be unveiled are striking and should encourage a critical reflection of its implication on theories of development, childhood studies, and the inclusion of the later into the former.

## 2. Childhood studies

No other science has dwelled upon development as progress to such an extent as child development. Child development is the crucial parameter for nearly all research dealing with young people, whether it is children's' biological, physical, psychological, moral, or social development that is being considered. Their development always implies a process to a more advanced stage (Woodhead). Unfortunately, the history of childhood and research on young people has been written and presented from an adult perspective, which distinguishes it from all other interpretative theories. Especially the scientific concept of development that suggests a linear process of refinement, thus following an evolutionary logic, has been dominated by an adult perspective of young people's development.

The linkages between the triumphal procession of (economic) science as described at the beginning of Section 1 and the changing construction of childhood and altering status definition of young people within society are evident.

Only at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, awareness rose that governmental regulations are required to guarantee a solid reproduction of young people and a common childhood for every young person. This awareness of a required successful reproduction of human capital for a functioning knowledge-society went hand in hand with the consciousness that the newly gained productivity required certain standardised forms of education in order to be able to ensure continuous economic growth. With the establishment of institutionalised education, the perception of young people as part of society changed tremendously. Young people were degraded from a fully integrated subject in the labour market to “mere becomings”, who first have to complete their childhood before being able to participate in the adult and thus the working world (Prout 2004).

Moreover, young people were excessively confronted with a system that is based on strict norms that identify truthful adult behaviour as a benchmark, which deepened the power relations between adults and young people noticeably. During this time, age started to play a crucial role, determining young people's required level of “development” according to the scientifically determined standard. Developmental psychology dominated



the academic debates throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and as a result, also shaped the general public's understanding of young people's development. The work of Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erickson concerning the intellectual, moral, and personal development of young people must be mentioned specifically here. Together with theories focusing on the socialization aspect of childhood (see Mead, for example), these concepts built the foundation for an ever-increasing number of institutions directed at the development of young people.

The various phases and stage models that have been presented throughout the discourse are essential, the most well-known of which being Piaget's model of developmental phases. The concentration of science on understanding a young person's normal development and analysing it to the smallest circumstances has led to a culture of scaling and standardization childhood. This scaling concept is strictly bound to the age categorization of young people and has led to the perception that age, childhood, and therefore the various phases within childhood (based mostly on Piaget's models) are naturally and hence almost biologically determined. As a result, "the mission (of identifying milestones of normal development) was to identify universal, rule-governed patterns of behaviour, thinking and reasoning" (Woodhead, p. 49).

Even though these stage or phase models have been challenged with new concepts and theories (see Section 3 for the most recent and comprehensive consideration of childhood studies), the mental models have adopted a strong position in the everyday lives of both young people and adults. "Don't worry, it is just a phase she/he is going through" vividly illustrates two main aspects of this prevailing construction. First of all, the young person's development is regarded as a passage of various phases with the final destination of adulthood. Secondly, attention is turned to the future, thus neglecting the present state of being a young person.

Furthermore, the categorization according to age has gained a reputation as the natural and precise measurement of a young person's development, irrespective of the tremendous limitations that the age variable inherits (an arbitrary measurement that does not allow for any respectful evaluation of a person's capacities, experience, personality, or qualification). Such a natural perception is automatically accompanied by universality in the approach of childhood. The final stage of development, in this case the aspiration that childhood and adolescence are meant to prepare for, is always marked by the fully-developed, Western (male) adult<sup>8</sup>.

All these conceptions have influenced institutions aiming at transforming young people into standardised adults, which in the end results in a system in which the main aim of education, both formal and informal, is to manufacture adults. Young people are deliberately separated from the working world, from economic status, and are therefore left out of any form of decision making. Protection and care have emerged as receiving the highest priorities concerning young people, with childhood being regarded

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<sup>8</sup> In this regard, the childhood discourse seamlessly ties in with the previously outlined theories of development of so-called Third World countries and the goal of achieving the Western standard seems to be just one of many similar conceptions.

as a phase of playing, learning and growing. Childhood therefore shifted from a time in which young people strongly participated in economic and social activities without or with merely minimal protection (until the 19<sup>th</sup> century) towards an area of all-round protection and a diminishing professional participation (Jans 2004, p. 33).

The social changes of the last decades have turned the understanding of childhood inside out. Late modernity has changed the everyday context of young people and families. Family compositions are not standardised anymore, as new constellations are brought into practice and becoming socially accepted. A central characteristic of modernity is the feeling of being in motion. Everything is perceived as being constantly challenged, readjusted or revised and everything therefore seems to be becoming rather than being. This shift appears to be particularly evident for childhood, “which of all the modern stages of life is seen as the most evanescent, the most subject to loss and displacement” (Gillis, p.114). The idea and construction of childhood has changed tremendously and is, in the sense of modernity, constantly challenged.

These changes are also reflected in the construction of childhood and childhood studies has therefore changed as well. These changes will be outlined in Section 3 of this paper. The adjustments that have been made by the new paradigm of childhood studies offer great potential for refinements in the theories of development as well and an integration of the systemic consideration of the new childhood studies within theories of development appear promising. Due to the fact that mental models do not change as fast as theoretical considerations may change, it is regarded as an essential first step to comprehend the prevailing conceptions of childhood and young people before turning to the proposed new paradigm. Therefore, the prevalent constructions of childhood (Section 2.1) and the causes of young people’s exclusion as active members of the “present-tense society” will be described (Section 2.2). These revisions form the foundation for an evaluation of similar conceptions of childhood studies and development theory, which will be analysed in Section 2.3. The new paradigm of childhood studies is regarded as being able to offset some of these constraints as shown in Section 3. For this reason, the discussion of this rather new school of childhood studies is presented following the comparison of childhood studies and development theory.

## **2.1 Towards a fully developed adult**

The linear concept of development dominated psychological science of child development has been revised and replaced with the concept of lifelong learning, and therefore a process that is described as continuous losses and gains rather than phase-like, fixed development (Honig). According to this perspective, development is not finished once childhood is declared as being over, as development continues during adulthood. The cultural scaling of adulthood in comparison to childhood, however, did not come to an end under such a consideration of the sociological concept of socialization (Honig, for instance). Especially the evaluation and scaling of the learning process during childhood is regarded as elementary due to young people’s lack of knowledge, experience, and capabilities. “Learning” is therefore evaluated differently for young people and adults. The learning

process that adults pass through is generally conceived as more advanced in comparison to the basic learning required by young people. In this regard, lifelong learning did not abolish the general classification of childhood as “inferior” in comparison to adulthood. Parsons’ socialization theory, for example, followed the notion that young people are incomplete “by nature” and are formed into “functioning adults” only as a result of socialization (see James, p. 37). Once again, the focus is placed on childhood as a “vehicle” to pass through the transformation from young person to adult (Prout).

Young people are deliberately excluded from society in this regard, given that they only entail a status of “becomings” and not yet the status of beings. It is in this sense that society refers only to “fully developed adults” and does not include young people. Young people’s exclusion from the “we” of society was not challenged by either developmental psychology or by socialization theory until the introduction of a new childhood studies paradigm. “People still repeat theories of the developing mind as if these are factual and as if children’s minds develop like their bodies through one universal pattern of ascending growth marked out by ‘milestones’ from zero to adult maturity” (Alderson, p. 113).

Since the 1970s, such concepts have been constantly challenged and critically scrutinized. The Year of the Child (1979), the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and the acceptance of the new paradigm of childhood studies manifest a new school of thought. Childhood, or rather childhoods, have been analysed in light of changing societal circumstances and the constructivist notion has been applied to this field as well. Social scientists started to take both agency and structure<sup>9</sup> into consideration in their explanations of the social world, and much has been achieved concerning the bevelled consideration of young people and childhood from an adult perspective. An important question has been moved from back to centre stage, namely which role young people themselves play in their growing up and socialization. James and Prout provide a definition that emphasises this change in perception: “children are and must be seen as active in the construction of their own lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live” (James & Prout, p. 8). This definition has truly changed the conception of young people as social actors and by the same token changed the conception of childhood. The formerly shaped mental models nevertheless remain, not only in everyday life but also in academic literature. It is therefore essential to understand the basic connotations that are rooted in the mental model of a linear development process that culminates in the maturity of western adulthood.

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<sup>9</sup> The new paradigm of childhood studies emphasizes the differentiation between agency and structure. It is important to distinguish between young people (children) and childhood. Here, childhood is regarded as a process; something young people do (Frones, p. 281). Young people are therefore regarded as agents, in the sense of someone who does something with other people that is contributing to a wider process of social and cultural reproduction. Childhood is regarded as a socially constructed context that scales developmental processes and is influenced by historical phenomenon and social figuration. This distinction will be part of the introduction and discussion of the new paradigm in Section 3.

## 2.2 Exclusion of young people

All attempts to consider development as a lifelong process have not altered the contemplation of childhood in deficit terms in comparison to adulthood. Attention was continuously placed on childhood as a transitional phase and childhood as a social construct remained mostly unacknowledged. Instead, childhood was analysed as a preparation phase, standardized and generalised to the outmost. The institutionalization and claim of a universally applicable concept of childhood<sup>10</sup> is a visible outcome of these academic reflections. Institutionalization reached far larger proportions than mere schooling. Although school is one of the most essential topics concerning the proper education and thus the socialization of young people, the modern lifestyle requires more and different forms of institutionalized preparation for adulthood. Along with the spread of an institutionalized childhood, the requirements for expert knowledge and consultation have also increased. Today, an entire machinery of adult experts take care of young people's prosperous development, with special attention being paid to natural, normal, and obviously healthy development. Schools, social institutions, and families are therefore accountable for the proper socialization of young people with the supreme target of forming them into functioning adults. "Today, we have a further set of age-calibrated institutions (...) that serve everything from infancy to adulthood" (Hendrick, 2009).

The reproduction of society is the declared benchmark for every endeavour. Such a consideration underlines the above-mentioned de-recognition of young peoples' social status – a status as active subjects of society - and entirely neglects the present tense of young people and their lives by postponing every outcome to the future.

### 2.2.1 Future investment

Exposing young people's value to the future is the core difference between childhoods in comparison to adulthood. First of all, this "investment" in the future undermines a notion of young peoples' status in society in terms of a deficit (Honig, 2009). They are simply not there yet, are not yet regarded as full members of society. Furthermore, this concept does not only exclude them as active members of society, but also entails an economic consideration. Given that the costs of young people are increasing (a side effect of modernization), investments into their future are increasing as well. The *return on investment* seems to be the newly introduced benchmark – young people are bred as status symbols and their achievements in future adult life are measured as the returns on former investment. The reinforcing power of this thinking, recreates the system described above that designs institutions for every age, all working

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<sup>10</sup> The widely held belief of a universally applicable concept of childhood makes it difficult to contribute to a differentiated discussion that incorporates varying contexts of childhoods. Especially the different social, cultural, political, and economic circumstances that influence modern childhoods are not reflected by this single term. The discussion on exclusion of young people can therefore not be applied to all circumstances and it must be kept in mind that the context of childhoods in the so-called First World varies significantly from childhoods in the so-called Third World. Furthermore, there is no single concept that could be used to accurately describe "the" childhood in "the" Third or So-called First World" (see the discussion in Section 2.3.4)

towards the premise of supporting and fostering a young person's development. As a result of tailor-made advancement, the return on this investment is promised to be escalated, producing a young adult with a comparative advantage compared to their peers (even the language is infiltrated from the economic thought and reasoning).

