

**The Construction of Global North Benevolence:
Development Discourse and Constitutional Law**
Lara Torbay*

Contents

I. Introduction: We're such (a) Good People	1
II. Post-Development Theory: Development as Discourse	4
III. The Legal Discourse of Development	8
IV. Constitutional Law as National Identity-Building	10
V. The Creation of Benevolent Subjects: The Case of Switzerland	12
A. The Provision of Development Assistance as a Constitutional Obligation	12
B. Lessons from Swiss History	12
C. Benevolence: An Essential Part of Swiss National Identity	14
D. Functions of Development (Legal) Discourse	15
E. Summary	17
VI. Conclusion: (Constitutional) Development Law and the Construction of the Global North Subject	18
VII. Bibliography	20

I. Introduction: We're such (a) Good People

The topic of the Swiss' collective generosity regularly surfaces in Switzerland's media and political landscape. In 2020, the group *Année Politique Suisse*, a University of

* Lara Torbay is a PhD candidate at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). She obtained the SNSF Doc.CH grant for her doctoral project in March 2024 and has since dedicated herself to her research on the law of development cooperation and feminist approaches to law.

Bern project, published a post titled “The Swiss are More Generous Than Ever”.¹ In 2023, renowned Swiss newspaper *Le Temps* published a piece highlighting that the Swiss, including those living outside of Switzerland, are generally charitable, as they remain generous donors to philanthropic causes.² More generally, a 2025 study on Swiss identity highlights that national and international (economic) solidarity, which also includes the practice of humanitarian and development aid, represents an important aspect of national identity to about two thirds of the Swiss.³ To put it in somewhat simplistic terms, we like to see ourselves as *really good people*: benevolence, including the kind manifested through international cooperation, is an integral part of the Swiss’ understanding of themselves.

The practice of development cooperation indeed plays a significant role in Swiss identity-making. From the point of view of post-development theory, this is of little surprise. Indeed, post-developmentalists have long argued that development is a powerful subject-making discursive apparatus.⁴ Though more focus has been placed on the ways in which development constructs the Global South Other⁵, development also shapes Global North subjects. Indeed, Global North and Global South subjects can be understood as two sides of the same coin: if the latter is constructed as deprived and in need of help, the former is shaped as affluent and benevolent.⁶

What is often ignored in discussions of development discourse is the role law plays in it. Though development is usually understood as an international policy issue strictly at the mercy of political discretion, there often exists national law that regulates

¹ Année Politique Suisse, „Les Suisses sont plus généreux que jamais“, <https://anneepolitique.swiss/fr/prozesse/62953-les-suisses-sont-plus-generoux-que-jamais> accessed 7 October 2025.

² Grassi, ‘Philanthropie sans frontière’ (*Le Temps*, 27.11.23) https://www.letemps.ch/opinions/debats/philanthropie-sans-frontieres-les-suisses-de-l-etranger-aussi?srsId=AfmBOopPlkLC3C8_WhhVALZh3K1SXvhAComLLXB1Xao8Dd0QpopMaqN, accessed 7 October 2025.

³ Bret et al., *Heimat Neu Erzählen: Narrative der Schweiz im Wandel* (Zurich, 2025) 32.

⁴ See for instance Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, 2011) 9.

⁵ This refers to the process of ‘othering’ that characterizes the relationship of the Global North to people from the Global South. Othering is a discursive process through which a dominant in-group, in this case people from the Global North, constructs a dominated or subaltern out-group, here people from the Global South, by identifying and stigmatising their real or imagined difference.

⁶ Saunders, ‘Introduction: Towards a Deconstructive Post-Development Criticism’, in Saunders (ed.), *Feminist Post-Development Thought: Rethinking Modernity, Post-Colonialism, and Representation* (London, 2002) 14.

it⁷. This kind of development law tends to remain vague and anchors general values, principles, and procedures, rather than detailing the approach and content of a country's development cooperation policies.⁸ Yet it is precisely in its anchoring of values and principles that development law represents a particularly potent part of development discourse: in doing so, it makes fundamental claims about the state and the subjects it represents. Moreover, law's authority and the symbolic weight of constitutions can provide a particular importance and longevity to development discourse. Law thus represents both an integral part of the development discourse and one of its most authoritative vectors.

