

**Global Inequality and Development.  
Textual Representations of the  
World Bank and UNDP**

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## **DFG Research Center (SFB) “From Heterogeneities to Inequalities”**

Whether fat or thin, male or female, young or old – people are different. Alongside their physical features, they also differ in terms of nationality and ethnicity; in their cultural preferences, lifestyles, attitudes, orientations, and philosophies; in their competencies, qualifications, and traits; and in their professions. But how do such heterogeneities lead to social inequalities? What are the social mechanisms that underlie this process? These are the questions pursued by the DFG Research Center (Sonderforschungsbereich (SFB)) “From Heterogeneities to Inequalities” at Bielefeld University, which was approved by the German Research Foundation (DFG) as “SFB 882” on May 25, 2011.

In the social sciences, research on inequality is dispersed across different research fields such as education, the labor market, equality, migration, health, or gender. One goal of the SFB is to integrate these fields, searching for common mechanisms in the emergence of inequality that can be compiled into a typology. More than fifty senior and junior researchers and the Bielefeld University Library are involved in the SFB. Along with sociologists, it brings together scholars from the Bielefeld University faculties of Business Administration and Economics, Educational Science, Health Science, and Law, as well as from the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) in Berlin and the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. In addition to carrying out research, the SFB is concerned to nurture new academic talent, and therefore provides doctoral training in its own integrated Research Training Group. A data infrastructure project has also been launched to archive, prepare, and disseminate the data gathered.

## **Research Project C5 “Conceptions of Global Inequality in World Society”**

This project deals with the emergence of a global semantics of inequality within world society. Through three comparative case studies it traces how ideas about global social inequality that draw on various aspects of heterogeneity have developed in international organizations, both programmatically and on the policy level. In addition, the project is particularly interested in the question of whether it is specific global discourses, e.g. on issues of justice, the climate, environmental protection, security etc., that serve as the main vehicles for the emergence of such a global semantics of inequality.

The main project goal is to describe shifts in semantics of inequality in world society and to map this shift in a detailed fashion in the context of the case studies. In particular, these case studies focus on reports, statistics, and policy statements of three international organizations (World Bank, UNDP, OECD). Changes in notions of inequality, which are reflected in semantics have effects on how ‘progress’ in development is quantified, and it has a tangible effect on the projects and measures of international organizations. These semantics emerge within a cycle of communication between national and international, public and private actors concerning problems in economic and social development.

The text corpus to be analyzed includes development-related reports, statistics, and policy statements of international organizations. These are supplemented by reports, policy proposals, and working papers (“nonpapers”) written by administrative units within the organizations. Negotiation protocols will be analyzed in order to determine how specific ideas have gained entry to and shaped the semantics of inequality. In this process, the project will seek to identify more directly the different actors involved in the formation of particular notions of inequality, most particularly organizational staff, representatives of member states, representatives of other governmental and nongovernmental organizations, or experts from the academic community. These groups of actors do not only participate in the formation of certain ideas on inequality, but to some extent are also addressees of specific measures or proposals, e.g. member states which benefit from a programme and who then possibly also adopt these notions of inequality within their own programs and policy formulations. Such an approach is also able to account for the influence of NGOs on the forms of observation and the subsequent policy formulations by international organizations.

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# **Global Inequality and Development.**

## **Textual Representations of the World Bank and UNDP**

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### **1. Introduction**

Global politics unfold as unequal relations. Income equality is higher within many states than between states (Milanović 2005), economic growth is unevenly spread across the globe, and poverty has not declined as rapidly as foreseen by those who fight it (Gilbert and Vines 2000; Subramanian 2008). These are, however, only some of the dimensions of inequality in the global realm. Poverty and a lack of economic development are often seen as the main pillars of unequal relations between the states of the world (e.g. Ravallion 2005)—but human rights, political freedom, participation in global institutions, and access to welfare are also distributed very unequally between and within nation states, and are therefore regarded as varying the opportunities and capabilities of human beings (Sen 1999; Sen and Manna 2002; Sen 2005). How individuals are affected by environmental degradation or diseases, and how they gain access to education, health care, and other infrastructures for their well-being, depends on the conditions within states. Yet the development policies of states in the Global North (and more recently, the policies of states such as China) have also had a long-standing impact on these domestic conditions and continue to do so.

In terms of inequalities, all states are visible on a global map of UN organizations and other major players in the international system, mirrored in indicators such as the Human Development Index (HDI), which ranks the standards of living in all countries. This may have created the idea of “global inequalities,” referring to a shared problem on a global scale. According to the literature, global inequality can be conceptualized both as inequalities between states and as unequal conditions within states (Firebaugh 2003; Milanović 2005, 2011). Arguably, global inequality also implies a global imaginary that makes it possible or necessary to see these inequalities as global-scale concerns. This paper aims to offer a conceptual approach to studying concepts of global inequality and semantic shifts within those concepts.

Our research addresses the discourse of the globally active international organizations (IOs) that can be conceived of as major influences in the (re)production of globality itself, and asks how the global sphere can be defined as a “single sociopolitical space on a planetary scale” by taking social inequalities into account (Bartelson 2010: 219; other perspectives include Neumann and Sending 2010). By putting certain issues on the agenda and offering solutions that can only be delivered by themselves and only on a global scale, these IOs have regulated the discourse of specific problems and reproduced

the imaginary of a world community concerned by these problems.<sup>1</sup> Among the IOs we consider are the World Bank and UNDP, whose definitions of development have competed with each other and shaped the global development discourse over time (Bergesen and Lunde 2000; Murphy 2006; Pogge and Menko 2010; Milanović 2011).<sup>2</sup> One of the key issues within this development discourse has been inequality, traditionally related closely to the realm of nation states (or ‘countries’ as they are more commonly called in official documents), but re-framed as a global issue here.

In this paper, we remain open towards how the global is discursively construed—this needs to be reconstructed from the texts we will analyze. However, our focus on inequality serves as an analytical lens to investigate how global semantics may serve as mechanisms in the production of social inequalities and the different forms of heterogeneities that are reproduced in them. Analyzing official texts produced within the World Bank and UNDP, we trace how references to a global imaginary correspond to political programs of overcoming inequality.<sup>3</sup> These programs are concerned with poverty reduction, gender mainstreaming, environmental security, and other aspects of heterogeneity. We ask, for instance, whether they draw upon specifically global understandings of inequality or whether the nation state remains the sole object of reference even in the question of global inequality. Overall, we aim to show which specific discourses, e.g. on issues of global justice, the climate, environmental protection, or poverty, serve as the main vehicles for the emergence of such a global semantics of inequality and, in turn, the construction of globality.

In order to indicate the future trajectory of our project, which is part of Collaborative Research Center 882, we also demonstrate in some detail not only where we see our potential contribution to debates on global inequalities, but also how we intend to go about acquiring knowledge about them. We therefore first provide a short overview of what we consider to be the relevant literature on global inequalities. Since we are interested in the specific contextualization of inequalities within the global development discourse, we also introduce some of the more important linkages between the two ideas. A chapter devoted to the methodological issues arising in the early stages of any project presents some of our key considerations on how to proceed. Finally, we give an illustrative first impression of our approach to the data and ways of interpreting it with regard to our research question on global inequalities.

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘imaginary’ goes back to Cornelius Castoriadis and, later, Charles Taylor. A social imaginary, as is the case here, refers to (fictive) ideas that construct communities around them, fulfilling a function within society. The phantastic elements of a social imaginary help to distinguish it from other social forms of communication, but do not undermine its effects on society. While anchored to ideas rather than materiality, social imaginaries are intersubjectively shared in certain cultural, social, etc., contexts.

<sup>2</sup> Our choice of empirical cases affects how inequalities are discursively constructed; alternative discursive arenas would have been other globally active IOs, states, NGOs, and so on. However, we are specifically interested in the context of developmental politics, since they are often seen as intrinsically linked to the question of global (social) inequalities. Beyond World Bank and UNDP we would possibly find other linkages between inequality and the global.

<sup>3</sup> We conduct a text analysis in two steps: Since we are dealing (in the overall project) with an enormous amount of text produced by the World Bank and UNDP, we start with a computer-supported corpus linguistic analysis. Terms referring directly to the technical concepts of corpus linguistics (as named in the software we use, Wordsmith) are found in square brackets and will be explained where necessary. In a second step, we analyze single key documents, employing a discourse analytical approach influenced by Essex School discourse theory (Howarth and Torfing 2005; Laclau and Mouffe 2001; Torfing 1999). Very briefly, this entails looking for conflicts between hegemonic projects and alternatives, identifying how a discourse is structured and looking for depoliticized concepts.

## 2. Global Inequality

Definitions of “global inequality” are not abundant. Mostly, the nation state is the central reference object in either between-country comparisons or comparisons of within-country inequalities—the global enters as a reference framework only in the overall assessment of inequalities in all countries of the world. Inequality research, mostly by sociologists and economists, has traditionally dealt with many issues of inequality within domestic environments, sometimes beyond. Formally, inequality in the global realm can refer to the status of states in international law. In international politics, the question of equality and inequality is one of order: can we overcome inequality under conditions of anarchy? Do we need hierarchy in a global order? And if so, what kind of order should it be? The answer in global politics and international law has so far been sovereign equality, which builds on formalized equal relations between legal subjects, i.e. states, and ignores differences in capabilities such as populations, resources, size of territories, etc. Since this formalization of equality has followed from decolonization and may be seen as an achievement of previously colonial states that have gained a formally equal status in international politics, Ngaire Woods calls it foundational equality (Woods 1999: Ch.10). In these understandings, the idea of inequality is reduced to the level of states and their formal status, without a social imaginary beyond that. Any substantive understanding of inequality—as disparities in power, size, capabilities, etc.—is neglected for the sake of guaranteeing at least some equality in legal status. This approach, however, is more about equality than inequality.