Neglecting the present state results in tremendous problems and challenges for young people, their parents, and society in general. Postponing value to the future also implies postponing needs, acknowledgement, and appreciation. The current debate about the correct measurement and amount of welfare support for children (so-called Hartz IV debate) in Germany<sup>11</sup> is just one of many examples. Here, it is simply not possible to postpone these needs to the future, yet the social status of young people and their role in society has to be taken into consideration – now.

Interestingly, the value postponement of young people towards the future has made them even more precious in the present. This leads to a situation in which fewer adults are able to afford such a precious “asset”, however (Hendrick, p. 120). In the Western world, the number of young people is declining and fewer adults actually live together with young people. Gillis phrased this phenomenon as children becoming “more luminous even in the absence of real children” (Hendrick, p. 120). This leads to another circular causality that in the end places even more pressure on childhood if considered not as a category but as a preparation phase for adulthood. The demographic change, which is visibly showing the decline of young people in Western societies, puts even more pressure on the “proper development” of these few young people in order to maintain the advanced status of society. Hence childhood as a learning and preparation phase becomes more important and more institutions are taking care of it. Here, the circular starts from scratch. More institutions, leading to higher costs, result in even greater investment, and even fewer young people. The often praised lightheartedness of childhood will surely be lost for these young people and their families.

The economic reasoning of future investment in human capital and thus the reproduction of modern society is a fundamental driving force behind such thinking.

### 2.2.2 Exclusion from public space

The erosion of households as the core social, and to large extent also economic, institution within Western modern societies led to a new debate about the place of and for young people (Gillis, p. 118). The consequences of modernity are combined in the loss of public space for young people. Although young people are valued as precious and occupy a special

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<sup>11</sup> On February 9, 2010 the German Supreme Court declared the calculation of the amount of support for children of adults receiving welfare or unemployment support in Germany to be illegitimate, given that the current measurement system assumes children to be “small adults” (the recent measurement grants young people under the age of 14 60%, and between 16 and 18 years 80% of the adult allowance). The denial of young people as active subjects has been reversed with this judicial decision and children's support has to be recalculated and based on their actual needs and not an arbitrary percentage of the adult support.

status within society, they have lost their own space within society and the public. Today, public space is fully arranged according to adult needs and requirements. Modernity has therefore yielded a separation of domestic and public life, production and consumption, and produced an even wider gap between childhoods and adulthoods.

In line with the consideration of childhoods described above as an investment phase striving for a successful integration into adulthoods, childhoods have further received the label of protection and care. Young people out of place are precarious for the reproduction of decent human capital and thus society. Protective institutions do take care of young people who have lost their space and place in society. "Subject to increased adult supervision in school and in public spaces in general, young people have less access to the times and places of adults in general" (Zeihner). In order to take care of the changing circumstances of family composition and labour market requirements, such as the new role of women in the labour market, or mobility, flexibility, and ever longer working hours, more institutions are designed to take care of young people after school or forms of education (e.g. kindergarten). In summary, "Western societies are now developing out-of-school services in order to meet the 'demands' of the adult working day" (Mayall, p. 179). Young people being described as out of place is an aspect of childhood studies with manifold facets. Remaining within the discussion of Western societies for a moment, two aspects are taken into closer consideration.

Firstly, the current trend of the labour markets and welfare systems in Western societies has given rise to the assumption that young people will remain in a state of dependency and the institutionalization of education longer. In other words, their childhood and adolescence is estimated to be expanded even further (Mayall, p. 179). By the same token, young people will be separated from the adult world longer and being out of place will become an even broader topic of debate in the coming years. Why is it likely that childhood and adolescence will be extended? The argument is closely connected to the recent welfare system in most Western societies and the visible demographic development. The current welfare and pension system will not be able to compensate for the demographic development within the next years. As fewer young people are growing up in Western societies and entering into the paid labour force, and simultaneously pensions for an increasing number of elderly people have to be paid, the burden for the young generations must somehow be shifted. New solutions must therefore be found for this flawed and unjust system. One adjustment has been the decision to "make use of people's longevity" and simply rise the retirement age for employees. For young people, this implies that they will be excluded from the labour market even longer and their time of dependency and most likely also the time they spend in institutional education and cared-for development will be extended (Mayall). This development is in striking contradiction with another tendency that has become visible in Western societies, namely an earlier "growing up of young people" and their capabilities.

The second point of consideration is that although childhood is extended and the dependency of young people in adult societies, primarily on their parents, has never been higher in Western societies, the boundaries between the age groups are constantly being challenged with many

speaking of blurring boundaries (Gillis or Buckingham). Despite attempts to protect young people from the dangerous adult world as long and as coherently as possible, young people consistently find new entry points and access to these public (meaning adult) places. New technologies and vastly changing communication and participatory means are especially altering the modern landscape. At the same time, it seems as though adults aim to extend their own youth and thus the “romantic idea” of an innocent childhood. Childhood is not only being elongated, adults are also remaining in the category of youth longer. Mental models of generation and appropriate behaviour within age categories begin to vanish and the idea of constant negotiation and navigation begins to flourish. Despite these developments and the fact that literature has already claimed the “death of childhood” or makes reference to “adult-like-children and child-like-adults”, the category childhood has not been seriously challenged within the concepts of Western society (Gillis, p. 120). Although circumstances have notably changed, the basic distinction between child- and adulthood has not been adjusted. This has led to a situation in which young people have lost their individual space without gaining new “territory” in an adult-centric society.

### 2.2.3 Separation from the working world

There is a third aspect of young people’s exclusion from society that needs to be mentioned in this regard – young people’s separation from the labour market. While the two previously described aspects are rather associated with Western society, this third aspect applies to both so-called First as well as so-called Third World societies. As studies have proven, the number of young people engaged in paid work is steadily rising also in rich societies in contradiction to popular belief that child labour is only a matter of the so-called Third World countries (see for instance Whistutz or Liebel). Nevertheless, this topic is closely related to the grand stage of global politics, making it also relevant within the context of international development policies. The ministerial meeting of the WTO in 1996 and their alignment with a global child labour policy received tremendous support from so-called First World societies, including trade unions, governments, and special interests were claimed even from the consumer. In this regard, “global child labour was overwhelmingly interpreted as a repetition of northern history”<sup>12</sup> (Nieuwenhuys 2007, p. 154) and in the name of development needed to be abolished. The consequences of this strict denegation were twofold. On one hand, it fuelled an overdue debate about the definition and circumstances of child labour and brought children’s working movements from back to centre stage. On the other hand, it undermined the social status of young people even further, given that their paid work was denounced as the backwardness of so-called Third World societies and actually indicated that by working these young people are missing out on an essential part of their childhood (applying the universal conception of childhood).

Furthermore, the international child labour law even made most of their paid work illegal so that young working people also faced judicial exclusion and even higher risk. The economic consequences of a child labour ban

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<sup>12</sup> Special reference is made to the industrialization and the exploitation of young people in the factories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Nieuwenhuys).

were and continue to be enormous for many families in which young people contribute to the family income and actually often generate income that supports the entire family (Liebel). Global awareness of this topic culminates in the marginalization of young people. Official paid work was regarded as harmful and often boycotted by Western societies, which set off a reciprocal circle of young people losing their jobs, causing families to lose an essential part of their incomes, and ending in young people seeking employment in the informal or even illegal sector and ensuring their social exclusion (e.g. Liebel).

Stunning, however, is the fact that global awareness has led to a more subtle classification between paid and other forms of work (with regards to young people). In this sense, the contribution of young people to the family economy by means of helping out at home, on the fields, taking care of siblings or elderly relatives, for example, is not taken into account in the labour debate at all. These contributions are not reflected in any statistics in the so-called First or Third worlds, implying that the enormous contribution of young people to their family's well-being is simply not valued at all. These contributions have been labelled as the 'moral economy', indicating an "economy which is most visible where, in absence of a strong state, the extended family is the sole source of support and long-term security" (Nieuwenhuys 2009, p. 294). Due to this nonexistent recognition of their economic contribution, young people are constantly excluded from the adult sphere of the working world. Their social status is thereby persistently reduced and manifested as being inferior, as they are not yet "full members of society".

This ignorance of young people's contribution to the economy is a naive assessment of the situation, however. It fails to acknowledge that young people, who constitute up to 70% of the population in some countries, occupy a crucial role within all economic activities. Furthermore, the current global market system could not be maintained without the unpaid, unofficial, and unacknowledged work of young people. Many industries would lose their competitive advantage and the flow of cheap consumer goods would be drastically restricted (Nieuwenhuys 2007, p. 160). Hence, the question Peet addresses in a slightly different context, namely the exclusion of so-called Third World countries in general, could be rephrased in this context again – a system that excludes two-thirds of the population cannot be sustainable or maintained in the long run (Peet, p 278).

The claim of young people for acknowledgment of their achievements and their social and economic responsibilities is in line with the actual recognition of their economic and social contribution to society (Nieuwenhuys 2009). The implications of such an appreciation are globally far-reaching, as it questions the conception of childhood as it is currently presented and actually attempts to transfer to a global notion of modern childhood. Young people's exclusion from society, their consideration as "becomings" instead of "beings" due to the constant postponement of their social and economic value, would be challenged. The illusion of childhood being a phase of leisure, play and learning would also vanish and new concepts would need to be designed or rather acknowledged. The distinction between the category of childhood and adulthood would need to be revised and many parameters currently considered to be natural and



proven would need to be refined. The attempt to homogenize modern childhood<sup>13</sup> contradicts the real lives of many young people and thus does not capture a true picture of reality, however. Although it is essential not only to acknowledge that young people are excluded from society, it is crucial to revise the existing mental models in order to rectify this injustice. The time is ripe for a transformation of perceptions.

### 2.3 Similar conceptions of childhood and development theory

Exclusion is an issue that obviously prevails in both discourses - childhood studies and development theory. The underlying models of inferiority, marginalization, and development (process) are constantly present in discussions of each topic. It is striking how many similar conceptions<sup>14</sup> can be found when comparing these theories and astonishing that such a comparison has not been conducted until now. The aim is to understand the similar parameters that determine the mental models in order to transfer rudiments that have been achieved in one discourse to the other. The actual conviction is that childhood studies needs to be actively included in development theory in order to be able to paint an accurate picture of the complex world of young people. It is not acceptable to exclude two-thirds of the population from the discourse and this is why considerations of young people's perspective and childhoods also need to be incorporated into the international development debate.

The similar conceptions outlined below already indicate the numerous intersections between the two different fields indicating a great potential for synergies and new perspectives if these intersections are combined and commonly understood. Moreover, it is essential to understand the underlying assumptions in order to break through reciprocal circles of mental models. A comparison of both discourses might yield new insights and reveal possible levers for changing these mental models, thus designing a theoretical discourse that is capable of transforming reality.