In fact, legal and development discourses function in strikingly similar ways: they both constitute particularly resilient and powerful discursive practices that play a significant role in shaping subjectivities and political institutions. They also both represent excellent examples of the ways in which discourses have concrete and material consequences for our daily lives, collective identities, and understanding of them. It therefore seems all the more surprising that so little attention – both in development and legal theory – has been afforded to national development law.

This article therefore seeks to participate in remedying the dearth of research on the topic. My analysis will focus on the ways in which national development law – *a fortiori* when it concerns constitutional law – participates in shaping Global North subjects. More specifically, I will explore the potential role of development law in constructing Global North subjects as particularly solidary, benevolent, and generous. To survey this question, I will first offer an overview of the theoretical framework that I mobilize in my analysis by explaining the main theses of post-development thought. I will then argue that national development law constitutes a particularly potent form of development discourse that contributes to shaping Global North national narratives. This is especially the case of constitutional law, which is central to national identity-building processes. I will then seek to explore the ways in which national development law shapes collective identities and participates in creating benevolent, or charitable, subjects, using Switzerland as a case study. Development cooperation not only appears in Swiss law as early as 1976 but has also been anchored in the country's constitution in 1999. I will seek to explain the extraordinary importance of development in Swiss law and discuss the ways in which the country's development law helped cement the development discourse that ultimately played a significant role in shaping Swiss subjects.

⁷ Dann, *The Law of Development Cooperation - A Comparative Analysis of the World Bank, the EU and Germany* (Cambridge, 2013) 1.

⁸ See for instance Dann, *The Law of Development Cooperation* 344.



II. Post-Development Theory: Development as Discourse

Development cooperation – sometimes called development aid or assistance – has often been (rightfully) criticized for its colonial historical roots⁹, its ignorance of power relations and unequal terms of trade¹⁰, or its focus on economic growth rather than human flourishing¹¹. But one strand of development theory, post-development theory¹², went as far as rejecting the goal of ‘development’ altogether. Post-developmentalists convincingly argue that development discourse is rooted in colonialism and serves the interest of “a dying and obsolete colonialism to transform itself into an aggressive – even sometimes an attractive – instrument able to recapture new ground.”¹³ To put it succinctly, development cooperation is here argued to be a tool to exercise power over the Global South.¹⁴

This has been the case ever since the very beginnings of modern development cooperation. When U.S. President Truman gave his inaugural speech in 1949, he called in his famous Point Four for the country to “embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of [the United States’] scientific advances and industrial

⁹ Craggs, ‘Development in a Global-Historical Context’, in Desai and Potter (eds.), *The Companion to Development Studies* (London, 2014) 4; Grajales/Saiget, ‘Repolitiser l’étude de l’aide au développement’ (2022) *Cultures & Conflits*, 126(2) 7; Kothari, ‘Commentary: History, Time and Temporality in Development Discourse’, in Rao and Bayly (eds.), *History, Historians and Development Policy* (Manchester, 2020) 65.

¹⁰ See for instance the critiques and theses formulated by proponents of the dependency and world-system schools: Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism, 1964-1971* (London, 1975), 7; Hettne, ‘The Development of Development Theory’ (1983) *Acta Sociologica* 247, 253; Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* (New York, 1967) 3.

¹¹ See for instance the critiques and theses formulated by proponents of the basic needs and capabilities approaches to development: Sen, *Inequality Reexamined* (Oxford, 1992) 40; Nussbaum, ‘Capabilities and Social Justice’ (2002), *International Studies Review* 123, 130.