Most generally:

Global inequality is a different kind of theme for it measures not just the condition of the world’s majority but the gap, and the growing gap, between them and the prospering minority. In that global inequality maps relative deprivation, it challenges the legitimacy of world order in a way that mere poverty statistics, accompanied by benevolent policy declarations, do not. (Nederveen Pieterse 2009: 1027)

Notably, global inequality has usually been defined in terms of differences in economic development; particularly in the post-WWII era, “development” became a metanarrative of divisions in the world (Crow, Zlatunich, and Fulfrost 2009). “Rich” vs. “poor,” “developed” vs. “underdeveloped” (nowadays mostly reconceptualized as “developing”) became categories and frames of reference for observing the world of states. The underlying idea of modernization beyond the confines of the nation state became a guiding paradigm for overcoming different levels of development, i.e. inequality (Rostow 1960), and it also served to divide the world into worlds—the first, second and third; the developed and underdeveloped; the included and excluded; the givers and the receivers, etc.

Depending on the definition of inequality and the way that certain factors are operationalized and related to each other, global inequality is seen as either on the rise or in decline. Some scholars concerned with inequalities on a global level have scrutinized the historical trends over the *longue durée*, often going back as far as the early industrial age (Korzeniewicz and Moran 2008). The common findings of these studies indicate that inequality between states began to arise in the mid to late eighteenth century, declined with technological development, and has been on the rise again since the 1980s

(Firebaugh 2003; Clark 2007). Another finding in this regard asserts that economic development in some of the more negatively affected regions (China, Africa, etc.) was a motor of economic growth before imperialism and colonialism reversed that trend (Martell 2010); critics of today's inequality studies have complained that major political interventions such as imperialism and colonialism are often ignored in historical accounts of world inequalities, even though they contributed systematically to creating and sustaining these inequalities (Williamson 1997).

Historically, global inequality is thus a rather recent phenomenon, and even a *longue durée* perspective generates mixed results in its analysis. The methodological issues leading to these divergent assessments have been discussed in detail (e.g. Mills 2009), but they draw attention away from the question that interests us here: how to conceptualize inequality in terms that account for more than just one, mostly an economic, dimension.

More generally, this problem also has to do with how global inequalities have come about. Both post-colonial authors and proponents of post-Marxist or world-system theoretical approaches have pointed to the involvement of Western, colonial states in the making of conditions that have led, and still lead, to massive inequalities between the states of the world. In a well-known comment on the postcolony, Arif Dirlik problematizes the relationship between those who helped produce inequalities and those who now seek to remedy them in parts, all in a framework of anti-capitalist critique:

The situation created by global capitalism helps explain certain phenomena that have become apparent over the last two or three decades, but especially since the eighties: global motions of peoples (and, therefore, cultures), the weakening of boundaries (among societies, as well as among social categories), the replications in societies internally of inequalities and discrepancies once associated with colonial differences, simultaneous homogenization and fragmentation within and across societies, the interpenetration of the global and the local, and the disorganization of a world conceived in terms of three worlds or nation-states. Some of these phenomena have also contributed to an appearance of equalization of differences within and across societies, as well as of democratization within and among societies. What is ironic is that the managers of this world situation themselves concede that they (or their organizations) now have the power to appropriate the local for the global, to admit different cultures into the realm of capital (only to break them down and remake them in accordance with the requirements of production and consumption), and even to reconstitute subjectivities across national boundaries to create producers and consumers more responsive to the operations of capital. (Dirlik 1994: 351)

While critical schools like *dependencia* and world-systems theories added ideas such as the concept of center and periphery, along with that of a semi-periphery (Wallerstein 1974), they did not generally question the overall discursive context of capitalism and the economy. They did, however, contribute an understanding of the global dimensions of inequality as asymmetries between socioeconomic spheres closely interconnected by dependencies that are created unilaterally, but are capable of being overcome by those in the peripheries. This idea of endowing the less developed, poorer, peripheral states with the agency to mitigate inequalities and act against global inequality is rarely found in other accounts of global inequality—something to keep in mind for the analysis.

In order to understand global inequality, we can gain additional, and perhaps more viable, categories and perspectives by addressing the historical context and the precise nature of these inequalities. In such approaches, we find an account that focuses on the global as a discursive sphere where certain

ideas—neo-liberalism and the market economy—are disseminated and gain their power of conviction and political relevance. Importantly, they depict inequality as a result of processes of globalization, which itself seems to be in the hands of certain powerful states that are able to set the agenda:

Certainly it is true that today's global trend of increasing inequality results from a recent technology-assisted surge of globalization under a neo-liberal free-market-oriented policy framework promoted by national elites who are forming a new international, imperial ruling class; but by exploring intersecting histories of imperial territoriality, we can better understand how social, political, and spatial patterns of increasing inequality structure trends amidst contemporary globalization, at various levels of scale. (Ludden 2006: 7)

Ludden sees inequality as having multidimensional features—social, political, spatial—that are all to some extent interwoven with global processes.

### ***Globalization and Inequality***

Studies that have taken up the term “global inequalities” and gone beyond measuring inequalities in terms of income have suffered the problems of constant redefinitions on the one hand, and a lack of alternative concepts to the mainly economic debate on the other. Over the last decade and more, inequality has been systematically placed in the context of globalization. While earlier works like Midgley's (1984) study of “Social Security, Inequality, and the Third World” have no understanding of inequality as global, works like those by Ngaire Wood and Andrew Hurrell (1999), David Held and Ayse Kaya (2007), Raphael Kaplinsky (2005), or Alastair Greig, David Hulme, and Mark Turner (2007), and others reaffirm the closely interrelated nature of inequality beyond the state and its globalization dimension. Greig, Hulme, and Turner summarize the definitions or specifications in this context:

The United Nations' Human Development Report 2003 provides a useful classificatory scheme for looking at income inequalities: inequality across countries, inequality within countries, and inequality across the world's people. While income inequality cannot capture the full impact of inequalities along other dimensions of social life (such as gender, ethnicity and region), these indicative economic statistics clearly demonstrate the enormous gulf between rich and poor. They also illustrate the scope and scale of challenging global inequality in the twenty-first century. (Greig, Hulme, and Turner 2007: 2)

The reference to UNDP shows how closely related global politics can be with the definitions we apply. A further example: in the volume edited by David Held and Ayse Kaya, several of the authors work for or advise the World Bank. Accordingly, the collection frames global inequality in economic terms (Milanović; Sutcliffe; Dollar; Galbraith; Thompson; Wade, all 2007; see also Basu 2005). “Global inequality is casually used to mean several things, but the most sensible definition is the same as for a country: line up all the people in the world from the poorest to the richest and calculate a measure of inequality among their incomes” (Dollar 2007: 84)—a narrow, but evidently pertinent definition if we take a World Bank-based view. It is also defined as “international and inter-class inequality” (Sutcliffe 2007: 69) or as “spatial disparities” (Kanbur and Venables 2007: 204). Pertaining to global institutional settings and power disparities (Pogge 2007) as well as justice (Fraser 2007),

global inequalities are mostly defined in terms of income, but sometimes, more broadly, of well-being as a multidimensional category (Gillivray and Markova 2010; Decancq 2011).

However, more often than not the question of the global itself is not systematically discussed in studies of globalization and inequality. Unequal distributions of wealth, unequal relations within states under the impact of economic globalization, and varying opportunities for economic growth are portrayed as the defining features of global inequality. Since inequality is mostly understood in terms of income and economic growth, questions concerning the relationship between inequality within and between countries and the processes of globalization are mainly asked in terms of the opportunities and impediments of globalized economies. There is some dispute as to whether poorer countries—and these are the main point of reference for this literature—benefit from integration into a globalizing economic order or experience its more detrimental effects (Nederveen Pieterse and Rehbein 2009). Proponents of the first thesis hold that globalization has fostered economic growth and national welfare (as set out controversially by Dollar and Kraay 2002, befittingly in the *Journal of Economic Growth*; also Dollar 2005, 2007). Critics such as Firebaugh or Wade counter that this can only be accepted under the presumption of the benefits that liberalism and the Washington Consensus have brought—but that this presumption must be profoundly criticized (Wade 2004, 2007; also Sutcliffe 2007). In any case, the idea of global processes, economic or otherwise, has entered into discussions of inequality and has produced the label of “global inequality/inequalities” that we find both in the development discourses of international organizations and in the scholarly literature.

One further question remains:<sup>4</sup> Inequality between whom? Between states? Nations? People? People within states? And if so, how are they related to the global? While the relational quantities in the research literature include, among others, supranational regions (Thompson 2007), countries, domestic regions (Kanbur and Venables 2007), groups, and individuals, it often remains unclear how these socio-spatial categories are causally related to inequalities and how they are interconnected. While it seems clear that the subjects of inequalities are usually those that suffer most from them—poorer countries, the poor, women, children, etc.—it is rarely discussed whether these individuals, groups, or collectives are seen as potential agents or not. As mentioned above, *dependencia* activists at least attributed to those in states of the periphery, the Global South, the potential to free themselves from their dire economic straits. Does that also hold true for the agencies engaged in the fight against poverty and inequality today? The addressees of development policies are usually states; the statistics, measures, numbers, and reports produced in IOs refer to states. However, the notions of equality and inequality themselves refer to the people within states. The global imaginary may be one of people living in equal conditions within the world, at least to the extent of enjoying some chance of survival and perhaps, later on, dignity. But are those affected by unequal relations seen as subjects with the capability for agency—or as mere recipients of aid? Is the idea of lessening inequality also applied to their own

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<sup>4</sup> This problem was the starting point for Milanović’s study, in which he analyzed income distribution using household survey data from more than 100 countries (Milanović 2005).

position within the world? This may be difficult to answer on the basis of a textual analysis, but we will include the issue of subjects and agency in our set of analytical questions.