It has to be noted that this comparison can only be carried out at a structural and not at an individual level. Furthermore, the two different social categories, childhood and so-called Third World countries<sup>15</sup>, are not only rooted in two different fields of sociological science but are also mostly referred to within distinguished contexts. While childhood is regarded as a national or even individual variable, so-called Third World countries are placed within the grand league of international politics and cannot be phrased as a national variable. Nevertheless, the underling

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<sup>13</sup> Here, modern childhood explicitly refers to the concept of childhood as designed by the Western world. It is hence the all too familiar vision of childhood as a period devoted to play, learning, and education (see e.g. Nieuwenhuys), a time that is reserved for the innocent child to become acquainted with the not so innocent adult world.

<sup>14</sup> Throughout this analysis, the differentiation between concept and conception is taken into consideration. Concepts are regarded as "a general understanding of a category" while conception is used in case the "understanding is specified through special attributes" (see Hendrick).

<sup>15</sup> Here, childhood is referred to as a social category and not a phase within the course of life. As a category, childhood includes all young people under the age of 18 (in accordance with the CRC's official definition – [www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc)). By the same token, the term *Third World countries* is used as a social category and not as an economic or political classification or evaluation.

mental models are similar and the concepts that are applied can be compared.

To begin this comparison, four major parameters have been chosen and will be analysed. The remarks that can already be drawn from these four aspects are manifold and actually indicate a promising integration of childhood studies within development theory.

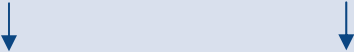
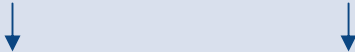
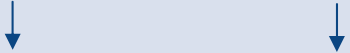

Parameter	Childhood studies	Theories of Development
Postponement towards the future	Investment in the future as reproduction purpose of society	Investment in structure, processes for future stability, and foundation for economic growth
 <p>Neglecting the present and speculation about return on investment</p>		
Power hierarchies	Notion of adultism	Knowledge power of advanced societies
 <p>Benchmark is the developed western (adult) society</p>		
Economic dependency	Separation from the working world and ignorance of value contribution	Economic, knowledge, and technological dependency of so-called Third World countries
 <p>Continuous dependency due to economic hegemony, leading to continuous exclusion</p>		
Homogenization	"The" childhood	"The" Third World
 <p>Homogenization or the paradox of integration &amp; differentiation</p>		

Figure 2: Overview of parameter of comparative analysis

### 2.3.1 Postponement towards the future

The aspect of postponing the social status from childhood to adulthood was discussed in detail in the previous section. Childhood is regarded as a transitional phase that is essential for full integration into society once adulthood has been reached. Investment in the future is noticeably distinct regarding the numerous and prosperous flourishing educational, medical, and social institutions that all take care of young people's "best return on investment". Childhood has received the status of "becoming", which underlines dependency as well as an assumed innocence and natural incompetence. Although the theoretical discourse has changed, as outlined in Section 3 below, the mental models persist and even the regular parlance illustrates the deeply rooted conception of childhood as a transitional phase along the way to full citizenship.

Similar mental models can also be determined within the conception of the so-called Third World. Here, the investment into the future has mostly been linked to investment in basic infrastructure and later in technical assistance and knowledge transfer from North to South (see the OECD report). Again, the chosen terminology already reveals the underlining catch-up mentality and the denial of a current full status of the so-called Third World countries.

A paternalistic approach has dominated the landscape of international development cooperation for a long time. Concepts of development were conceptualized in Western societies and imposed on the so-called Third World countries for the sake of development. In this regard, "lagging behind" in development implied not only structural implications but also an exclusion from the decision-making processes of global politics. Similar to the category of childhood, full access to the "benchmark" of Western adult society is thereby denied.

Although a lot has changed within the concepts of development cooperation and capacity development<sup>16</sup> has today emerged as the key concept for nearly all activities, the connotations remain intact. Especially the metaphor of capacity building, often used as a synonym for capacity development, suggests a "plain surface and involving a step-by-step erection of a new (advanced) structure" (OECD). Furthermore, capacity building that is similar to capacity development suggests a process that is geared towards the future.

Development theory concepts follow the return on investment logic, also neglecting the status quo. Given that the so-called Third World countries are "not yet fully developed", the aspiration is to guide and support them as providers of the right concepts and knowledge. The current investment is based on manifold interventions from direct financial support, technical support, knowledge transfer, or recently capacity development means. All means are regarded as a prerequisite for a prosperous process in the

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<sup>16</sup> Capacity in respect to development cooperation and theories of development is understood as the "ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully" (according to OECD definition). Using a rather vague and simple definition has been chosen in order to minimize judgements on the objects and acknowledge capacity development as an endogenous process of change. Furthermore, there are three analytical levels on which capacity development applies: 1) individual, 2) organisational, and 3) then enabling environment (OECD 2006)

future. Donor communities, institutions, development agencies, and their experts' advice and support provide all necessary means of development in order to integrate the so-called Third World countries into the global community. A country's development could therefore also be described as a transition phase: phases from least to less to fully developed countries. The return on investment in this case is measured in the particular state's economic growth, democratic stability, and good governance. A high return on investment would result in a strong (trading) partner, a fertile ground for international cooperation, and investment opportunities. In this respect, So-called First World countries would gain trading partners thereby helping to maintain the global economic, growth-oriented system. The problem with such a future oriented perspective, both in the case of childhood studies as well as development theory, is that it postpones the appreciation of current relevance, of the current status and significance, as well as the denotation of current structures. Value, acceptance, and appreciation are all transferred to the future, eroding the current status and degrading the relevance of the present. The promise is always directed to a better and "advanced" future, without offering a transformation of the present. The danger of postponement towards the future is that the current needs of individuals, societies, institutions, and governments are kept silent and the reciprocal circle ensures that the future aspiration is never reached.

It is essential to recognize the difference between the involved social actors and the prevalent social structure<sup>17</sup>. While individuals (may) move through the transition phase (every young person will sooner or later move from childhood to adulthood, for example), the structure remains and new people will face the challenges imposed by it. By the same token, people may move out of the "less developed" circle due to education or capacity building means, for example, and gain personal wealth and economic prosperity. The system of the "less developed" so-called Third World countries, however, will not be shaken by the success of individual actors. It is therefore essential that the prevalent structure be deconstructed and the various social actors involved in this structure be taken into account in the present. Postponement will always remain postponement; change must be made in the present.

### 2.3.2 Power hierarchies

Every form of oppression is based on an ideological and an institutional aspect that reinforces the structure of oppressor and oppressed. According to Foucault's point of view, there is not even a "power free space", although he claims that it is ubiquitous (Ziai, p.1048). The aspiration is therefore not the complete abolishment of all forms of power hierarchy, which is an illusionary and naive perception, but to understand and deconstruct underlying power hierarchies. Deconstruction implies a solid understanding of, or a reflection on, the existing influences and the context and in the end it provides the opportunity to reconstruct these perceptions. In this sense, a transformation of contexts and hierarchies is possible.

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<sup>17</sup> The systemic differentiation between actor (agency) and structure is a key element of the new paradigm of childhood studies and will thus be explained in more detail in section 3.

In the case of adultism, the ideological basis is built by the assigned inability of young people to take part in social life because they have not yet achieved the required capabilities of being a fully accepted member of society. This ideological basis is accompanied by an institutional approach. As described above, this institutionalization takes place in nearly every aspect of social life and thus contributes to the oppression of young people.

The fields of exclusion with respect to young people outlined above underline the power hierarchies that are imposed by the institutional setup of childhood. Given its constant remuneration, young people internalise the status they have been given of “not yet being full members of society”. The most dominant aspect of adultism is based on the disrespect of adults towards younger people. This mistreatment can have manifold facets, including both rational and emotional aspects. In general, it is often argued that young people are lacking the necessary capabilities to make cognizant decisions because they do not yet possess the experience and knowledge of adults. Young people are therefore excluded from taking part in decision-making processes and, given that they do not play an active role in this regard, are often not even listened to. Their opinions and perspectives are not validated because they are lacking the crucial influence or power.

Adults assume that they have the legitimate power to support the unknown young people by making decisions for them (Bell, 1995, p.6). Along with their given legal authority and the duty of caring for and protecting young people, they consider this overpowerment to be naturally given. Especially the legal systems in our societies underline the authoritarian role of adults and force a certain amount of disrespect towards children. In addition, the non-existence of young people in the economy underlines their lack of power and thus their inability to influence decision making, even if the decision has a direct and explicit impact on their lives.

One aspect that is essential in this power relationship between young people and adults is the still prevailing assumption that development is a *linear process* from inferior circumstances to superior and more complex systems. Although childhood studies by now acknowledges a systematic and rather circular process, most concepts are still based on phase, or stage-like development. With regards to childhood studies, development is set to take place during childhood when socialization and education processes support the solid development of young people into functioning adults.

A similar assumption of a linear process can also be found in development theory, in which the stages from least developed to developed countries must be completed. In both cases, the process of development is mostly understood as a linear process, in which certain values have to be achieved before the next stage can be entered. Such a stage-like process is closely interwoven with strict standardisation, which is required for comparison and the sustainment of development thought as such. The benchmark for both is the “fully-developed Western (adult) society”.

Western society’s benchmark status already indicates the strong power relations that are manifested in the concept of the so-called First and Third World countries. Following Foucault, Arturo Escobar criticises the construction of “developing countries” through Western ideas and

illustrates the various forces of power that are combined in this construction in his model of development displayed below (Escobar, 1995).

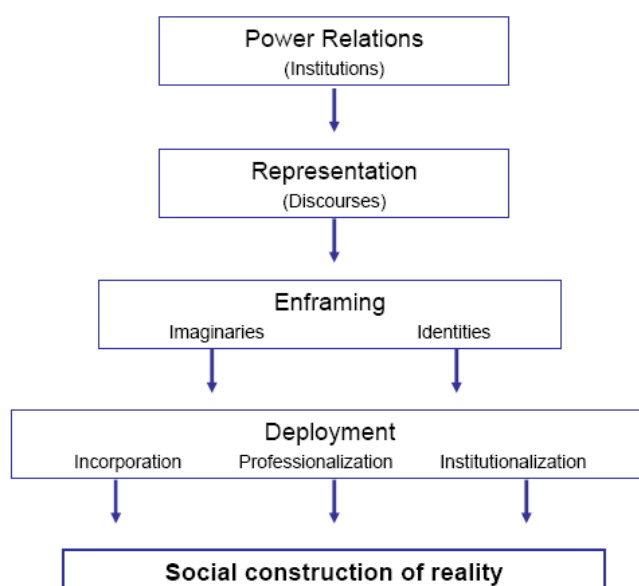


Figure 3: Escobar's model of development discourse. Data from Escobar (1995)

According to this model of development discourse, Escobar illustrates that all criteria of Foucault's power consideration apply to the development discourse. In addition to the economic forces (financial power), the forces of discourse, truth, imagination, and knowledge must also be considered. Due to the creation of ideas and concepts of development theory by Western societies, their theoretical representation dominates the entire discourse. What has been labelled as power of knowledge is omnipresent in this model. Given that the discourse as such is dominated by Western conceptions, the concepts designed for implementation are also infiltrated. The recent wave of critical voices in the academia of so-called Third World countries shows how deeply the power of Western knowledge is anchored in the discourse. These critical voices are sedated rather than being openly discussed and the typical pattern of "we as the advanced countries have the right and correct answer" is frequently repeated. Here, the strong linkage between power of knowledge (taking into account that true knowledge is based on economic rationalism) and economic power (financial aid determines "the political correct discourse") is evident. In consideration of Escobar's model, this theoretical representation leads to the construction of social imaginaries and identities, causing people to think and act "through Western categories, seeing the world (...) through a westernized developmental gaze" (Peet, p.222). The progressive deployment of development, operated through the stages of professionalism and institutionalization, created a vast network within the so-called First and Third Worlds, all inhaling the Western mental models of development.