¹² Though post-development is undoubtedly in some aspects convincing and central to the reasoning developed in this article, it also has shortcomings. Post-development thus can and should be criticized. For examples of such critiques, see for instance Corbridge, ‘Beneath the pavement only soil’: The poverty of post-development’ (1998) *The Journal of Development Studies* 138; Kiely, ‘The last refuge of the noble savage? : A critical assessment of post-development theory’ (1999), *The European Journal of Development Research* 30; Peet/Hartwick, *Theories of Development: Contentions, Arguments, Alternatives* (New York/London, 2015); Pieterse, ‘After Post-Development’ (2000) *Third World Quarterly* 175.

¹³ Rahmema, ‘Towards Post-Development: Searching for Signposts, a New Language and New Paradigms’ in Rahmema and Bawtree (eds.), *The Post-Development Reader* (London, 1997) 384.

¹⁴ Escobar, *Encountering Development*, 9.

progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.”¹⁵ The Point Four program was eventually put in place, focusing on technological assistance and private investments, as well as self-help projects.¹⁶ It is also within this period that a causal relation between economic growth and peace, and lack of economic growth and war was discursively developed – an argument that was instrumental in galvanizing support for development aid after the Second World War.¹⁷ Truman’s speech is thus often argued to mark the beginning of the ‘development age’.¹⁸

One of post-development’s core ideas¹⁹ is that ‘underdevelopment’ was invented by development discourse and that this discourse was inaugurated by U.S. President Truman’s Point Four “as part of a political campaign to maintain or increase Western influence in Africa, Asia and Latin America.”²⁰ The critique is a post-structuralist one: it focuses on how “we have ordered the world in our language and how our language (which comes before us) has ordered our world.”²¹ Indeed, though post-development is a wide-reaching, diverse body of work, it is united by “a post-structural epistemological conviction that words, languages and representations have very real impacts on people’s lives.”²² Post-development thought thus understands development as a discourse, i.e. “groups of statements which structure the way something is thought about, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking.”²³ The development discourse then not only includes ideas that are expressed in speech but also an array of concrete actions that serve to promote and legitimate them.²⁴ As I argue in this article, law is one of these legitimizing tools.

¹⁵ Truman, ‘The Fourth Point in President Truman’s Inaugural Address, January 20, 1949’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 268 (1950):183.

¹⁶ Unger, *International Development: A Postwar History* (London, 2018) 59.

¹⁷ Unger, *International Development* 57.

¹⁸ Rist, *Le développement: Histoire d’une croyance occidentale* (Paris, 1996) 71 ff.

¹⁹ Ziai, ‘I am not a Post-Developmentalist, but...’ The influence of Post-Development on development studies’ (2017), *Third World Quarterly* 38, 2721 f.

²⁰ Ziai, ‘I am not a post-developmental’ist’, 2721.

²¹ de Shazer, *Words Were Originally Magic* (New York, 1994), 9.

²² McGregor, ‘New Possibilities? Shifts in Post-Development Theory and Practice’ (2009) *Geography Compass* 1688, 1692.

²³ Riano/Wastl-Walter, ‘Immigration Policies, State Discourses on Foreigners, and the Politics of Identity in Switzerland’ (2006) *Environment and Planning* 1693, 1693.

²⁴ Gudynas, ‘Postdevelopment and other critiques of development’ in Veltmeyer and Bowles (eds.), *Race in/and development* (London, 2021) 49.

Proponents of post-development theory thus pay specific attention to the ways in which discourses constitute “practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak.”²⁵ Based on this theoretical approach, post-developmentalists argue that, rather than fixing a pre-existing issue – underdevelopment in the ‘Third World’–, development discursively creates both underdevelopment and the Third World. In other words, rather than addressing an existing reality, Truman’s Point Four started the discourse that would shape it into existence.²⁶ As Esteva writes, “On that day, two billion people became underdeveloped ... from that time on, they ceased being what they were, in all their diversity, and were transmogrified into an inverted mirror of other’s reality: a mirror that belittles them and sends them to the end of the queue, a mirror that defines their identity, which is really that of a heterogeneous and diverse majority, simply in the terms of a homogenizing and narrow minority.”²⁷ The reasoning is clearly analogous to that of other post-structuralists working outside of the field of development theory, such as Edward Said. Indeed, in his hugely influential book *Orientalism*, Said contends that “it is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries.”²⁸