### **3. Inequality and Development**

The history of development, almost mythically starting with the “invention of development” (Rist 2008) in Truman’s Inaugural Address of 1949, has always involved international organizations (IOs). The World Bank was funded even before Truman’s speech, in 1944, during the pioneering phase of development politics. In the formative and pioneering phases various development concepts and paradigms were proposed and refuted (Prebisch and Economic Commission for Latin America 1950; Singer and Hoffman 1964; Dosman 2006; Staples 2006), and the first ‘development decade’ saw the founding of many important development organizations, national and international, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development, or the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Helleiner 2010). The 1970s witnessed a paradigm change, moving towards a neoliberal agenda that was strongly pushed by the World Bank and the IMF (Gilbert and Vines 2000): the Washington Consensus was born. Both organizations proclaimed and supported programs for structural adjustment, deregulation, and privatization that led to a retreat of the state (Woods 2006; Rist 2008) and growing poverty among the labor force (Ayres 1983). The late 1980s and the 1990s are often characterized as the ‘lost decade’ in the history of development because per-capita income growth stagnated in developing countries (Easterly 2001; Nuscheler 2006: 80–81). With the changes in the international system after the collapse of the Cold War order, development politics changed as well. Development agencies, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions, concluded that the neoliberal strategy had failed and must be replaced by a paradigm that would combine governmental control and institutions with economic forces in liberalized trade (Sindzingre 2004; Woods 2006). Intrastate inequality was now starting to be perceived as an obstacle to new policies such as good governance and poverty reduction; equity and development entered the agenda (World Bank 2006).

Today, we find a close interlinkage of inequality with poverty—and also, in the broader sense, with development in more recent debates. The World Bank, for instance, has a poverty-reduction strategy that inherently draws on at least implicit notions of inequality and gives clear indicators as to how we should measure its problems and successes. UNDP, similarly, relates inequality and poverty. More generally, a fairly traditional imaginary of modernization relating to states in development is required in order to justify these sorts of development policies. Again, this affects how socio-spatial categories of center/periphery, rich Global North/poor Global South, etc., are constructed in terms of inequality.

Much of the debate about global inequality has been dominated by economists working for the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank. Leading analysts such as Milanović and economists such

as Firebaugh, Dollar, or Ravallion have not only been involved in discussing the issue but also in framing and, to a certain extent, directing how we think about global inequality itself. In the discussions, the self-referentiality of concepts, figures, and ideas of how to measure inequality—and even whether to measure it at all—is palpable; alternative approaches that do justice to the many dimensions of inequality or explicitly introduce different conceptions are rare. Global inequality, accordingly, is regarded as inherently about income, economic growth, and, more rarely, other issues of well-being (health, education, environment). The majority of academic and policy papers concerned with global inequality, thus, address it in the context of economic development.

Moreover, much of the global academic archive that generates knowledge about global inequality is embedded in the discourses of UNDP and the World Bank. These experts are major voices in the constant redefinitions of what constitutes inequalities in the broader debate, and also influential actors in justifying the governance practices of global agencies; they are among the main players in development politics. As agenda-setters, they have helped to develop policies to combat inequality; in their function as academics and knowledge-contributors they have shaped understandings of inequality in the context of development. This observation of the double role that many academics have played is important insofar as the debate about global inequality has never been a purely academic one, but has always been profoundly connected to the concrete actions of global development agencies. Most of the literature on global inequality has referred to the writings of such scholars—whether to support or criticize their expertise. The spectrum of positions, while not narrow, is limited by the fact that the debate has been carried out in the context of development politics. Even those thinkers who are philosophically detached from an actual involvement in policy, like Nancy Fraser, Martha Nussbaum, or Thomas Pogge, have acknowledged the near-monopoly on defining inequality that has devolved to IOs like UNDP or the World Bank (Pogge 2007; also Moellendorf 2009). This, in turn, shows how closely interlinked the development discourse of major IOs and the understanding of global inequality seem to be.

The World Bank has followed a development agenda since its foundation in 1944, starting with its support for a Europe recovering from the consequences of World War II.<sup>5</sup> Of particular importance here are the two institutions within the World Bank Group dealing with development and global inequality and managed by 188 member countries: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA) (Staples 2006). The IBRD concentrates on reducing poverty in middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries, whereas the IDA focuses exclusively on the world's poorest countries. In the treatment of poor countries the World Bank uses differing measures: Whereas the IBRD promotes sustainable development through loans, guarantees, risk management products, and advisory services, the IDA concentrates on fighting hunger

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<sup>5</sup> The World Bank Group comprises five institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

and malnutrition through targeted funding of agricultural productivity and infrastructural development. However, states only receive loans and support from the World Bank if they accept certain conditionalities, such as investments in agriculture, promoting good governance (Weaver 2008), or adapting political structures to World Bank demands (Easterly 2005).

In the context of development and inequality, the concepts introduced by Branco Milanović and others have been highly influential, particularly when equating inequalities with income inequalities as measurable quantities that allow for cross-country as well as within-country comparisons and assessments. However, while sometimes defined as “global,” inequality is mostly seen as “international,” i.e. between states. Despite some criticism, Milanović’s remains the main definitional framework in the World Bank’s inequality approach—for instance, a new regular publication entitled “Focus on Inequality” draws heavily on his concepts, signaling their continuing validity and a certain level of self-reliance or self-referentiality in their knowledge production (Olinto and Saavedra 2012). Beyond Milanović, the World Bank’s one-dollar-per-day (sometimes reframed as two-dollars-per-day, e.g. Sala-i-Martin and Mohapatra 2002) definition of poverty, which is also used in the context of global inequalities, has been employed by many authors but criticized by others for being reductionist (see particularly the debate on “how not to count the poor,” Ravallion 2010; Reddy and Pogge 2010). It is a combination of these sets of ideas that has structured World Bank discourse over previous decades.

Breaking the ground for a reconceptualization of development economics, in the context of inequality the capabilities approach introduced by Amartya Sen is a seminal one, closely integrated into the politics of UNDP and accordingly the global development discourse. Against the background of UNDP’s central concept of “human development,” inequality here refers to varying degrees of “entitlements,” “capabilities,” and “functionings and freedoms” (Sen 1992; Robeyns 2005). Translated to questions of global scale, Sen’s approach has been taken up in various UNDP Human Development Reports and served as a major frame of reference for assessing inequality. Development indices like the Human Development Index and various gender-related indices, including the Gender Inequality Index, are based on the notions of inequality developed by Sen (and to some extent Martha Nussbaum, who, however, remains critical of some of these concepts), indicating their centrality. The capabilities approach is not decidedly opposed to the income inequality perspective, but offers a broader alternative framework for recognizing inequalities and finding ways of ameliorating them.

At least two other grand narratives have characterized UNDP’s development discourse: the concept of Human Development (based on Equity, Empowerment, Cooperation, Sustainability, Security, and Productivity) is closely interlinked with the concept of Equity, which in turn is part of the discourse of inequalities.<sup>6</sup> The Millennium Development Goals (MDG), a set of eight goals to improve the living

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<sup>6</sup> The Millennium Development Goals are: 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2. Achieve universal primary education; 3. Promote gender equality and empower women; 4. Reduce child mortality; 5. Improve maternal health; 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; 7. Ensure environmental sustainability; 8. Develop a global partnership for development. See UNDP, “What is Human Development” ([www.undp.org/bz/human-development/what-is-human-development/](http://www.undp.org/bz/human-development/what-is-human-development/), accessed 13 November 2012).

conditions of the world's people, include the aspect of gender equality and have also been integrated into the general policies for fighting inequality. A redirection of development ideas has thus been observable, in development indicators that do not focus exclusively on economic criteria but include social variables like life expectancy or the literacy rate (see the Human Development Index, Haq 2003). The Millennium Development goals are one of the most visible changes that mark new directions in development policy: development no longer focuses solely on economic parameters, but takes into account health (in particular the dire situation of children and mothers), education, gender, and sustainable development issues. These goals have been developed by, and are strongly influenced by, a working group composed of representatives of the World Bank, UNDP, OECD, and other NGOs.

As a preliminary conclusion, it can be stated that IOs have always played a key role in development politics, either as arenas that states and non-state actors use to negotiate or set up political programs or as actors that establish a certain understanding of global inequality. In some cases IOs even act as “teachers of norms” (Finnemore 1993), and whatever concept and understanding of global inequality arises, it has to be approved and incorporated by IOs at some point—otherwise it will most likely not reach a global dimension.

#### **4. Steps in the Analysis<sup>7</sup>**

We will now turn to the study of a small number of documents that deal with the question of global inequality and were issued by four United Nations agencies.<sup>8</sup> As illustrations for a future in-depth study of the global development discourse in major IOs, they serve to demonstrate how the question of inequality can be linked to ideas of globality and how it is integrated into the political issue of development. The reference corpus permitting the documents to be related to the overall discourse contains several hundreds of texts from different contexts within UNDP and the World Bank.