Here, another reinforcing circle sustains the entire construct of development. First, abnormalities or problems such as poverty, population

growth, climate change, malnourished street children, or child labour are extracted and analysed in light of the existing development discourse in order to design tailor-made strategies for minimizing or eliminating them. The expertise is based in Western development agencies, universities, and specialists who will design new strategies for the problem in order to then support their “partner” (the so-called Third World country) in implementing the strategies. Even the claim for a predefined development strategy’s strong local ownership follows this pattern – the claim is that strong local ownership is generated for concepts that solely follow the Western perception of development. It is doubtful that in such a constellation a true endogenous process of change can take place. However, the recent focus on capacity development as the core principle explicitly refers to strong ownership on the part of local partners and furthermore mentions that “capacity building would be inefficient as long as it was not part of an endogenous process of change, getting its main impulse from within” (OECD, p. 15). The question remains whether an impulse can come from within if the entire context is already predetermined from outside. Is it therefore possible to claim strong ownership and urge for endogenous change processes if all the theoretical phrasing, the ideas and concepts are still written according to the perception of and usually in Western societies?

Summarizing the analysis of power hierarchies, it can be said that the conception of Western (adult) society is the determining category given the notion of development. Young people are measured against Western adulthood and so-called Third World societies are evaluated and ranked according to the supreme and advanced model of Western society according to a similar thought process. In both cases, the premise of development is regarded as reaching the standard set by Western societies. Furthermore, the hegemony of Western economic and social power as well as knowledge deliberately maintains the mental models that are necessary to continue the concept of development – the development of young people as well as that of entire nations.

### 2.3.3 Economic dependency

Economic dependency can be described as a subcategory of the power hierarchies mentioned above. It will be discussed separately due to its significance in the reasoning of our global world and its severe consequences. Economic independence is a key attribute in both childhood studies and development theory. Although it obviously implies a different level of economic independence with regards to the so-called Third World countries in comparison to the category of childhood, the mechanisms are exactly the same. As long as financial independence is lacking, full inclusion in the system (society or global market, accordingly) cannot be achieved. Furthermore, before financial independence is achieved, influence imposed from outside is a significant driving force in the development process. Again, this applies to both categories on different levels (with regards to childhood, social institutions or the state intervene whereas the international donor community intervenes in the development of the so-called Third World countries). In summary, economic dependence always implies being exposed to external influence and therefore co-determination that maintains a system of inferiority and exclusion.

In addition to financial independency, the variable of power of knowledge is also a crucial part of this parameter. Knowledge and economic strength are interfaced in the current mental model of any form of process and the criteria apply again to both categories, the so-called Third World as well as childhood. Both are assumed to be lagging behind the status quo of knowledge and the main emphasis within both areas should therefore be placed on catching up. In this sense, knowledge is a different form of currency that determines in a similar manner the rank within global competition. Not inheriting the right or sufficient knowledge is a severe criterion for exclusion from society or the global market system. The right knowledge, however, is an admission ticket for the right technology and simultaneously the right path to development.

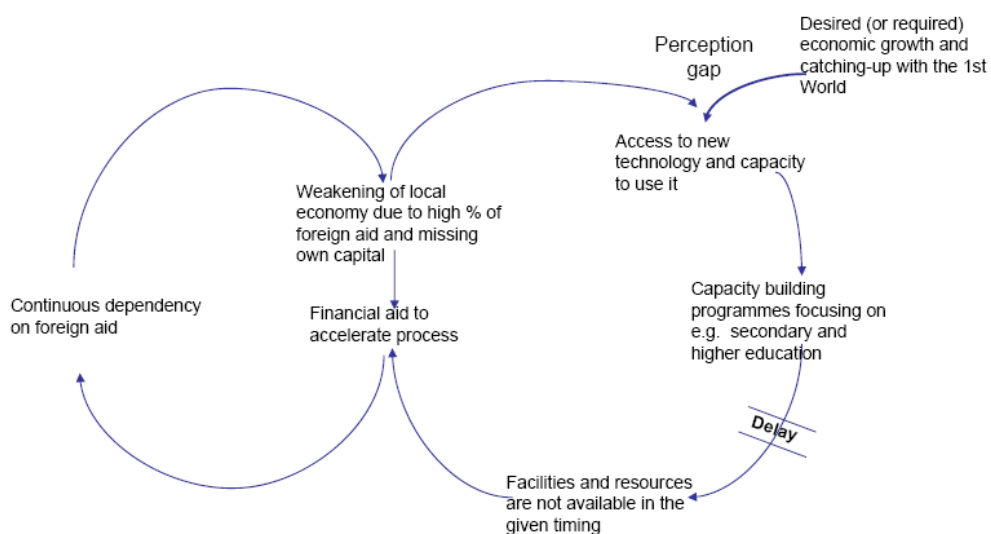


Figure 4: Reciprocal cycle of economic dependency – so-called Third World countries



Many so-called Third World countries are said to be lacking access to the **right** knowledge and are therefore lagging behind in the global sprint of process. Financial aid for establishing competence centres is therefore aligned within the donor communities. An example of such a reinforcing mental model may be illustrated as follows<sup>18</sup>:

In this sense, the Western power triangle of prerequisites, of financial, knowledge and technology resources, imposes a reinforcing circle on the so-called Third World countries that actually hinders their attempt to achieve the next level of development. Interestingly, all countries that are currently mentioned as references of successful development (the Asian Tigers, India, or Venezuela, for instance), have all left the path of international development aid and withdrawn themselves from the advisory circle of the international community and first and foremost from the World Bank (see Peet or Berger). Such a withdrawal from interdependency might appear to be a direct and maybe drastic form of breaking through the reciprocal cluster of aid, but it seems to date to be an effective path.

Such a power triangle of finances, knowledge and technology can also be transferred to the category of childhood. Here, the perception gap is rooted in an a priori incompetence statement that is placed on childhood. Similar to the example provided above of the so-called Third World's economic dependency, the power hierarchies of Western, adult societies also become visible in the illustration for young people. The economic exclusion of young people is further supported by the labour laws and basic constitutions determining the exclusive nature of childhood as such. The unacceptability and lack of appreciation of young people's contribution to the so-called moral economy, however, constrains the economic independence of young people even further.

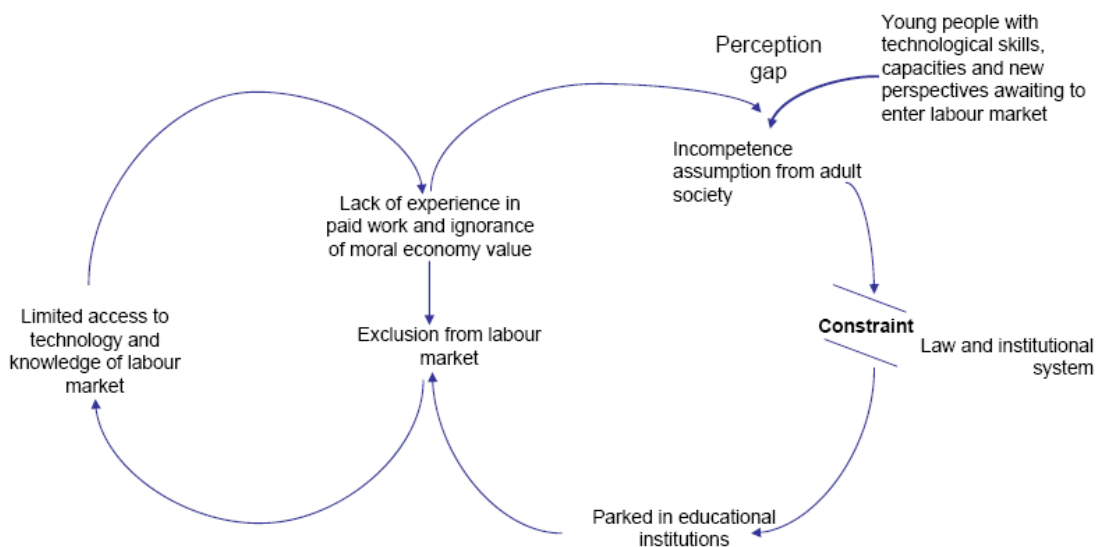


Figure 5: Reciprocal cycle of economic dependency – childhood

<sup>18</sup> Both illustrations, so-called Third World countries and childhood dependencies, are simplified and do not affirm to be complete or reflect a comprehensive picture of the complex situation. The illustrations assert the reciprocal nature of such mental models and reflect the close linkage of financial, knowledge and technology dependency.

Due to the fact that the right knowledge, access to information, and hence technology are all determined by Western (adult) society, the outlined dependency is socially constructed throughout childhood.

The comparison of this parameter “economic dependency” shows the very close connection and similarity between the categories of the so-called Third World and childhood. Furthermore, it already indicates that both aspects are deeply interwoven, as shown by the next parameter.

The intersection of both circles is the educational aspect, which is a core issue within the framework of the so-called Third World as well as childhood. What might be regarded as a wonderful opportunity by some, may easily be phrased as the greatest concern by others. The universality approach that dominates both discourses is regarded as a threat rather than an opportunity, given that it neither meets reality nor the complex circumstances at hand.

#### 2.3.4 Homogenization and universalism

These complex circumstances are often summarized as one concept of “the” childhood and “the” so-called Third World. Such a homogenization and simplification does not meet the requirements of an appropriate consideration of childhoods or circumstances in the manifold countries that are included under the heading of the so-called Third World.

With regards to the category of childhood, the challenge is not to confuse the social category and ideology of childhood with the actual process of being a child. Childhood is a socially constructed sphere that distinguishes young people from adults. It is not a natural category but a distinction that has been invented. This construction of childhood has caused a homogenization or standardization of childhood. Social and educational institutions are designed to support the image of a normal childhood while guiding young people and their parents through this important phase along life’s path. “Normal childhood” usually implies a romantic perception of childhood as innocent playground and leisure time, a protective space for growing up and discovering one’s own potential and capabilities. This idealised perception has led to the notion of “the” childhood per se. The concept has become universally applicable and the attempts to unitize the perception of childhood are manifold.