The discourse of development has quickly been *institutionalized*: its effectiveness as a tool for the exercise of power depends on an institutional apparatus composed of organizations such as the Bretton Woods institutions or the United Nations, as well as national development agencies and local development projects.²⁹ It is this apparatus that *deployed* the discourse of development, that has turned it into “a real and effective social force, transforming the economic, social, cultural and political reality of the societies in question.”³⁰ By the time the discourse of development had been successfully deployed, it had become common sense, self-evident and unavoidable in its omnipresence³¹. Through this process, all alternative ways of seeing the world

²⁵ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language* (New York, 1972) 49.

²⁶ Nested, ‘Development: the Devil we know?’, in Ziai (ed.), *Exploring Post-Development: Theory and Practice, Problems and Perspectives* (London, 2007) 36.

²⁷ Esteva, ‘Development’, in Sachs (ed.), *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power* (London, 1992) 7.

²⁸ Said, *Orientalism* (London, 2007) 57.

²⁹ Escobar, ‘Post-Development’ as Concept and Social Practice’, in Ziai (ed.), *Exploring Post-Development: Theory and Practice, Problems and Perspectives* (London, 2007) 19.

³⁰ Escobar, ‘Post-development’, 19.

³¹ Nested, ‘Development: The Devil We Know?’, 36.

had been made impossible: the sole valid narrative is the one produced by development.³² This is consistent with Foucault's notion of 'rules of exclusion': "for each discourse only certain objects, statements and speakers are allowed as legitimate."³³ As a result, when people from "Third World" countries "search for options, solutions and alternatives to their current realities, they do so from their own perception of failure, of what they were not able to achieve, and aiming at becoming what the development discourse *has already put in words and programmes*"³⁴ (emphasis is mine). An absence is thus produced by development discourse: "what does not exist is in fact actively produced as non-existent, that is, as a non-credible alternative to what exists."³⁵

To summarize, it is development discourse that portrays and therefore constructs most of the world as poor, helpless, and in many ways inferior to the Global North; what seems to be neutral knowledge about an object "creates that object by establishing a set of relations between its elements."³⁶ The development discourse hence creates both the Global North and the Global South subject, rendering other forms of being and thinking unimaginable. It homogenizes and flattens people in all their complexity and diversity into polar opposites: the Global North subject is constructed as modern, enlightened, educated, and benevolent, and the Global South subject as traditional, backwards, uneducated, and uniformly poor.³⁷

Though post-development thought has been adopted as the theoretical framework of this article, it is worth noting that some of its elements have been – rightfully – criticized in scholarship. Post-development theory has for instance been charged with both essentializing and idealizing indigenous and poor populations in the Global South³⁸; lacking nuance in its analysis of development cooperation, which does not

³² Nested, 'Development: The Devil We Know?', 36.

³³ Ziai, *Development Discourse and Global History: From colonialism to the sustainable development goals* (New York, 2015) 14.

³⁴ Agostino, 'Post-development: unveiling clues for a possible future', in Ziai (ed.), *Exploring Post-Development: Theory and Practice, Problems and Perspectives* (London, 2007) 198.

³⁵ Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* (New York, 2015) 238.

³⁶ Nested, 'Development: The Devil We Know?', 36.

³⁷ Saunders, 'Introduction', 14.