The choice of these documents was made on the basis of their role in the overall development discourse in the global arena of international organizations. “The Inequality Predicament” (I), a United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs-authored 2005 report, summarizes understandings of global inequality developed in the UN and promotes the fields of action for global organizations like UNDP, UNICEF, and, at least indirectly, the World Bank. The 2006 World Development Report (WDR) entitled “Equity and Development” (II) sets the agenda for a new understanding of inequality and the related policies. The IMF 2007 report deals with the relationship between “Globalization and Inequality” (III), taking up an issue not traditionally within its domain and thus, perhaps,

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<sup>7</sup>We include this short chapter because we are here using the methodological approach for the first time; this also leads to a rather schematic presentation of results.

<sup>8</sup> The four documents chosen (in their entirety used as reference corpus A) are part of a very comprehensive text corpus, mainly consisting of texts authored or authorized by the World Bank and UNDP. Two of the documents, a World Development Report (WDR) and a Human Development Report (HDR), mention the token “inequality” more often than all other documents in the sample [keyness], which consists of all HDR (1990–2011; B2) and WDR (1978–2012; B1). Since they serve here as illustrations of a broader discourse and not as random samples, we accepted the selection bias. The two other documents, one by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the other by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), function as potential contrast foils.

not as discursively linked to the general IMF discourse. Finally, a recent issue of UNDP's annual Human Development Report (HDR), "The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development" (IV), is deeply concerned with certain questions of inequality—as indicated by the high [keyness] value comparing it to all other HDR.

The World Development Reports have been published annually since 1978, and each focuses on a specific aspect of development emphasized by the World Bank in its policies. The World Development Report 2006 on "Equity and Development" pays attention to the "persistence of inequality traps by highlighting the interaction between different forms of inequality" (World Bank 2006). It shows that inequality of opportunity is wasteful and inimical to sustainable development and poverty reduction. It also sets out policy implications on the broad model of leveling the playing field, both politically and economically and in both the domestic and the global arenas.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was founded in 1966 with the aim of providing technical assistance and developing surveys and investment analysis to identify large, economically feasible development projects. However, "UNDP has always been more than just a provider of technical assistance and what was once called 'pre-investment' service" (Murphy 2006: 5). The UNDP sees itself as "a solution-oriented, knowledge-based development organization, supporting countries to reach their own development objectives and internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)."<sup>9</sup> Committed to the Millennium Development Goals, the UNDP links and coordinates global and national efforts. Its focus is helping developing countries to attract and use aid effectively to build and share solutions to the challenges of democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention, environment, and HIV/AIDS. Unlike the World Bank, UNDP's offices and staff are on the ground in 177 countries, working with governments and local communities to help them find solutions to global and national development problems. UNDP supports projects within developing countries and provides expert advice, training, and grant support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed countries. The annual Human Development Report, commissioned by UNDP and published since 1990, aims to measure and analyze development progress.<sup>10</sup> It ties into the global debate on key development issues, providing new measurement tools, innovative analysis, and policy proposals. The global Report's analytical framework and inclusive approach carry over into regional, national, and local Human Development Reports, also supported by UNDP.

Our analysis combines a corpus linguistic and discourse analytical approach.<sup>11</sup> The first and main part of the analysis is based on a corpus linguistic analysis, starting from the most basic step of counting words and moving to more complex maneuvers of studying how they are grouped. To that end, we use

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<sup>9</sup> This standard description appears prominently in recent documents, papers or electronic, including the UNDP homepage, [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org) (accessed 13 November 2012).

<sup>10</sup> The Human Development Index (HDI) as launched by Mahbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen therefore serves as a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education, and standards of living of a country.

<sup>11</sup> For a similar approach see Baker and Ellece 2011. Baker calls this approach corpus-assisted discourse studies.

the three main functions of WordSmith, the program that helps to analyze words, i.e. [tokens] in context: this entails, first, looking at frequencies of certain tokens—more precisely, their lemmata (indicated by \*)<sup>12</sup>—and creating [word lists] and, second, comparing them within the sample of texts to see which words are relatively over/underrepresented keyness with regard to a reference corpus. Words and their immediate context, including patterns of co-occurrences and collocations, can then be calculated.<sup>13</sup> The corpus linguistic analysis serves to identify patterns of language-in-use, i.e. to show statistically relevant frequencies of certain terms and the context in which they are used.<sup>14</sup> If we look at a small number of texts, these patterns are only indicative of how certain terms are used at that point in time in one type of text; however, comparing the texts with an overall [reference corpus] of all documents of a certain type and/or with other documents at the same point in time enables us to contextualize these patterns and assess their generalizability.

In the second part of the analysis, we follow the indications of the quantitative analysis and look into what seem to be cases of semantic conspicuousness. This discourse analysis again entails two steps: a deconstruction of text (see Culler 1976) and a reconstruction, i.e. the re-embedding of the text into its context. The deconstruction attempts to find presuppositions that reveal how certain ideas are presented, linked, and established as normal, how subjects are positioned, and what intertextual references are made to other ideas (see Doty 1993). The reconstruction goes beyond the simple addition of information about each text to a more general investigation of their meaning in context. On the one hand, this part of the analysis—cut short in the present paper—enables us to go far beyond identifying patterns: a discourse analytical perspective potentially validates (or refutes) the findings of the quantitative analysis. The specific contribution of this perspective is to extend the quantitative analysis by building on the findings to identify relevant cases of language in use. On the other hand, when looking at the results of the quantitative process, we already have the discourse analysis in mind; determining what might be interesting for us is always a step in interpreting the data and assessing its analytical value. Ascertaining the relevance of these interpretations is the task of the discourse analysis.<sup>15</sup>

In order to show—for now only illustratively—how the semantics of inequality are embedded in the official discourse of major development agencies, we draw on the theoretical background introduced above, as well as some less systematically discussed questions, to generate categories for the analysis. Starting from the findings in the text, we first name pertinent clusters of meaning around the question of inequality, seeking patterns that can be related back to the main approaches to global inequalities, e.g. income inequality or multidimensional inequalities. We then identify the context of these clusters

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<sup>12</sup> The lemma *inequal\**, for instance, will automatically include the [tokens] inequality, inequalities and the—incorrect—adjective inequal.

<sup>13</sup> As a methodological guide we used several articles and books on mass text analysis and corpus linguistics, including Bubenhofer 2009; Wetherell, Yates, and Taylor 2001.

<sup>14</sup> While we are dealing mainly with a very small number of texts in this paper, we will process thousands of documents in the course of the project and thus be able to generalize on a sound basis of data.

<sup>15</sup> As an important disclaimer, we should add that we do not fully use the potential of discourse analytical tools in this paper; rather, we give preference to demonstrating the procedure of corpus linguistic analysis with the added value of combining it with discourse analytical steps in the study to come.

of meaning, looking for discursive linkages to metanarratives, i.e. broader narratives beyond the question of inequality. Aiming to reconstruct the determinants of the IOs' conceptualization of inequality, we identify who is regarded as a subject and agent of social inequality and/or overcoming it, which also includes their socio-spatial localization. Further, we reconstruct the reasons given for and corresponding strategies to combat inequality. Finally, we look for socio-spatial representations of inequality within the texts that help to locate inequalities as potential dimensions of a global community (or world society) in the making.

The study discussed here has one shortcoming: what we present can only illustrate how we will proceed in future, not offer a set of reliable findings from an adequately extensive analysis. Nevertheless, we believe that these illustrations help to demonstrate how we can respond to the gaps in the global inequality literature and what our contribution to a debate about the semantic foundations of this field could be. From our initial, explorative results, we generate several claims for future research that link up to our research questions and show how we can build upon these very small first steps of textual analysis.

## **5. “Global Inequality” and the United Nations System**

In our empirical analysis, we aim to make a number of comparisons that will structure our future findings in the field of global inequalities. These systematic comparisons can be diachronic or synchronic, encompassing texts of one or several IOs and refer even beyond these IOs to a broader discourse of development. The following (and possibly more) comparative dimensions will be addressed in the course of the project: a) *phases/issues* (diachronic within one IO in one text type); b) *phases/IOs* (diachronic/synchronic between IOs); c) *issues/text types* (synchronic within one IO over text types); d) *issues/IOs* (synchronic between IOs); e) *issues/development discourse* (synchronic between four IOs). In the following, we will outline how to go about the analysis in general and how to combine the corpus linguistic with the discourse analytical part of the research. We do not expect to offer any substantial results; however, we hope to show what contribution our research may eventually make to the debate about global inequalities.

## 5.1 Inequality/Equity

First, we looked at the two main reports chosen for the analysis, one by the World Bank, the other by UNDP. Since we opted here for a corpus-based analysis, i.e. a procedure that follows our research question and not the demands of the texts, we will concentrate on the terms that seem relevant in the context of our analysis of global inequalities and leave aside other potentially interesting observations that could be generated from the analysis.<sup>16</sup> In order to see how the idea of “inequality” is embedded in one of these institutions’ key publication types, their publicly received reports, we compared findings from one report with those from the entirety of all WB/UNDP Reports. The clusters of meaning mentioned in the table refer to the most frequent co-occurrences of terms that indicate issue areas in the context of *inequal\**.<sup>17</sup> In the WB 2006 report these issue areas include health, income, education, and poverty—taking all co-occurrences of terms together, these are the only fields of issues that are mentioned more than five times. In the UNDP 2011 report, similar but not the same fields can be seen, including gender, poverty, health, life expectancy, income, world income, and maternal mortality (by far the highest co-occurrence can be found with gender categories).

| Report/<br>Categories                                     | <i>Equity and Development. World Development Report 2006 (World Bank)</i> | <i>Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All. Human Development Report 2011 (UNDP)</i>  |
|---|---|--|
| 1) main clusters of meaning in context of <i>inequal*</i> | Income (43)<br>Education (22)<br>Health (16)<br>Poverty (8)               | Gender (109)<br>Life Expectancy (31)<br>Income (25)<br>Development (21)<br>Poverty (16)<br>Maternal Mortality (12)<br>Health (9)<br>World Income (7) |

A short comparative look at WB and UNDP allows us to assume a greater importance of gender issues in the 2011 UNDP report than in the 2006 WB report—interesting because both reports feature the idea of “equity,” apparently with different ideas attached to it. However, when we look for collocates of *equit\**, we see that gender does not in fact play a great role either in the WDR or in the HDR, where we might have expected it (see [word clouds] below). Why the issue areas to which the two reports refer differ in this way needs to be explained—but we require more data to substantiate this observation, and a closer textual (i.e. discourse) analysis will then be necessary.