The argument for a plurality of childhoods has often been related to the global disparity between rich and poor countries (Frones). Such a distinction, however, still ignores the varieties of childhoods in general and does not acknowledge the fact that the active subject (young people, in this case) contributes to the construction of childhood. The interaction between agent and structure is completely ignored by the attempt to establish a uniform notion of childhood. As Frones outlines, “the educational institutionalization of children interacts with their social and economic background and personal capacity; the consequence is that differences are produced because of this institutional integration” (Frones, p. 269). One of many modern dichotomies is constructed here – while the attempt is made to homogenize childhood and create a universally applicable model of successful reproduction of society, the various life paths, the numerous social, economic, and political circumstances that influence this system reflect the diversity of the construct. Although

diversity is apparent, therefore, an acknowledgment of various childhoods and the resulting adjustment of uniform institutionalization are still missing. The construction of “the” so-called Third World societies appears to be similar. Again, a system is constructed and summarized under one heading, although the reality cannot be captured in one term or concept. The elements influencing the context are as diverse as possible, but again it has been simplified so that the so-called Third World countries all appear to be operating within the same context. Once again, the reciprocal circle, a systemic differentiation, is not provided. The fact that social actors contribute to the structure of society is suppressed. Given this construction of a homogeneous context, it is not surprising that nearly homogeneous solutions are offered to transform the system. One explanation for the failure of these solutions may be the simple acknowledgment that the context is not the same. An appreciation of the nonexistence of “the” so-called Third World might provide new perspectives for a diversified approach. Universalism in both cases must fail in the long term, given that the complex structures cannot be summarized and categorized under one concept as such. Complex and diverse structures require the complex and diverse deconstruction of the concepts and individual transformation approaches, always taking into account that social actors contribute to the construction of the context. A static universalism is therefore doomed to failure.

### 2.3.5 Similar conceptions - similar solutions?

Two discourses that have hardly ever been discussed in the same breath reveal striking analogies and are both built on quite similar conceptions. Although an analysis that combines theories of development with childhood studies may seem to be a bit far-reaching, the results and the similarities might lead to the conclusion that the differences are not as far-fetched as they may seem. The analysis might not be based on the best and most solid scientific comparative study, but this has never been the aim. The idea of the comparison is to outline the striking similarities of the prevailing mental model, the construction of reality in both fields. The construction of the categories of childhood and so-called Third World countries are based on similar conceptions of **dependency**, which are manifested in:

- ◆ Postponement towards the future. The return on investment is only expected in the future. Current needs and requirements are thereby disregarded and essential parts of society are excluded from the present until they reach the preset benchmark (see below).
- ◆ The sophisticated Western adult (male, in most cases) forms a prototype advanced society that serves as the benchmark for all development processes, whether it be the development of young people into adulthood or the development of so-called Third World countries. The maxim of achievement is always the Western adult society and with it the inheriting values, norms knowledge, and concepts.

- ◆ The economic and technological standards determining the rules of the system. Both categories find themselves in a reciprocal cycle of dependency.
- ◆ The attempt to establish universally applicable concepts and standards that provide a one size fits all solution, while simultaneously maintaining the degree of differentiation between advanced and backward, developed and underdeveloped, and between mature and immature.

These dependencies will not vanish and the circumstances causing and maintaining them can also not be easily transformed. As Foucault actually indicates, there is no power-free space as such. It is essential, however, to be aware of the existing dependencies, of the mechanisms that keep them in place in order to begin formulating alternative approaches that deal with or even transform the existing structure on all three levels: the individual level, the institutional/organisational level, and the social level. Both childhood studies and development theory offer new approaches that aim to overcome some of the criticism stated above. Both offer promising alternatives to the prevailing concepts and both herald new paradigms that address the challenges of the previous models.

The new paradigm of childhood studies emphasises a systemic differentiation between subject and structure, which helps to overcome some of the dependencies described above. Furthermore, this point of view strengthens the role of the subject, in this case of young people, as social actors and hence paves the way for the comprehensive inclusion of young people as a part of society.

The new approach of capacity development opens up the floor for transformation on all three analytical levels: the individual, organisational, and environmental levels. Furthermore, capacity development also makes a clear shift towards a systemic perspective, emphasizing the necessity of having the impulse for a change process from within and therefore an endogenous process. In this regard, capacity development requires that country ownership be strengthened and that the donor community take on a merely supportive role.

Both new paradigms have shifted towards a systemic consideration and claim the inclusion of the subject, which needs to be more than a mere participation approach. Not only the old concepts yield similar conceptions, but also the new paradigms are heading in the same direction and focusing on similar solutions. What is still missing is the inclusion of childhood studies in development theory. This combination not only makes sense, but is also necessary in order to tackle today's problems and be able to start a transformation on all three levels as indicated above. A combination of these two discourses is necessary in order to achieve sustainable change processes within societies, as shown in the following line of argumentation.

## **Chapter II - Transforming mental models**

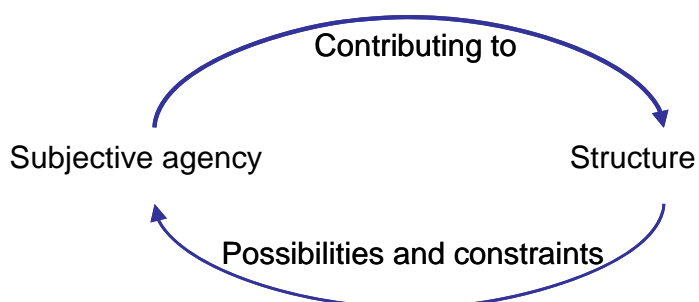
### 3 New paradigms – new opportunities

It is astonishing that both theories have, rather recently, experienced a major and groundbreaking paradigm shift. In addition to content-related similarities, these shifts even began almost at the same point in time. Both paradigm shifts have been influenced by the systemic and constructivist approach and therefore strive for a differentiated contemplation of the context and offer rather circular explanation models in comparison to the previous causality-driven linear approaches. It is even possible to find common keywords indicating core issues within both discourses. The consideration of similar conceptions can therefore not only be applied to the previous theories (see the discussion above), but can also be transferred to the comparison and further integration of current childhood studies and theories of development. Both theories focus on the reflection of (power) relations, endogenous change processes, subjective agency/ownership (to stay in the parlance, respectively), empowerment, and participation. A closer look at these two discourses demonstrates the logical coherence of the two fields and leads to the conclusion that it is a logical consequence to include childhood studies in the approaches of capacity development. Young people have to be included in the concepts of development cooperation if we intend to achieve sustainable and lasting changes in society and our enabling environment.

#### 3.1 Systematic differentiation between children and childhoods

As mentioned above, socio-generational categories are not naturally determined, but always constructed and shaped by the socio-cultural, political, and economical contexts, or the enabling environment in other words. At the same time, these generational categories are also shaped by the subjects that are described by this classification. This also applies to the categories of childhood or youth, as both are social positions that are internally and externally constructed in addition to being parts of the so-called enabling environment (Christiansen). The core thesis of

Every act which contributes to the reproduction of a structure is also an act of production and as such may initiate change by altering the structure at the same time it reproduces it.  
(Giddens)



the new childhood paradigm directly refers to this understanding of a socio-generational category. In doing so, the new paradigm does not reflect “an alternative image of the child but is a systematic differentiation between children and childhood” (Honig 1999, p. 62). Such a dual analysis is the consideration of both subjective agency (young people in this regard) and the structure (childhood, youth, and adolescence) enables an understanding of socialization along a non-linear path. Given the consideration and especially the relationship and interaction between subjective agency and structure, the question of the new paradigm of

childhood changes and addresses the question of “which part do young people themselves play in their own growing up and socialization?”

This contemplation of childhood not only requires a reconceptualization of what childhood and youth is, but also phrases the question of young people’s role, influence, and position as active participants in society. This notion has far-reaching implications, not only claiming the active participation of young people. The above-stated definition of young people being subject agents indicates that they are also active in “constructing their own lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live – young people are not just the passive subjects of social structures and processes” (James and Prout).

In this regard, young people are now considered to have an impact on their environment, as they shape the relationships, decisions, and social settings that surround them. At the same time, the environment shapes the context of young people by establishing norms, possibilities, and constraints. The structure is regarded as being constantly designed by way of the activities of all social subjects involved. The structure therefore also determines the life chances, opportunities, and possibilities of escape for every subject. It is hence the interaction between agent and structure that leads to non-linear paths of change. But in addition to these tremendous achievements for the recognition of young people as subjective agents, it also inherits quite a large risk of homogenization and equalizing the circumstances of structures that are not equal at all. The structure of childhood and youth differs enormously depending on the time and location that is being investigated. Possibilities for young people to actively influence the structure, to participate, differ as well. It is essential to take advantage of the opportunity that the new paradigm offers, namely to consider the individual circumstance and reject a universally applicable approach. Acknowledging the different environments inevitably leads to the search for individual solutions and concepts.

In addition to the risk of homogenization, the fact that there is a direct and very strong relationship between vulnerability, dependency, responsibility, care, and own rights of young people should be further taken into consideration (Honig 1999). This is not to say that independence and rights should be a matter of debate, but rather that the correlation between the attributes stated above must be discussed and made aware of.

### 3.1.1 Children as social actors contributing to societal change

What is the actual impact of the paradigm shift? Does it have an impact at all, or does this achievement only contribute to the theoretical appreciation of young people? The implications of this change remain vivid. The difference is that they now can be seen and heard with the theoretical support of childhood studies.

Young people are on the lookout for social paths, and maybe also paths of escape from their social structures. They are the navigators of their own paths, pathfinders for their collective futures, as well as for those of the generations to come (Christiansen). It is indisputable, however, that young people and childhood/youth are closely intertwined with issues of power, authority, and social position. It should therefore not be the aim to simply draw another romantic picture of the active young person who

independently participates and interacts with his/her environment and changes the social circumstances for the better.

Acknowledging young people as subjective actors, however, does appreciate the fact that they are not passive recipients of childhood or youth. They are seeking to inhabit, escape, or move within this category and, in doing so, to actually change it in meaningful ways. Taking this into account, the new paradigm acknowledges that young people are sources of social change and that they participate, initiate, and accomplish transformation processes within societies. They therefore do not only change their own life-paths, or assigned socio-generational categories, but also transform their larger environment. These transformation processes are essentially endogenous, meaning that they originate from insight and are not externally induced. Young people, as agentive part of society, therefore create, initiate, and transform social change beyond their own life paths and generational categories. Especially the intergenerational negotiations that take place and will increase in the near future due to the demographically changing social composition of societies are part of these transformation processes. It is already estimated that the core topic of childhood studies will have to focus on the intergenerational dimension and the interaction of various socio-generational categories in the coming years (see e.g. Chistiansen or Honig).

Taking this expected debate and transformation into account, it seems essential to strengthen the initial position of young people in this negotiation process. Young people embody a different principle of reality that might enable a different exposure and access to the objective, social, and subjective worlds. Adults, and society in general, should take advantage of the fresh impulse and most likely different association of society that young people have to offer. In this regard, we should encourage them to start negotiating the socio-generational boundaries and norms and should enhance the debate even further. These negotiations inevitably not only take place on the individual level, but also include the institutional, socio-cultural, and economic contexts. In this sense, the implications of the new paradigm are indeed far-reaching, given that young people transforming the enabling environment are now perceived as driving agents behind change processes and can therefore also be included in the further transformation processes. It is quite important to note that the influence of young people as agents will not change due to a new paradigm in theory. Deliberate appreciation, and the chance to include young people as constitutive parts of society, has therefore been increased.

In this regard, the new paradigm of childhood has direct and practical implications. The question is, in fact, whether adults are capable of permitting new approaches and transformation processes that will change our societies. The transformation of mental models must be achieved by adults in the first place.