³⁸ Kiely, 'The last refuge of the noble savage?: A critical assessment of post-development theory' (1999), *The European Journal of Development Research*, 30, 38; Nanda, 'Who Needs Post-Development? Discourses of Difference, Green Revolution and Agrarian Populism in India' (1999), *Journal of Developing Societies*, 5, 7.

rely on a thorough investigation of its concrete effects³⁹; relying on unhelpful and simplistic binaries⁴⁰; rejecting development in the name of a romanticized idea of cultural difference⁴¹; and, as is common in post-structuralist thought at large, providing no concrete solutions to the problems it points to⁴². Many of these critiques point to genuine issues that an unreflected and total embracement of post-development theory would only exacerbate. With these critiques in mind, post-development theory is nonetheless mobilized in this article due to its useful linkage of post-structuralist discourse analysis to development theory. The framework is therefore appropriate for the discussion at hand, while remaining criticizable.

III. The Legal Discourse of Development

Most development discourse analyses focus on official statements and policies made by donor-states and multilateral development organizations, such as the OECD or the World Bank. It follows that law is often sidelined from such discussions. This is especially regrettable given that development law represents an especially potent form of development discourse, one that is – as will be later argued – instrumental in the processes of development institutionalization and deployment described above. Though discussions on the right to development in the field of international law also participate in fascinating ways to development legal discourse, my analysis focuses on domestic development law, which remains significantly ignored by both development and legal scholars.

Yet development has made its way into national law in numerous legal orders. Many states have indeed adopted laws to define the principles underlying their development policies, as well as their priority aims and funding. This has, for instance, been the case in Austria, with the adoption in 2002 of its *Federal Act on Development Cooperation*⁴³. The law anchors an obligation for the federal government to provide development cooperation (section 1, art. 1) and defines its guiding aims and principles (section 1, articles 2, 3 and 4). These include combating poverty, ensuring peace and human security, and preserving the environment (section 1 art. 3). Austrian

³⁹ McGregor, 'New Possibilities? Shifts in Post-Development Theory and Practice' (2009), *Geography Compass* 1688, 1694.

⁴⁰ Corbridge, 'Beneath the pavement only soil': The poverty of post-development' (1998), *The Journal of Development Studies*, 138, 139; Kiely, 'The last refuge', 38.

⁴¹ Kiely, 'The last refuge', 46.

⁴² McGregor, 'New Possibilities?', 1695.

⁴³ *Bundesgesetz über die Entwicklungszusammenarbeit*, 29.04.2002, BGBl. I Nr. 49/2002; the law can be accessed via https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/2002_49_1/2002_49_1.pdf.

development must also respect the right of the concerned populations to choose their own way of development and take into account environmental concerns, gender equality, and the rights of children and of people with disabilities (section 1 art. 4). In this way, Austria reinforces its positioning as a human rights abiding, sustainable, peaceful, and egalitarian state. It appropriates these values in reasserting its commitment to them in the vague language of development law.

This same process can be observed in other legal orders. Denmark has, for instance, adopted a similar law with its *International Development Cooperation Act*⁴⁴, which details the objectives of its development policy as follows: “The objective of Denmark’s development cooperation is to fight poverty and promote human rights, democracy, sustainable development, peace and stability ...” (art. 1 par. 1). Similarly, Italy has adopted in 2014 its *General law on international development cooperation*⁴⁵, which places a comparable focus on the fight against poverty and for peace and human rights (art. 1 par. 1 and 2). The legal embedment of development isn’t limited to European states: Canada, for instance, adopted in 2008 its *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act*⁴⁶, which seeks to ensure that “development assistance abroad is provided with a central focus on poverty reduction and in a manner that is consistent with Canadian values” (art. 2 par. 1). In this act, Canadian values are defined as including “values of global citizenship, equity and environmental sustainability” (art. 3).