To identify the most frequently and systematically used tokens to define equity, we produced another set of clusters, both as collocates of *equit\** (**WC 1** and **WC 2**). The format is a [word cloud] that helps indicate which tokens referring to equity are more and which are less important (the closer to the center and the bolder and bigger the letters, the more important the clusters). Judging by these depictions of clusters, the 2006 WDR mentions as most frequent collocates equity and efficiency (33 times),

<sup>16</sup> In the overall project design, however, we will instead use a corpus-driven analysis, i.e. follow the findings of the computer-generated processing and take all further steps from there.

<sup>17</sup> We have summarized them here because many co-occurrences use different wordings but refer to the same issue areas (e.g. gender equality > equality between men and women > women and men, etc.). In the discourse analytical phase, we will break these simplifications up again, to see in more detail how the issue areas themselves are constructed around certain concepts.

greater global equity (15 times) and equity and development (13 times). Again, this tells us little. We learn more, however, by creating issue area clusters from these collocates, forming clusters around the concepts of “global,” “development,” “well-being,” “access,” and “institutions.” Turning to the 2011 HDR, we see a different picture, where equity is clearly embedded in the context of the issue areas of “human development,” “sustainability” and “environment.” This is still a rather provisional way of dealing with the data, but it helps to identify small patterns, which we can control for in a next step by looking at how, where, and in what exact context they are used in the text.



WC 1 [WDR 2006 concordance *equit\** - clusters]



relevant collocates of equity. Although, as mentioned above, inequality ranges very high on the word list of the 2006 WDR and 2011 HDR when compared to the reference corpora, the titles of these reports already suggest that “equity” is the most relevant issue. Conspicuously, however, equity and inequality do not seem to be congruent concepts. One could argue that the one is some kind of negation of the other by semantic definition, but this would not necessarily separate them according to the issue areas they refer to. A brief look at the collocates for *equit*\* in the reference corpora WB1 and WB2 shows us that despite a larger number of collocates, the overall picture remains the same: equity is most frequently used in the context of “efficiency” in the World Bank corpus, and in the context of “human development” and “environment” in the UNDP corpus. This, in turn, may have at least two reasons: one is that the 2006 and 2011 respectively were by far the most important in terms of the idea of equity; the other is that there have been no conceptual changes in the short periods since 2006 or 2011.

Going into the text of the reports, several things become clearer: here, inequity and inequality seem to be congruent to some extent, at least on the surface. Thus, the 2011 HDR says in its overview summary: “Similarly, all inequitable processes are unjust: people’s chances at better lives should not be constrained by factors outside their control. Inequalities are especially unjust when particular groups, whether because of gender, race or birthplace, are systematically disadvantaged” (HDR 2011: 1). Three things can be learned from this. First, inequity and inequality are used interchangeably here (we would have to see whether this is always the case or only in this text). Second, inequality and inequity are used in different contexts—inequity with regard to equal chances, inequality with regard to certain characteristics such as gender or race. Third, both terms are normatively loaded: both inequality and inequity are condemned as unjust, thus equating them to something else, namely injustice.

That relationship is made explicit later on in the report, where similarities and differences are laid out. Conceptually, equity does not depend on equality. However, “in this Report we use inequality as a proxy for inequity, pointing out the exceptions where the relationship is not straightforward. We also consider inequality in human development—extending beyond income inequality to inequalities in access to health, education and broader political freedom” (19). While this is clearly an explanation of similarities, it does not tell us much about the concepts in their systematic usage. One thing we can assume is that the concept of equity has taken on a more central role; inequality is positioned in relation to it. This may indicate a change in concepts within the discourse of UNDP, which can be traced by analyzing the reference corpus of all UNDP Human Development Reports. Looking at the usage of equity in the reference corpus, we see that it was already used in the first report in 1990, but only 24 times, at a similar rate until 1995, and significantly more often in the 1996 report, the 2003 report, and most strikingly the 2006 and 2011 reports. To adequately assess these observations, we would have to take several other steps to substantiate them by comparing within and between IO documents and over time. We would look for correlations with the concept of equality/inequality in the same texts; we would look at other UNDP documents of the same period to see whether we can discern certain phases

in the proliferation of this concept, and, finally, we would look at World Bank documents of the same years to see whether there is a connection between the two organizations in the use of the concepts in their development policies.

The following table illustrates how the quantitative analysis helps us to identify patterns of language in use:

| <b>File</b>                            | <b>Words</b> | <b><i>Equit</i>*<br/>Hits</b> | <b>per 10</b> | <b><i>Equal</i>*<br/>Hits</b> | <b>per 10</b> | <b><i>Inequal</i>*<br/>Hits</b> | <b>per 10</b> |
|--|--------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Overall                                | 275490       | 1202                          | 4.36          | 1704                          | 6.19          | 3007                            | 10.92         |
| 1990 Human Development Report.txt      | 89586        | 24                            | 0.27          | 31                            | 0.35          | 29                              | 0.32          |
| 1991 Human Development Report.txt      | 121309       | 22                            | 0.18          | 38                            | 0.31          | 32                              | 0.26          |
| 1991 Human Development Report_0001.txt | 121309       | 22                            | 0.18          | 38                            | 0.31          | 32                              | 0.26          |
| 1992 Human Development Report.txt      | 127893       | 20                            | 0.16          | 47                            | 0.37          | 25                              | 0.20          |
| 1993 Human Development Report.txt      | 150444       | 26                            | 0.17          | 42                            | 0.28          | 32                              | 0.21          |
| 1994 Human Development Report.txt      | 143001       | 29                            | 0.20          | 45                            | 0.31          | 12                              | 0.08          |
| 1995 Human Development Report.txt      | 127528       | 46                            | 0.36          | 324                           | 2.54          | 115                             | 0.90          |
| 1996 Human Development Report.txt      | 144299       | 93                            | 0.64          | 76                            | 0.53          | 75                              | 0.52          |
| 1997 Human Development Report.txt      | 80745        | 32                            | 0.40          | 63                            | 0.78          | 72                              | 0.89          |
| 1998 Human Development Report.txt      | 161498       | 40                            | 0.25          | 46                            | 0.28          | 61                              | 0.38          |
| 1999 Human Development Report.txt      | 109503       | 46                            | 0.42          | 28                            | 0.26          | 91                              | 0.83          |
| 2000 Human Development Report.txt      | 188431       | 21                            | 0.11          | 121                           | 0.64          | 83                              | 0.44          |
| 2001 Human Development Report.txt      | 164201       | 16                            | 0.10          | 62                            | 0.38          | 118                             | 0.72          |
| 2002 Human Development Report.txt      | 182273       | 34                            | 0.19          | 103                           | 0.57          | 124                             | 0.68          |
| 2003 Human Development Report.txt      | 226051       | 67                            | 0.30          | 104                           | 0.46          | 136                             | 0.60          |
| 2004 Human Development Report.txt      | 186289       | 48                            | 0.26          | 122                           | 0.65          | 120                             | 0.64          |
| 2005 Human Development Report.txt      | 234978       | 45                            | 0.19          | 89                            | 0.38          | 462                             | 1.97          |
| 2006 Human Development Report.txt      | 275490       | 169                           | 0.61          | 84                            | 0.30          | 245                             | 0.89          |

|  |        |     |      |    |      |     |      |
|--|--------|-----|------|----|------|-----|------|
| 2007_2008<br>Human Development<br>Report.txt | 188216 |     |      |    |      |     |      |
|  |        | 31  | 0.16 | 19 | 0.10 | 81  | 0.43 |
| 2009 Human<br>Development<br>Report.txt      | 152248 |     |      |    |      |     |      |
|  |        | 10  | 0.07 | 29 | 0.19 | 47  | 0.31 |
| 2010 Human<br>Development<br>report.txt      | 152482 |     |      |    |      |     |      |
|  |        | 78  | 0.51 | 44 | 0.29 | 468 | 3.07 |
| 2011 Human<br>Development<br>Report.txt      | 128872 |     |      |    |      |     |      |
|  |        | 283 | 2.20 | 68 | 0.53 | 309 | 2.40 |

Judging from this table, which compares the frequency of terms *equit\**, *equal\** and *inequal\** in the reports, there may be a certain relation between these terms—as explicated in the 2011 HDR—but not necessarily a congruence between their usages. For instance, looking at 1995 and 2002 (and not only these), there is a huge discrepancy in numbers between the three concepts that needs interpretation. This is as far as the quantitative analysis allows us to go; again, we will need to look into the texts to account for these observations. For future steps of the analysis, we will thus continue to look for the relationship between the concepts of equity/inequity and equality/inequality. Despite differences between the terms and their related concepts, we can gain knowledge about the context in which they are used and, thus, the way that global inequality is defined. Another way to do this, adding to what we already know, involves the attributes or features of inequality.