### 3.2 Capacity development approach

Capacity development (CD) has initiated a transformation of the existing mental models within the field of development cooperation. CD is the embodiment of the paradigm shift of development theory and primarily deals with transformation and change processes. It could therefore be closely connected to the previously mentioned paradigm shift in childhood studies, at least in theory.

CD is not a new concept but has been floating around in the area of development cooperation since the 1950s, although the understanding of CD and thereby its definition have changed tremendously. Until recently, it was mainly understood as knowledge transfer from North to South (power of the right knowledge as the subliminal dependency), as technical assistance as an instrument for filling in perceived gaps in the partner organisations, and individual skills levels (OECD report). As the results of the last 40 years of development cooperation vividly show, the returns on these capacity building attempts have been low. The mere concentration on knowledge transfer often leads to an overemphasis on what is considered to provide the “right answers”, as opposed to searching for country-specific and needs-specific approaches. Moreover it does not provide maintaining structures, which enable a continuous learning process of the system. A mere knowledge transfer is bound to personal skills and capacities and is often rather transient.

The transformation of the mental model that CD has by now achieved is a new consideration of the actual meaning of capacity development. In this regard, capacity is now understood as “the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully” (OECD). This definition is intentionally simple in order to prevent any assessments of the objectives that people choose to follow. Understood as the ability of people, organisations, and society to successfully manage their affairs, CD refers to more than merely an individual’s knowledge, technical skills, and level of experience. It is the composition and the interaction of the three levels that are said to enhance the sustainable transformation process. It is not only the enabling environment that shapes the context of organisations/institutions and therefore individuals as well. The construction also works the other way around. Individuals also shape and create their enabling environment. In this regard, the new capacity development approach also underlines the differentiation between agent and structure and is aware of the reciprocal inducement.

Following this line of argumentation, CD not only incorporates the reciprocal inducement of the three levels of the individual, organisational/institutional, and enabling environment, but actually focuses on the agency factor in this equation. The OECD clearly states that “capacity development would be ineffective so long as it was not part of an endogenous process of change, getting its main impulse from within” (OECD p.15). In accordance with this strengthening of agency, CD’s new approach focuses on ownership and partnership in the development of capacities. In doing so, the role of the donor community has also changed. Given that local ownership is not only accepted but actually called for, the role of the donor community shifts into a supportive role. This role, and attempts to streamline international efforts, has been manifested in the

Paris Declaration of Aid Alignment (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) (see Appendix 1 for these basic agreements).

The conviction that ownership is the crucial variable in the equation of capacity development is accompanied by a focus on agency along the principle of empowerment.

### 3.2.1 Empowerment

The “butterfly of empowerment” (used by the GTZ) highlights the importance that is attributed to the concept of empowerment within the new understanding of capacity development. Here, empowerment is understood as the enablement of disadvantaged actors to gain equal access to resources<sup>19</sup>, participate actively in decision-making processes, and claim their rights.

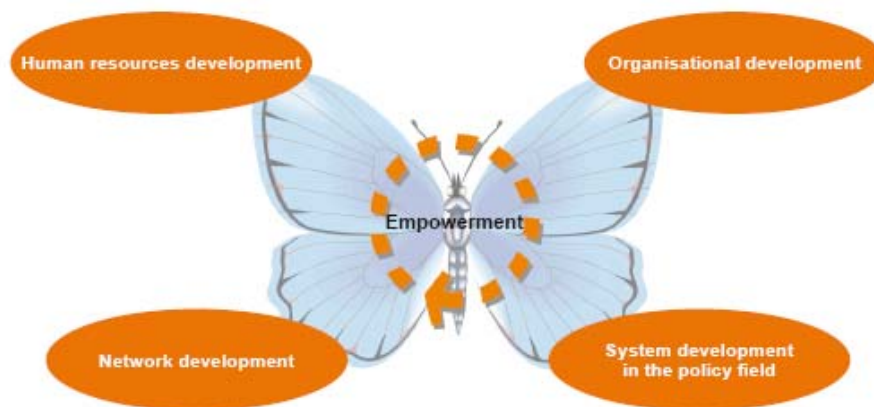


Figure 6: Empowerment principle of CD.

**Source:** Capacity WORKS - The GTZ Management Model for Sustainable Development, p. 60

Within the context of development cooperation, the interaction between domestic actors and the donor community surely does not always run as smoothly as the commitment of the Paris declaration and the focus on ownership suggest. The transformation of existing mental models begins exactly at this point. In general, the aim needs to be to strive for so-called virtuous cycles of empowerment and to reduce and accordingly eliminate vicious cycles of empowerment (see Appendix II for more details).

Furthermore, empowerment is understood as a value-oriented intervention into existing power relations, which is designed to promote social justice and democratic participation by overcoming the disempowering status of dependency (GTZ, Capacity WORKS). In other words, empowerment aims to redistribute power in the interest of disadvantaged actors. In this regard, the term empowerment is used in line with the rights-based approach. Empowerment may therefore also be necessary to enable disadvantaged actors to articulate their interests, negotiate as equal partners, and claim their rights.

<sup>19</sup> The term “resources” refers not only to material resources, yet further to participation in political decision-making processes, access to education, knowledge, equity and social justice.

Interaction between the three levels of change is essential in this regard, due to the fact that organisational/institutional settings influence the capacities of individuals, either by creating incentive structures of development or by denying these favourable frameworks. In this sense, the enabling environment either gives or takes opportunities for people to make use of their abilities. Capacity development must be driven by the participants and their organisations. It is the participating actors themselves who change, develop their capacities and their organisations, and change their environments. Their different perceptions and perspectives are the starting point for every capacity development (GTZ). The process must therefore always begin with the participating actors and their mindsets. It is exactly this persuasion that makes the inclusion of young people as subjective agents necessary and inescapable.

It is neither sustainable nor acceptable that two-thirds of the population are excluded from such an approach because they are not yet considered to be an active part of society. It is exactly here that the inclusion of childhood studies needs to take place. The transformation processes that are referred to as capacity development need to include the perspectives, needs, and perceptions of young people. The empowerment approach needs to include young people, enhancing their access to education, knowledge, equity, and social justice. Young people are not merely the recipients of capacity development initiatives; they play an active role in the transformation processes by shaping their own lives, the lives of their surroundings, and the larger environment.

### 3.3 Inclusion of young people

“If participation could be conceived of as not only consisting of speaking and being heard, but also of active and routine inclusion in vital social processes, new prospects could be opened up for the situating of children in society” (Liebel, Saadi in Smith et al, p.359).

In this regard the idea of agency and young people’s social participation within their surroundings (peers, family, institutions and communities) is essential for a reconsideration of young people’s participation. The inclusion of young people implies far more than just giving them the opportunity to “have a say” or “be listened to”. These forms of participation, often used in international settings, have been rightly criticized. Participation needs to move beyond a decorative element and the occasional display of good will. Inclusion of young people implies a widening of the concept of participation to a concept of active citizenship.

A shift towards inclusion in the form of a dialog should be strived for. The dialogical form of participation is the contrary approach to the prevailing concept of a monological form of participation<sup>20</sup>. Calling for a new form of participation is based on the awareness that young people so far have

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<sup>20</sup> Monological approaches to participation focus primarily on claims that can best be conceptualised as a struggle for recognition. An (adult) agent therefore processes the information given by young people and takes up the evaluation of this participation in a different field. In this regard, the agency remains with the adult and it is the adult perception that forms the results of the young person’s participation (Fitzgerald et al., p. 301)

remained excluded by the monological understanding of participation. The dialogical form considers the agency of young people as fundamental and thus admits an accompanied intersubjectivity (Fitzgerald et al.). The dialogical form is based on the principles of negotiation, in which the particular agents discuss and share their perspectives, given their subjective perceptions of reality. It would be naïve, however, to expect the mere demand for the introduction of a dialogical form of participation to overcome the prevailing power structures and authorities that exist between the generational categories and determine the structures of today's societies. Nevertheless, a shift from monological to dialogical participation may be accompanied by a certain degree of awareness. A deliberate debate about subjectivity and perception of reality might therefore enhance the chances of becoming aware of the underlying power hierarchies that determine intergenerational negotiations (adultism). In addition to the positive effect that such an awareness creation might already accomplish, it is important to allow for the perspective of young people in this participatory dialogue. In other words, a commitment to the self-understanding and reflexivity of young people is required (Fitzgerald et al, p. 302). Thirdly, the dialogical form does not per se determine whether young people are included or excluded. It does, however, set a certain framework or the conditions within which participation might occur. In summary, the dialogue form of the participation approach, as with all other forms of participation, requires a new set of skills and a very cautious acquaintance of all involved agents. In this case, it does set the framework for the inclusion of young people in our society. As such, the dialogue form of participation might be regarded as a preparatory first step towards the implementation of the concept of citizenship.

### 3.3.1 Citizenship and democratic participation

The concept of citizenship indicates a collection of rights and responsibilities that all members of a community have, and all members of this community are enabled to exercise these rights through democratic action (Smith et al). Such a truly democratic approach, or radically democratic as some refer to it, is a logical consequence of the new childhood paradigm if the notion of agency is to be strived for in practice. The perception of young people as agents involves the abolition of the routine denial of rights naturally held by adults, such as the right to vote or economic rights. Again, the implications of these changes are far-reaching and require the acceptance of new forms of democracy.

Young people's abilities to exercise their citizenship rights and the affiliated responsibilities evolve as they are actually included in these processes and decisions. These capacities and skills develop as they are applied, which obviously applies to adults in the same manner. "Competence as citizen is not limited to adults neither is incompetence restricted to young people" (Theis, p. 346). Active citizenship is therefore a learning process that needs to be fostered by opportunities and accordingly needs to provide access to situations in which the capabilities can be learned. Taking this into account, it is obvious that citizenship and young people's agency cannot be limited to the individual level or be left in the hands of the family. Active citizenship needs to be fostered on all three

levels: the individual level (personal experiences and exchange with family and peers), the institutional level (currently school and other educational institutions, which are far from being democratic entities capable of enabling young people to access opportunities to experience citizenship or democracy), and the environmental level (where politics needs to shift towards true democratic structures).

The stringent implementation of the childhood theory demands a powerful call that goes beyond young people's participation to promote young people's civil rights and engagement. According to Barry Percy-Smith and Nigel Thomas the following six items may be the necessary next steps to take in order to accomplish this ambitious goal (Percy-Smith & Thomas, p. 364).

- ◆ Supporting the building of participation from the grassroots
- ◆ Promoting participation beyond “having a say” and “being listened to”
- ◆ Building capacity with individuals, communities, and enabling environment for participation as active citizens
- ◆ Challenging adultism and the negative construction of childhood/youth
- ◆ Establishing dialogue forms of participation and negotiation between generations
- ◆ Operationalisation of young people's active citizenship

Such considerations underline the bridge of the claim of democratic participation and citizenship rights with the previously introduced capacity development approach. Working on all three levels, this approach emphasizes the empowerment of agents and ultimately leads to a transformation of society towards democratic participation and citizenship rights. The combination of the CD approach and the childhood paradigm would help to move beyond the decorative participation of young people in our society.

The combination of these approaches would offer alternative concepts and include young people's creativity and tenacity in overcoming difficult situations. This would indeed be a tremendous shift in the prevailing mental models that would not only change and most likely improve the situation for young people, but also result in a more just and democratic world for all.

## 4. Transition phase – an example

Many wonderful projects have begun to work in accordance with the idea of the participation of young people and their inclusion on all levels. In international development cooperation, there are many examples of projects that have moved beyond regarding young people as a mere target group and their participation solely decorative and have introduced concepts, programmes, and initiatives that aim to include them on all three levels. It is important to mention, however, that also here the idea of young people as agents has not yet been implemented and is often missing in the concepts and thus the implementation as well. An actual reduction in projects directly targeted to youth and focusing on strengthening young people's participation, their rights and working towards their inclusion into society is of severe concern. This decline in youth programmes within the international development cooperation is an immediate consequence of the negotiations and later alignment of the Paris Agenda. The harmonisation approach, aiming at aligning the international donor community, introduced a new sector approach. This sector approach indicates which topics of development (focal points) are perceived as relevant and urgent and are assigned to the lead responsibility of one donor country. Within these negotiations for prestigious sector topics, youth programmes lost status and by this lost the space within the agenda of the international donor community. By now, youth programmes and youth development is regarded as a mainstream topic "that should always been thought of and if possible included". However, a lack of clear role distribution and responsibilities for this topic leads to a marginalisation of programmes and projects that are actually dealing with capacity building for young people. As a mainstream topic young people have lost, once again, their status and are mostly excluded from the negotiation tables of the donor community and their partners. It might, however, be that the demographic as well as security urgency will cause a more direct inclusion of the topic again<sup>21</sup>. At least, the BMZ recently released a tender asking for an evaluation of the anchoring of children's rights and participatory approaches within German development cooperation. It therefore seems as though the topic has also gained fresh impulses from this side. Due to the scope of this paper, it is only possible to highlight one example of a project that is related to capacity development and youth. The decision was made to illustrate an alternative to classical development cooperation, a project in the field of social entrepreneurship, given that the examples highlight the above-mentioned principles of democratic participation and simultaneously follow the principles of the multilevel approach of capacity development. In this regard, the example shows a true alternative and may indicate the future of projects that transform our society.

### 4.1 Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship has become a mainstream area of inquiry, especially outside of Europe and the US. In light of these movements,

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<sup>21</sup> This insight information on the negotiations and the outcome of the Paris Declaration concerning children's rights approach and youth programmes has been received from a lecture of a representative of the GTZ in May 2010.

millions of new citizen organisations have been founded (Bornstein, p. 3). David Bornstein, as one of them, describes social change agents or social entrepreneurs as having powerful ideas that aim to improve people's lives. These change agents are often trapped in a situation that they are not willing to accept any longer and start to develop ideas to change it instead of waiting for someone to "develop" a solution. The challenge, according to critiques of development politics, is to *co-move*, not to change, develop, or create awareness; in other words to intensify the processes of construction of direct democracy" (Escobar, p. 28).

Social entrepreneurs capture entirely new areas that will, in this text, be referred to as the citizen sector<sup>22</sup>. In addition to a growing number of actors within the citizen sector and therefore also an increasing number of people being employed in this sector, there are further characteristics that have changed recently. The organisations offer a broader variety and are not limited to the local sphere. Instead, many of them act on the national or even international level. The most famous example might be the Grameen bank with its founder and Nobel Prize winner Muhammad Yunus.

Social entrepreneurship is strongly linked to thorough democratic understanding and an unshakable belief in human rights, equality, and diversification. Social entrepreneurship is therefore in accord with the previously described request of a participatory democratic approach. Equally important is the fact that these social changes, achieved by the intervention or rather innovations of social entrepreneurs, are rooted in an endogenous process. As a result, the change is not induced from outside or determined on a "round table" making use of assumed criteria. It is a process that takes place right where the problem has arisen. These interventions are not achievable without the ownership of people who are affected by the circumstances, and thus by the changes. It is therefore not a matter of "being developed" but of transforming circumstances. In addition, the ideas of social entrepreneurs are not mere "stop-gap-solutions". They are laid out as systemic approaches to problems.

Thirdly, in striving to change society's current circumstances, social entrepreneurs have the tendency to work for, and especially with, marginalized people. The ideas of change mostly relate to people being excluded and disadvantaged. While international development cooperation takes up the cause of poverty reduction and social inclusion, the bittersweet aftertaste of wanting to develop those left behind is an unconceivable obstacle for achieving sustainable change. Social entrepreneurs do not aim to develop someone or something, but offer completely new innovations, new approaches, and different solutions that are tailored to the specific circumstances.

This being said, the incredible potential for social transformation that especially considers the inclusion of young people to drowse within the field of social entrepreneurship may already be occurring. The example

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<sup>22</sup> The new sector is sometimes also referred to as the third or independent sector. Within this paper, it will be referred to as the citizen sector in order to highlight the democratic and participatory aspect of social entrepreneurship and to prevent the "scaling" effect that easily occurs when referring to it as a "third sector". The connotation would be an inferior sector in comparison to the first and second economic sectors.

below of a wonderful project in India outlines the power of ideas and the possibility of social transformation, and highlights the potential for including young people in the citizen sector. Furthermore, it indicates the still unused potential of such innovations by linking their actions to the meso as well as the macro levels. The examples controvert the commonly phrased criticism that social entrepreneurs are merely grassroots initiatives. 1098 CHILDLINE! shows that the transformation of the conditions for society is possible and that an idea that is linked not only to the micro level, but also working together with an established network of institutions and the government, can provide a prosperous and sustainable alternative to development efforts.

#### 4.1.1 1098-CHILDLINE – an encouraging example

What started in Mumbai in 1996 has by now spread to 83 cities throughout India. Plans for further extension have been made in cooperation with the Indian Ministry of Women and Child Development and the project has the ambitious goal of being present in every city of India by 2014 ([www.childlineindia.org](http://www.childlineindia.org)). The idea of CHILDLINE has been presented and transferred to various countries worldwide and by now 12 other countries have already come to India, visited CHILDLINE, and received training and presentations on this entire system with the simple idea of adjusting it to their country of origin. The founder of CHILDLINE India, Jeroo Billimoria, announced an even broader vision of building an international consortium of child lines by 2002 (Bornstein, p. 88).

“We are not helping ‘poor children’. I want to take the word ‘poor’ out of our vocabulary.”

Jeroo

The results of CHILDLINE India in 2009 are impressive. CHILDLINE receives two million calls per year at the 24-hour helpline and in 2009, 16 million cases had been recorded ([www.childlineindia.org](http://www.childlineindia.org)).

There are two basic principles that CHILDLINE has followed right from the start: firstly, to be a child’s rights service, and secondly to acknowledge that CHILDLINE cannot work in isolation (see Bornstein).

Being a child’s rights service implies, especially in Jeroo’s understanding, that young people’s needs, rights and therefore their protection is the utmost principle of every service offered throughout this programme. This also implies that young people are not only the centre of attention, but also that their experience and knowledge form the foundation of the entire concept. Right from the start, Jeroo worked closely with young people living on the streets, she invited them to ratify her concept and the actual implementation of CHILDLINE, and she was aware that only the young people who had lived on the streets themselves would be able and qualified to reply to emergency calls from children in need. These young people were CHILDLINE’s core team members from the start; “backed up by social workers, they responded to calls, providing information to other street youths, transporting street children to shelters, hospitals, or police stations, documenting calls and working with CHILDLINE partners to match children with necessary services. Not only did they carry out much of CHILDLINE’s work, they defined the organization’s priorities and policies” (Bornstein, p. 70). What can be found throughout the further development and extension of CHILDLINE is an unquestionable

“If we take a charity approach, we will be here for 50,000 years and nothing will be different.”



understanding that it is a service provided to young people that seek to support them and their needs. The belief in young people as individual subjects with their own rights is self-evident and combined with their willingness to learn.

The examples of listening to young people and involving them in every part of improving CHILDLINE's service are manifold. The introduction of an open house every month, for instance, is based on the suggestion of a young team member. Furthermore, given that many children reported server struggles with policy officers and hospital staff, CHILDLINE started with training means for these authorities. Due to the feedback and experiences of young people living on the streets, CHILDLINE found out which spots in every city are essential to focus on. Due to a constantly improving tracking system, CHILDLINE is able to locate these spots and provide immediate help, the installation of medical booths at certain railway stations for example ([www.childlineindia.org](http://www.childlineindia.org)). Listening to young people also affects the internal development of CHILDLINE. The computer documentation system, for example, is designed for "users who are easily distracted and often semiliterate", that is including pictures, easily understandable language, and the option for users to choose their mother tongue (Bornstein, p. 86).

According to Hart's ladder of participation, CHILDLINE not only includes young people at every stage of their development process, but the process is guided and determined by their input, experience, and knowledge. Young people are regarded as active citizens, are a crucial part of society, and are included in every aspect that affects their lives. CHILDLINE therefore follows the principle of active participation and a penetrative understanding of human rights, including children's right, as the driving force of progress in society.

CHILDLINE's second principle, "not working in isolation", underlines this holistic understanding of a transformation of society. Jeroo did not stop acting on the micro level, but was bitterly aware of the fact that institutions, such as schools, hospitals, railway stations, and their officers and policies need to be included in order to be able to transform the situations of young people living on the streets. Furthermore, she found that the numerous children and youth organisations, whether state, private, or non-profit organisations, were not linked at all. Their work was not consolidated and it appeared to be a jungle of uncoordinated services that were competing with one another rather than working together for the benefit of children.

In addition to offering a platform for consolidating service, CHILDLINE recognized the necessity of working on a multi-level approach. Similar to the capacity building approach discussed earlier, it is the linkage of the micro, mesa, and macro levels that yields the tremendous impact. The systemic approach has been inherent in CHILDLINE from its early beginnings.

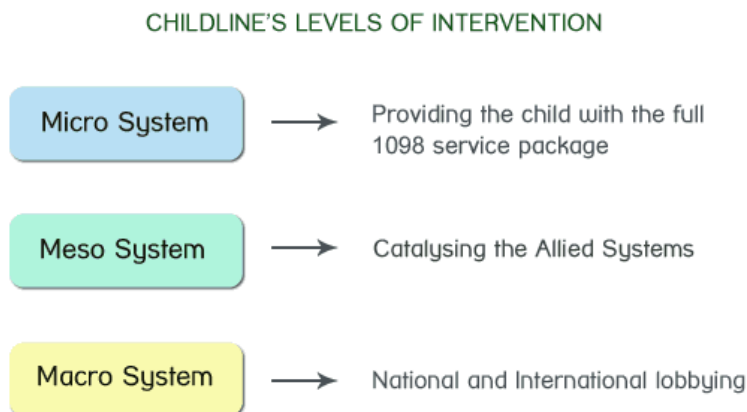


Figure 7: Childline's levels of intervention.