## 5.2 Features of Inequality

If we look at the overall reference corpora of WB and UNDP for collocates of inequality, we see that—unsurprisingly—the diversity of categories is greater there: in the case of the World Bank, alongside the issue areas mentioned we also find Gender, Growth, Poverty Reduction, Wage, Living Standard, Land Distribution, and Living. UNDP offers as additional issue areas Economic, Income, Education, Consumption, Global Income, Wealth, Expenditure, Rich and Poor, Access to Water, In Key Areas, Water and Sanitation, Social, Child Health, Life Chances, Gender Empowerment, Standard of Living, Child Mortality, Growth, Youth Literacy, Wealth and Location, Nutritional Status, and Life Chance.

| Report/<br>Categories   | <i>Equity and Development. World Development Report 2006</i> (World Bank) | WB reference corpus B1 (1978-2012)  | <i>Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All. Human Development Report 2011</i> (UNDP)  | UNDP Reference Corpus B2 (1990-2011)   |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <b>1) main clusters of meaning<sup>18</sup> in context of <i>inequal</i>*</b> | Income (43)<br>Education (22)<br>Health (16)<br>Poverty (8)               | Income (202)<br>Gender (178)<br>(Economic) Growth (74)<br>Poverty (112)<br>Opportunity (44)<br>Education (37)<br>Global (28)<br>Across Generations (23)<br>Health (21)<br>Political (19)<br>International (16)<br>Regional (16)<br>Spatial (13)<br>Wage (11)<br>Intertemporal (10)<br>Power (10)<br>Living Standard (10)<br>Land Distribution (10)<br>Investment (10)<br>Development (8)<br>Over Time (7)<br>In the world (7)<br>Within country (6)<br>Social (6)<br>Household (5)<br>Group based (5)<br>Agency (5) | Gender (109)<br>Life Expectancy (31)<br>Income (25)<br>Development (21)<br>Poverty (16)<br>Maternal Mortality (12)<br>Health (9)<br>World Income (7) | Gender<br>Poverty<br>Health<br>Life Expectancy<br>Multidimensional<br>World Income<br>Maternal Mortality<br>Development<br>Income<br>Economic<br>Education<br>Consumption<br>Global Income<br>Wealth<br>Expenditure<br>Rich and Poor<br>Access to Water<br>In Key Areas<br>Water and Sanitation<br>Social<br>Child Health<br>Life Chances<br>Gender Empowerment<br>Standard of Living<br>Child Mortality<br>Growth<br>Youth Literacy<br>Wealth and Location<br>Nutritional Status<br>Life Chance |

The sheer number of areas connected to *inequal*\* is impressive, but as such it is also difficult to interpret. We can only state that, for whatever reasons, the two reports focus on a smaller number of issue areas and give a narrower reading of inequality than their respective institutions have done over time. Since the UNDP HDR is a very recent one, it could indicate a trend but does not necessarily do so. We need to broaden our perspective.

However, what we can see by looking only at the collocates in the two reference corpora is that some issue areas seem to be more pertinent than others—for instance, our initial diagnosis that income inequality is seen as almost equivalent to global inequality provisionally seems well founded, at least in the case of the World Bank. We can only state that for the overall text type of World Development Reports, and only in a comparative perspective; but the collocation “income” is mentioned significantly more frequently than any other. With regard to the 2006 report, we can also say that there could be a thematic connection between the issues favored there that does not exist between those issues and

<sup>18</sup> The numbers themselves mean relatively little; they might simply indicate chapter headings that repeat certain tokens on every page or references to literature. Only in comparison do they become interesting findings that potentially tell us about language in use.

others (for instance, the marked absence of the otherwise large category of “gender” comes to mind). Small numbers might indicate a non-relevant issue, an ephemeral use, or a very unsystematic use. When, why, and in what context the idea of “global inequality,” for instance, evolved cannot be derived from this set of clusters.

The UNDP corpus initially mirrors the patterns of the 2006 report. Gender, human development, and poverty are among the most salient co-occurrences, and in large numbers. The spectrum of issues related to inequality is extremely broad and covers a wide range of topics traditionally expected in the context of developmental politics.

Comparing the UNDP and the World Bank report corpora, we can already make an educated guess about the differences. One is the number of tokens. It is much larger in the UNDP corpus, which might mean either that inequality has a different (analytical or political) significance in the IOs’ respective discourses or that the understanding is narrower/broader in the IOs. The other difference is the character of the tokens. Each IO’s development discourse seems to differ in its concepts and ideological background assumptions, and probably not only as regards inequality. This is a well-known observation (see above), but a more detailed investigation might be able to shed further light on the respective traits of the IOs.

The generalizable picture becomes more complete if we take two further analytical categories into account, namely discursive linkages to metanarratives and to locations and subjects of inequality. Metanarratives—as we use the term here—are broader concepts that go beyond characterizing inequality (thus, while gender, for instance, might be seen as such a broader concept, it is mostly used as an issue area or policy field to define inequalities). These metanarratives include opportunity, distribution, power, politics, and economics (WB); human development, distribution, and multidimensionality (UNDP). In identifying these metanarratives, we take a step in the direction of linking the different fields of inequality to broader concepts of how inequality/equality are conceptually defined, how they are linked to other guiding concepts of the organizations and, to some extent, how they are normatively rationalized. The identification of inequalities in opportunities, access, distribution, power, agency, and as political, in particular, might go beyond a discourse of development that is concerned with economic growth and poverty reduction, promising greater participation by the subjects of inequality and opening up towards the larger sociopolitical context.

| Report/Categories                               | <i>Equity and Development. World Development Report 2006 (World Bank)</i>         | <i>Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All. Human Development Report 2011 (UNDP)</i> |
|---|---|---|
| <b>2) discursive linkages to metanarratives</b> | Opportunity<br>Distribution<br>Power<br>Political<br>Economic<br>Agency<br>Growth | Human Development<br>Distribution<br>Multidimensional   |

To control for these findings on a preliminary basis, we looked for patterns in collocations with some of these tokens. In the WB 2006 report, for instance, “opportunity” is frequently linked with the adjectives “unequal” (29 times) and “equal” (13 times); other collocates include “economic” (30), “people” (17), “education,” “political,” “distribution,” and “social,” again hinting at a broader meaning of “opportunity” in different contexts that might, in turn, indicate how the subjects of inequality are seen. Another token we find is “power,” an ambiguous and loaded concept; among the collocations in this context are “political” (57), “distribution” (31), “unequal” (20), “inequal\*” (27), “egalitarian” (9), and “institutions” (17).

Looking at the 2011 HDR, we find considerably fewer references to these metanarratives, at least in the quantitatively relevant [clusters] of “inequality.” One of the few tokens is “distribution,” used mostly in the context of “income” (12 times), an expectable category. “Human development,” a UNDP-specific concept, is connected to all other terms, indicating its centrality. Clearly, to be able to say exactly how and in what precise context these collocates are used, we would move on to a discourse analytical study of the text. Finding patterns for each token and its collocates and seeing how this patterns overlap, how they are related or contradictory will help us to map the range of ideas and concepts that characterize the idea of inequalities on a global level.

As another exemplification, let us turn to one of the discursive linkages to metanarratives in the World Bank report, the concept of “agency.” In the 2006 WDR, the only cluster as a collocate of agency is “inequality of agency,” indicating a close connection between the two terms. In the text of the report, several sections are dedicated to linking the two ideas:

A key objective here is to show how inequalities combine, interact, and are reproduced through inter-linked economic, political, and sociocultural processes. Individuals and groups differ markedly in their power to influence these processes; indeed, they differ even in their capacity to aspire to such influence. The report emphasizes that such “agency” is a dimension of opportunity, alongside education, health, and wealth. And inequalities of agency are central in explaining how inequalities of opportunity are transmitted over time. (WDR 2006: 28)

Here, a broad, multidimensional characterization of inequalities is introduced, with agency as a means of overcoming them. As a precondition for tackling inequalities, agency is seen as a factor that can be

influenced by supporting certain groups and endowing them with the “power” to act. “Power,” in turn, is another important term used in relation with agency (see below). In the table,<sup>19</sup> we see what other tokens are frequently used in the context of “agency”—among them inequalities, power, political, groups, inequality. As we will see below, several of the linkages of “agency” to other terms mirror linkages that we also found in connection with “inequalities” (such as power, political, distribution), signaling a potential close relatedness of the two concepts.

| <b>N</b> | <b>Word</b>   | <b>With</b>   | <b>Total</b> |
|----------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1        | AGENCY        | <i>agency</i> | 45           |
| 6        | INEQUALITIES  | <i>agency</i> | 13           |
| 9        | POWER         | <i>agency</i> | 6            |
| 10       | POLITICAL     | <i>agency</i> | 6            |
| 12       | GROUPS        | <i>agency</i> | 5            |
| 13       | INEQUALITY    | <i>agency</i> | 5            |
| 17       | MARKETS       | <i>agency</i> | 3            |
| 21       | LEADS         | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 22       | NATIONAL      | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 23       | RECOGNITION   | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 24       | REGULATORY    | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 25       | SUBORDINATE   | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 27       | OPPORTUNITY   | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 30       | DISTRIBUTION  | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 31       | DISADVANTAGE  | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 32       | EDUCATION     | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 33       | ECONOMIC      | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 34       | DIFFERENCES   | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 37       | CHANGES       | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 39       | INSTITUTIONAL | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 40       | ASSETS        | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 41       | INTERGROUP    | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 42       | INSTITUTIONS  | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 45       | EQUITY        | <i>agency</i> | 2            |
| 47       | GROUP         | <i>agency</i> | 2            |