Source: <http://www.childlineindia.org.in/1098/b1c-intervention-model.htm>

As shown above, the micro system is clearly the cornerstone of the entire system, with the child at the centre of attention. This full service (please note that it is explicitly referred to as service rather than help or support, as the young people are entitled to this services provided) includes direct interventions such as medical aid, counselling, finding and providing shelter, and accompanying young people to police stations for reporting. This level also includes training facilities and workshop concepts provided to young people, such as training to become a CHILDLINE team member, including counselling and social work aspects. These trainings are often held together with former street children in order to create an awareness and understanding of their situation, providing insight into the young people's perspectives and sensitizing them to the needs of the young people living on the streets. Moreover, these trainings also include aspects of children's rights education. Such solid work on the micro level is an essential prerequisite for a holistic multilevel approach in the first place.

The meso level is concerned with the systemic surroundings of young people. CHILDLINE incorporates the fact that the situation of young people does not exist in isolation and therefore works eagerly on the institutional level as well. At this stage, young people's immediate environment is included and targeted, including police, the health and educational systems, the government, as well as the families. Here, CHILDLINE brings together a majority of institutions in India that are working with or for young people, or are directed towards them. "The Ministry of Women & Child Development, the Government of India, UNICEF, Department of Telecommunications, street and community youth, non-profit organisations, academic institutions, the corporate sector and concerned individuals" are all part of this wide network (<http://www.childlineindia.org>).

Given that CHILDLINE is such a major player within this network, their principles on children's rights and their vision of respecting children as strong, individual subjects who are an essential part of society prevails throughout the network. Furthermore, the committed work on establishing, maintaining, and extending a nationwide network focused on young people's needs and protection also enables CHILDLINE to influence

broader topics of advocacy. In this regard, the network engages in strategies to influence policy makers in order to change current injustices and deficiencies in the political and judicial system. UNICEF also plays a very strong role within the network. Their report “Childhood under Threat” indicates severe issues such as AIDS, health status, the infant mortality rate, malnutrition, child marriage, child trafficking, and children living below the poverty line, to name just a few. Tied together in the CHILDLINE network’s common strategy, the attempt is first to raise awareness (media advocacy), secondly to effect the juvenile justice system and national legislation given that many issues such as child trafficking are one of many issues that are not dealt with accordingly in the national allows (judicial advocacy), and thirdly to impact changes in the bureaucratic system. In this respect, capacity building is another essential pillar of the network strategies.

As mentioned above, the CHILDLINE concept began to spread beyond Indian boundaries so that the international child helpline currently counts 89 members in 77 countries.

In summary, a project that is rooted in the perception of young people’s need for consolidated services in case of emergencies has grown into an international network that aims to increase the awareness of children’s rights and give them a strong voice on matters that affect their lives. Above all, it began to tie together national and international organisations with similar attentions to support young people. CHILDLINE is therefore able to provide a comprehensive service to young people living on the streets, acting according to their needs and supporting them in finding ways out of their situations. Given their thorough understanding of young people as independent, capable, and strong subjects, this attitude is transferred to the entire system, paving the way for young people to make their voices heard.

## **5 Rethinking development**

Talking about the inclusion of young people is still furnished with a strange look on the face of an unfamiliar audience. Why should it be so important? Are there not other, more severe challenges we should focus on instead of concentrating on such a “nice- to-have” initiative? Claiming the inclusion of young people in society and with respect to this thesis the inclusion of childhood studies within the concept of development theories, appears being a utopia vision that lost every reference to reality. Yet, a first attempt to combine these two discourses shows that the idea is not that far fetched.

The reduction of capacity development programmes with young people, as an immediate effect of the Paris Declaration and its international implementation has been an alarming insight and adds another perspective to this thesis. Before, being able to actually include the notion of childhood and claim for the inclusion of young people as active subjects within the concepts of development theories, the awareness of Young people as a focal topic within development cooperation needs to be raised. It is essential to change the current status of perceiving children’s rights and the inclusion of young people as a mainstream topic that can be dealt with if there is time and resources left into a priority topic again. The

consequences of neglecting this topic will become vivid within the next years, without a doubt. Even more, the demographic urgency is already visible. Especially, in “typical” development cooperation topics, such as health, education and nowadays security the inclusion of young people is essential in order to provide sustainable concepts and design programmes that are based on the actual contexts of the country, respectively.

Why is the inclusion of young people so essential?

As the discussion of has shown, young people are a group of agents whose possibilities and life chances are determined by the larger environment, in the same way as the larger environment is influenced, shaped and constructed by the actions and decision taken by these agents. Young people navigate the social terrain they have been positioned in and by that actually changing the boundaries of this socially constructed category. Even more, these young agents do possess a very precious capacity for the entire societies, namely a unique perspective on society and their place in it. Young people do offer a fresh perspective on society and their role in it and at the same time inherit the possibility of offering new, alternative perspectives for transforming society. Young people are social change agents, most of them with energetic visions and aspiring ideas. Yet, young people are limited in sharing these ideas and transform their immediate environment. Due to the fact that they are, mostly, excluded from society and do not possess the required resources, financially, economically as well as politically, they are struggling to reach the state of active participation or even active citizenship. It is no surprise that young people being aggrieved by their lack of ability to achieve independence and thus their ability to move along trajectory of social becoming generational relations are turning sour (Vigh).

Given that many decisions shaping the lives of individuals and communities are made within the course of everyday life, active participations within everyday situations are crucial. These are the topics that need to be addressed in the very near future: the intergenerational negotiations, access for young people to society, decision making and inclusion in society in order to prevent severe security issues, being based on generational and social conflicts. The steps that have been suggested earlier need to be brought back to the international agenda:

- ◆ Building capacity with individuals, communities, and enabling environment for participation as active citizens
- ◆ Challenging adultism and the negative construction of childhood/youth

These will be the topics for the upcoming years and decades, to name just a few considering young people’s inclusion. In order to achieve any of the above mentioned steps, young people’s agency has to be recognized and included in the concepts of international development policies and concepts, self-evidently.

Here the voices of civil society and the actions and results of social entrepreneurs as well as grass-root initiatives need to be used for building up a strong lobby for young people and their agency. These fields offer so many wonderful projects, initiatives, and concepts yet are often not made public. The achievements of these fields need to be made public in order

to increase the pressure on the international community. As the example of CHILDLINE illustrates it is possible to grow out of a local initiative and work on all three levels of society. It is the particular linkage to the capacity development approach that is so promising for long term achievements. Transformation as well as inclusion is more than just a partial participation or the passing on of knowledge. It is the combination of working with a multilevel approach, emphasizing empowerment and thus respecting agency and ownership as well as generating endogenous processes of change. In this regard, the idea of agency and social participation is important in re-conceptualizing young people's participation beyond exercising a right to have a say or to be heard. The goal should be a wider concept of active citizenship.

## 5.1 Conclusion

From the development cooperation perspective, youth as a social category is often perceived as a parallel vein that is somehow unattached to the general social and generational dynamics of society. Due to this perception, it is further taken for granted that their challenges can be treated in relative isolation and thus with relative ease. The discussion of this paper indicates that this is a false believe. As the new paradigm of childhood studies as well as the capacity development approach indicates, social categories are constructed and it has to be acknowledged that the subject does intervene with the so-called external structure. An isolation of any social categories, hence also the isolation of young people, does not reflect a realistic construct. The inclusion of young people in society and, with focus on the scope of this paper in development cooperation, is necessary in order to foster social change and a transformation.

In order to achieve such an ambitious goal, it is essential to firstly be aware of the prevailing mental models that determine both discourses. Dependency is a key word, reflecting the similarities between childhood studies and development theory. Secondly, in order to reconstruct the existing mental models, radically new concepts have to be introduced. Most likely, these concepts will not be developed if young people are not included in this discussion. Their perspectives, perceptions, needs and thoughts might be an essential ingredient for a new conceptual mixture. The critical discussion of both discourses indicates, the inadequateness of language and hence the necessity to rethink not only the concepts that are currently implemented but also rethinking the underlying mental models. As introduced by the three hypotheses in the beginning of this paper it has been shown that radically new concepts and alternatives to the conservative models of development are necessary. Furthermore, the inclusion of young people in these concepts will lead to a kind of emancipation and will definitely challenge the existing generational structures. The question is, are adults able to and willing to approach such groundbreaking adjustments and transformations?

## 5.2 Outlook

The thesis at hand is suggested as a first attempt to link childhood studies to the theories of development. The topicality of this combination has been confirmed throughout the writing process as well as in various discussions. The interfaces are manifold and various topics ask for a closer, detailed look at. In general, thinking about young people's participation is not too difficult, especially if we share certain values. Once the claim for young people's agency is generally accepted it will broaden the perspective on how to include young people. The complexity is introduced by the questions about what sort of democracy can we achieve in our globalized and highly complex world? What kind of democracy do we want? What is radical, participatory democracy and in how far are we willing to follow such an approach? Similarly, we have to ask in how far we are willing to give up the existing categories of childhood, youth and adulthood? Are we able to transform the theoretical discourses into everyday lives?

The claim for young people to be empowered as equal citizens is a powerful call way beyond the call for participation as it implies young people's rights as well as their active engagement.

This might sound like a threat but it might also sound like a wonderful opportunity we should start handing over to young people. They have demonstrated their strong agency in so many cases already and the result is mostly an amazing creativity and tenacity in overcoming difficult situations that it should encourage to start this learning process across generational categories.

This would, for sure, not only enhance the situation of young people themselves, yet also lead to a more just and democratic world for all of us. It would make a difference.

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## Appendix

### List of abbreviations

<b>B</b>		
	<b>BMZ</b>	<b>Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung</b>
<b>C</b>		
	<b>CRC</b>	<b>Convention of the Rights of the Child</b>
	<b>CD</b>	<b>Capacity development</b>
<b>G</b>		
	<b>GTZ</b>	<b>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH</b>
<b>M</b>		
	<b>MDG</b>	<b>Millennium Development Goals</b>
<b>N</b>		
	<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-Government Organisations</b>
<b>O</b>		
	<b>OECD</b>	<b>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</b>
<b>U</b>		
	<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>W</b>		
	<b>WB</b>	<b>World Bank</b>

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## Appendix I

### « AID EFFECTIVENESS



The Paris Declaration, endorsed on 2 March 2005, is an international agreement to which over one hundred ministers, heads of agencies and other senior officials adhered and committed their countries and organisations to continue to increase efforts in harmonisation, alignment, and managing aid for results with a set of monitorable actions and indicators.

Joint progress towards enhanced aid effectiveness

**Ownership** - Developing countries set their own strategies to reduce poverty, improve their institutions, and tackle corruption.

**Alignment** - Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems.

**Harmonisation** - Donor countries coordinate, simplify procedures, and share information to avoid duplication.

**Results** - Developing countries and donors shift focus to development results and results get measured.

**Mutual Accountability** - Donors and partners are accountable for development results.

The Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) was drawn up in 2008 and builds on the commitments agreed in the *Paris Declaration*.

An Agenda to Accelerate Progress

**Predictability** – donors will provide information 3-5 years in advance on their planned aid to partner countries.

**Country systems** – partner country systems will be used to deliver aid as the first option, rather than donor systems.

**Conditionality** – donors will switch from reliance on prescriptive conditions about how and when aid money is spent to conditions based on the developing country's own development objectives.

**Untying** – donors will relax restrictions that prevent developing countries from buying the goods and services they need from whomever and wherever they can get the best quality at the lowest price.

## Appendix II

### VICIOUS AND VIRTUOUS CYCLES OF EMPOWERMENT