As a comparison, we can also look at the first 25 (of 47) entries in clusters of collocations with “agency” in the WB reference corpus. Here, it becomes clear that “agency” does not necessarily refer to the ability or capacity to act: other meanings such as an institution, particularly an international or government organ, are frequent alternatives. This serves to demonstrate the need to actually study the context of these tokens’ use and to scrupulously validate language in use. Beyond that, we can start to

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<sup>19</sup> The table has been cleared of all adverbs and auxiliaries, to indicate only the more complex [tokens], hence the irregular numbering.

look for patterns again—both patterns that are similar to those of the 2006 report and ones that go in different directions. This will enable us to determine how meaning has evolved. For instance, the striking combination of “agency” and “women” points us in the direction of gender empowerment; the combination with “opportunities” and “access” might indicate an understanding of inequalities as a lack of chances (or capabilities, to bring in Sen’s approach), another potentially interesting path.

| <b>Cluster</b>                           | <b>Frequency</b> |
|--|------------------|
| <b>WOMEN S AGENCY</b>                    | 88               |
| AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL                 | 78               |
| FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT            | 78               |
| U S AGENCY                               | 52               |
| S AGENCY FOR                             | 52               |
| INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY              | 45               |
| THE U S                                  | 25               |
| PROMOTING <b>WOMEN S</b>                 | 23               |
| INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY         | 22               |
| ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY          | 22               |
| STATES AGENCY FOR                        | 17               |
| INVESTMENT GUARANTEE AGENCY              | 17               |
| UNITED STATES AGENCY                     | 17               |
| AGENCY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES            | 16               |
| ECONOMIC <b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> ENDOWMENTS | 15               |
| MULTILATERAL INVESTMENT GUARANTEE        | 15               |
| SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT        | 14               |
| U S ENVIRONMENTAL                        | 14               |
| S ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION               | 14               |
| THE REGULATORY AGENCY                    | 13               |
| HOUSEHOLDS AGENCY ECONOMIC               | 13               |
| <b>ACCESS</b> TO ECONOMIC                | 12               |
| <b>GENDER</b> GAPS IN                    | 12               |
| INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION    | 11               |
| AND <b>ACCESS</b> TO                     | 11               |
| INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT USAID          | 11               |

Returning to the text, we are given several definitions of what agency implies. Because agency is a term loaded with meaning in social theory and implying a degree of freedom for subjects of inequality, these definitions are clearly embedded in webs of meaning beyond the idea of inequalities and whatever measures the World Bank envisions. This seems to be reflected in the definitions themselves. Thus, for instance:

Agency refers to people’s capacity to transform or reproduce such societal institutions. Some of this capacity is conscious—for example, when interest groups lobby for a change in land tenure legislation, or when women refuse to accept laws around marriage that systematically disadvantage them. Some of it is unconscious—for example, when people engage in land transactions without questioning them, they re-

produce the institutions of land tenure and the markets in land. When a disadvantaged group accepts its disadvantage as “taken for granted,” the effect is to allow the continuing existence of the relationships that create such disadvantage. [...] From inequalities in agency come inequalities in power, voice, and self-confidence—a major part of our story. Inequalities of agency are as much products of dominant institutions as sources of those institutional arrangements. (WDR 2006: 48–49)

Studying in more detail how “agency” is related to “inequalities” and its other collocations, we should be able to make reliable statements not only about how and with what implications inequalities are defined and plans are made for their management, but also about the subjects of inequalities and their features. In the quotation, the subjects possibly endowed with or prevented from having agency are “people” or “groups,” their conditions are found in “institutional arrangements.” This hints at the features of agency as both a precondition for overcoming inequalities and inherently connected with certain groups of subjects such as “women” or the “disadvantaged,” against a background of structural constraints. The textual analysis, evidently, will necessitate a deeper look at the texts while referring back to certain patterns and inconsistencies; however, we hope this preliminary sketch has made it clearer how we intend to proceed.

In short, by following different tokens and their collocations in the quantitative analysis and studying how they are signified in the text, we can hope to find not only material for a comparison of phases in discourse but also information about the causes of inequality, their sociopolitical and socioeconomic preconditions, and the subjects involved. Localizing these subjects—for example as groups, like those mentioned above—is another task for the analysis.

### ***5.3 The Localization of Subjects***

The third category, locations and subjects of inequality, constitutes another approach to the topic from a different angle. To see if these socio-spatial attributes can be found among the terms that we distilled from the first 1,000 entries of the HDR’s and WDR’s word lists (in comparison with the reference corpora), we turned to keyness values again (see table below). As potential subjects we find children, caste, and groups—rather general categories of collectives of subjects that give us a first impression of reference objects of inequality. However, we learn little about the specifics of these subjects and will need to seek other data to get a better idea of their meaning in use.

| <b>WDR 2006//<br/>WDR refer-<br/>ence corpus</b> | <b>Key word</b> | <b>Freq.</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Keyness<sup>20</sup><br/>(log-likelihood<br/>test)</b> |
|--|-----------------|--------------|----------|---|
|  | INEQUALITY      | 670          | 0.36     | 1732.27   |
|  | EQUITY          | 416          | 0.23     | 951.95  |
|  | INEQUALITIES    | 216          | 0.12     | 596.38  |
|  | UNEQUAL         | 120          | 0.07     | 331.42  |
|  | EQUITABLE       | 120          | 0.07     | 290.21  |
|  | POLITICAL       | 428          | 0.23     | 257.42  |
|  | DISTRIBUTION    | 212          | 0.11     | 224.91  |
|  | CHILDREN        | 285          | 0.15     | 202.60  |
|  | CASTE           | 75           | 0.04     | 197.84  |
|  | GROUPS          | 288          | 0.16     | 178.79  |
|  | WEALTH          | 105          | 0.06     | 162.51  |
|  | OPPORTUNITY     | 124          | 0.07     | 161.73  |
|  | RIGHTS          | 253          | 0.14     | 160.75  |
|  | INEQUITY        | 47           | 0.03     | 155.87  |
|  | POWER           | 257          | 0.14     | 144.46  |
|  | OPPORTUNITIES   | 249          | 0.13     | 142.96  |
|  | ACCESS          | 325          | 0.18     | 138.07  |
|  | LAND            | 365          | 0.20     | 136.89  |
|  | INSTITUTIONS    | 400          | 0.22     | 133.73  |
|  | SOCIAL          | 409          | 0.22     | 120.56  |
|  | FAIRNESS        | 46           | 0.02     | 118.98  |
|  | PLAYING         | 48           | 0.03     | 111.85  |
|  | INEQUITIES      | 38           | 0.02     | 109.85  |
|  | EVIDENCE        | 221          | 0.12     | 109.19  |
|  | INEQUITABLE     | 39           | 0.02     | 107.13  |
|  | FAIR            | 57           | 0.03     | 97.94   |
|  | UNFAIR          | 36           | 0.02     | 92.77   |

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<sup>20</sup> The higher the value, the more drastic the over-representation of the token in comparison with the reference corpus.

Another summary of terms from both concordance and word lists yields the following list:

| Report/Categories  | <i>Equity and Development. World Development Report 2006 (World Bank)</i>  | <i>Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All. Human Development Report 2011 (UNDP)</i>  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>3) locations and subjects of inequality</b><br><br>(data from [concordance] + [word lists]) | Global<br>In the World<br>International<br>Between Country<br>Within Country<br>Between Group<br>Group based<br>Households<br>Total<br><hr/> Countries<br>People<br>Groups<br>Children<br>Women<br>Government/Governments<br>States<br>Workers<br>Society<br>Individuals<br>Child<br>Farmers<br>Caste<br>Family/Families<br>Parents<br>Men<br>Community/Communities<br>Students<br>Elites<br>Girls | World income<br>Global<br><hr/> (Developing) Countries<br>People<br>Women<br>Nations<br>Groups<br>Children<br>Households<br>Communities<br>Government/Governments<br>Family<br>Institutions<br>Men<br>Peoples<br>Cities<br>Society<br>State<br>Regions |

Here, a significant number of socio-spatial attributes of subjects and locations of inequality are listed, with the aim of discovering their scope and whether there are any discernible differences between WB and UNDP.<sup>21</sup> In the reports, the World Bank clearly pays more attention to the locations of inequality and its subjects, at least more frequently, as these tokens are part of statistically relevant [clusters]. The list comprises global, international, and domestic categories, down to the level of groups and households; in the UNDP report it is only global localizations that are frequent. In the overall report corpora, as part of the word lists of the first 1,000 tokens, we find even more of these attributes. They range from the level of countries to families and the individual. The sheer breadth of references to certain

<sup>21</sup> Since both reports also refer to different areas and states of the world, mostly as illustrations for more general considerations but also because of their centrality in concrete policies, there are also many other spatial references in the lists. We did not give them here because they would not add any substantial information.

locations and groups of subjects within these two reports is surprising, particularly in a context where inequalities are portrayed as global. How each of these terms is signified, how they relate to each other, and how they are related to the issue of inequality, again, needs further scrutiny.

This set of tokens leaves us with no clear idea about the various socio-spatial constructions that may be relevant in the context of inequality. Certain tokens like child/children, parents, or family/families might be summarized in a cluster, as might farmers and workers, but this would clearly depend on the context of their usage in the reports.

Indeed, the group “children” plays a crucial role in the 2006 WB report. Several examples of children in different countries are given to illustrate the types and number of ways that children are affected by inequalities. More generally: “Inequalities of opportunity are also transmitted across generations. The children of poorer and lower-status parents face inferior chances in education, health, incomes, and status. This starts early” (WDR 2006: 5). While certain issue areas are made explicit again, there is also a reference to “opportunities” as an overarching concept that structures how children are seen within the constraints of inequality. Following this trail, however, findings in the quantitative analysis are rather inconclusive (concordance cluster for *child\**):

| N  | Cluster                     | Frequency |
|----|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 1  | EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT | 14        |
| 2  | CHILDREN IN THE             | 13        |
| 3  | FOR CHILDREN IN             | 6         |
| 4  | MATERNAL AND CHILD          | 6         |
| 5  | CHILDREN BORN IN            | 6         |
| 6  | THEIR CHILDREN S            | 6         |
| 7  | OF THEIR CHILDREN           | 5         |
| 8  | PERCENT OF CHILDREN         | 5         |
| 9  | AND CHILD HEALTH            | 5         |
| 10 | HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INVESTING | 5         |
| 11 | IN THEIR CHILDREN           | 5         |

In this case, the limits of the corpus linguistic analysis appear to have been reached. To see how “children” are related to different issue areas of inequality, what other subjects they refer to, and what degree of agency they are accorded, we will have to scrutinize the implicit presuppositions of the texts as well as their intertextual references to other ideas.

#### **5.4 The Global Dimension**

Finally, we looked for data that would tell us more about the imaginary of globality in the development discourse of World Bank and UNDP. All references to *global\** (appearing more than 10 times each in the reference corpus) are summarized below, again giving us a mixed picture. The WB 2006 corpus evidences a clear connection between globality and equity and between globality and inequality, whereas we find no such relationship in the UNDP report. Here, the environment, sustainability, and global warming seem to be most central, while equity or inequality seem to have no statistically relevant relationship in the report. What does this tell us? Judging from these and the above findings,

we can assume that equity/inequality are indeed thinkable as global phenomena, in whatever sense that may be, but the global imaginary does not significantly depend on the idea of equity/inequality. The overall linkage between globality and equity/inequality is stronger in the World Bank discourse, where a pattern can be claimed for the 2006 report (and accordingly for the reference corpus, where equity is mentioned 17 times in this context, the same as the individual report). There, equity and the global are closely interlinked and potentially constructed as mutually relevant.

In the UNDP data, we do find the combination of global and inequality (see table), so we can assume that it may be considered relevant, but in a different report or several reports. Development and Human Development in general, however, are salient categories frequently linked to the idea of globality, probably serving both to map the field of tasks for UNDP and to reaffirm its importance for global matters concerned with development.

| References to Globality                               | World Bank                    | UNDP                          |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Clusters: <i>global</i> *<br>WDR 2006 and<br>HDR 2011 | GREATER GLOBAL EQUITY 17      | AT THE GLOBAL12               |
|   | IN THE GLOBAL 15              | THE GLOBAL LEVEL 12           |
|   | GLOBAL INEQUALITIES IN 11     | EN REPORTS GLOBAL 10          |
|   | ACHIEVING GREATER GLOBAL 11   | UNDP ORG EN 10                |
|   | FROM A GLOBAL 9               | HDR UNDP ORG 10               |
|   | A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE9         | ORG EN REPORTS 10             |
|   | EQUITY FROM A 9               | PAPERS HDRP 2010 9            |
|   | THE GLOBAL ARENA 6            | GLOBAL HDR2010 PAPERS 8       |
|   | OF GLOBAL MARKETS 6           | NATIONAL AND GLOBAL 8         |
|   | FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT 6      | HDR2010 PAPERS HDRP 8         |
|   | CENTER FOR GLOBAL 6           | GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY 8 |
|   | THE GLOBAL LEVEL 5            | REPORTS GLOBAL HDR2010 8      |
|   | OF THE GLOBAL 5               | HUMANS CAUSE GLOBAL 7         |
|   | AT THE GLOBAL5                | CAUSE GLOBAL WARMING 7        |
|   | OF GLOBAL INEQUALITY 5        | CLIMATE CHANGE GLOBAL 7       |
|   |                               | PERCENT OF GLOBAL 7           |
|   |                               | GLOBAL WARMING THREAT 7       |
|   | YES GLOBAL WARMING6           |                               |
|   | WARMING YES GLOBAL6           |                               |
|   | AND THE GLOBAL 6              |                               |
|   | GLOBAL FOOTPRINT NETWORK 6    |                               |
|   | LOCAL NATIONAL AND 6          |                               |
|   | GLOBAL WARMING YES6           |                               |
|   | FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT 5      |                               |
|   | CENTER FOR GLOBAL 5           |                               |
|   | GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS 5         |                               |
|   | THE GLOBAL HDI 5              |                               |
|   | GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE 5 |                               |

| References to Globality  | World Bank   | UNDP   |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Clusters: <i>global*</i> Reference Corpora B1 and B2 (first 20 explicit terms marked)</b> | OF THE GLOBAL 133<br>IN THE GLOBAL 112<br>THE GLOBAL ECONOMY 106<br>THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT 56<br>AND THE GLOBAL 55<br>REGIONAL AND GLOBAL 54<br>GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY 53<br>BURDEN OF DISEASE 47<br>GLOBAL BURDEN OF 47<br>PERCENT OF GLOBAL 46<br>GLOBAL AND REGIONAL 44<br>GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE 43<br>PERCENT OF THE 40<br>THE GLOBAL BURDEN 40<br>AT THE GLOBAL 39<br>GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS 38<br>TO THE GLOBAL 37<br>SHARE OF GLOBAL 36<br>IN A GLOBAL 36<br>NATIONAL AND GLOBAL 35<br>THE GLOBAL LEVEL 33<br>THE GLOBAL COMMONS 33<br>GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE 31<br>OF A GLOBAL 30<br>FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT 28<br>INTO THE GLOBAL 28<br>GLOBALIZATION AND LOCALIZATION 28<br>OF GLOBAL GDP 26<br>CENTER FOR GLOBAL 25<br>THE GLOBAL CLIMATE 23<br>THE GLOBAL MARKET 22<br>[.....]<br>GREATER GLOBAL EQUITY 17 | OF THE GLOBAL 151<br>IN THE GLOBAL 96<br>AT THE GLOBAL 69<br>THE GLOBAL ECONOMY 68<br>THE GLOBAL LEVEL 66<br>AND THE GLOBAL 59<br>FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT 52<br>ON THE GLOBAL 51<br>GLOBAL HUMAN SECURITY 51<br>NATIONAL AND GLOBAL 50<br>THE GLOBAL WATER 49<br>OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE 49<br>GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE 48<br>FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT 48<br>CENTER FOR GLOBAL 47<br>GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY 41<br>THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT 41<br>A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP 39<br>THE GLOBAL FUND 38<br>GLOBAL HEALTH CRISES 38<br>HEALTH CRISES AND 38<br>WATER AND SANITATION 37<br>TO THE GLOBAL 37<br>LEADING GLOBAL HEALTH 36<br>A NEW GLOBAL 35<br>GLOBAL ACTION PLAN 34<br>GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR 33<br>DEVELOP A GLOBAL 33<br>GLOBAL INCOME DISTRIBUTION 30<br>[...]<br>GLOBAL INCOME INEQUALITY 17 |

As for the imaginaries of the global, we can assume that they are deeply embedded in the overall understanding of development as economic or as concerned with health or security issues or any others, depending on the organization. For some issues, there is no doubt that they are of global concern; the global itself is thus seen as a relevant sociopolitical sphere that needs IOs like WB and UNDP to overcome its particular problems.

The next step will be a more systematic summary of the issue areas we find in the data, giving us a clearer picture of how, and in the context of which problems, globality is reproduced in the texts of the World Bank and of UNDP. Interestingly, the findings of the first 20 unambiguous combinations with *global\** call to mind the lists of clusters in the context of *inequal\**, where similar issue areas were found in the texts, such as economy, environment, health, climate, and development (WB) and economy, development, security, water, climate, environment, health, and income distribution (UNDP). This may mean only that the overall understanding of the IO's tasks is limited; and that their playing

field is the global level, no matter what issues are at stake. But it could also mean that inequality, as a problem with which both organizations have become involved, has been integrated and embedded to such an extent that it is not inherently different from any other problem area dealt with by the organizations. That would be an interesting finding—particularly against the background of our summary of the inequality literature.

## **6. Conclusion**

To recap, analyzing some of the relevant literature and producing a first set of data about the idea of inequalities on a global level, we conclude that a link can be made between the two concepts that is more than an external analytical attribution. Particularly where the key development agencies are concerned, inequality has become a global problem—one that can be managed if the definitions match the capabilities of those tasked with managing it. However, a reductionist reading of inequalities as income disparities or particularly high levels of poverty has become a dominant feature of debates about the phenomenon. Those involved in supporting certain policies, especially of the World Bank and UNDP, have sought clear measures of inequality, bearing in mind that only those issues with clear definitions can be operationalized in the actual work of organizations.

We identified gaps in the literature, which is closely linked to the political sphere of development, to the extent that many dimensions of social inequality well-established in the domestic sphere have not been imported into the idea of global inequalities. In the narrow—and practice-oriented—working definitions provided, causes, subjects, and normative implications are largely lost. Within the large text corpus of UNDP and the World Bank, the range or restriction of these significations can be revealed. In our illustrative study, we showed how to generate findings pertaining to these observations through a combination of mass text and discourse analysis. Using the two analytical techniques as complementary tools and as ways of triangulating the results, we look for patterns in the language in use, then reconstruct their context. In this way we are and will be able to substantiate 1) patterns of language in use, 2) their background knowledge/presuppositions, and 3) their respective normative implications. This will allow us to reevaluate the research literature, its connectedness to political practice in the two development agencies, and, most importantly, the semantics of global inequalities.

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