Though a thorough discourse analysis of each of these examples isn’t the object of this article, the extracts from national development laws cited above are worth briefly commenting on. Interestingly, they all vow to promote and thus legally anchor the same aims: the fight against poverty, the protection of human rights, sustainability, and peace. In doing so, they also appropriate them: Austria, Denmark, Italy, and Canada are constructed as benevolent, human rights-defending, environmentally friendly, and peaceful nations. Development is indeed a site of choice to appropriate fundamental and grand values. As development necessarily implies – at least in theory

⁴⁴ *Lov om internationalt udviklingssamarbejde*, 18.06.2012, Law n. 555, Udenrigsmin., j.nr. 104.DAN.1; its official English translation can be accessed via <https://amg.um.dk/-/media/country-sites/amg-en/policies-and-strategies/act-on-denmarks-international-development-cooperation/lov-engelsk.ashx>.

⁴⁵ *Disciplina generale sulla cooperazione internazionale per lo sviluppo*, 11.08.2014, 14G00130, [GU Serie Generale n. 199 28.08. 2014](https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/LEGGE_11_agosto_2014_n_125_ENG-1.pdf); its official English translation can be accessed via https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/LEGGE_11_agosto_2014_n_125_ENG-1.pdf.

⁴⁶ *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act*, 29.05.2008, S.C. 2008, c. 17; the law can be accessed via <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-2.8/index.html>.

– such noble notions as international solidarity and wealth redistribution can be lastingly endorsed through development laws.

Moreover, development is a vague, polysemic term, an amoeba-like empty signifier⁴⁷ which can be conveniently filled with any positive (or fashionable) value and talking point; development can then serve as a malleable vector for states to declare their own general *goodness*. This can be done even if these same states benefit from and perpetuate unequal terms of trade, are responsible for a disproportionate amount of CO2 emissions, or fuel wars by providing or selling the weapons necessary for their waging. Akin to pink- or purplewashing, development laws and policies function as a kind of solidarity-signaling, one that can etch into law a state’s humanitarian values and commitment to global justice in terms vague enough that they often do not imply concrete, clearly delimited measures, yet sufficiently specific for the construction of a positive state image to be easily discernible.

The adoption of such development laws is at times – albeit rarely – justified, if not demanded, by *constitutional* norms. For instance, the Italian *General law on international development cooperation* has been adopted on the basis of art. 11 of the Italian Constitution, which states: “... Italy agrees ... to the limitations of sovereignty that may be necessary to a world order ensuring peace and justice among Nations. Italy promotes and encourages international organisations furthering such ends.” As we will explore later in this article, this is also the case of Switzerland, its *Federal law on development cooperation and international humanitarian aid*⁴⁸ (hereafter “Law on Development”) having been adopted as the legal concretization of art. 54 par. 2 of the Swiss Constitution⁴⁹. The enshrinement of development cooperation in constitutional law then takes on a specific significance, owing to the great symbolic weight of constitutions and their central role in building national identity.

IV. Constitutional Law as National Identity-Building

At the risk of stating the obvious, it is worth briefly mentioning that constitutions play a particular and significant role in national identity-making processes. They are not only legally fundamental as a state’s supreme law, but also symbolically powerful in

⁴⁷ Escobar, *Encountering Development*, 58.

⁴⁸ *Bundesgesetz über die internationale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit und humanitäre Hilfe*, 19.03.1976, 974, AS 1977 1352; the law can be accessed via https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/1977/1352_1352_1352/de.

⁴⁹ *Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation*, 18.04.1999, 101, AS 1999 2556 ; the Constitution can be accessed in its official English translation via <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/1999/404/en>.

their subject-making function. Indeed, though constitutional and extra-constitutional national identities never perfectly overlap, they are nonetheless profoundly related.⁵⁰ Constitutions thus aspire to define much more than a nation's legal system: they serve to delimitate and describe its people, culture and values as well. This necessarily implies a process of othering through the designation of outsiders. In this sense, constitutions can be regarded as cultural products that serve "as a medium of a collective identity."⁵¹ As Červinka contends, constitutions "build not only a cornerstone of the popular identity of the people but also a very powerful connection between the political people and the idea of the state."⁵²

These observations imply that constitutions serve a paradoxical function: they represent foundational acts that are meant to both *constitute* and *represent* a people and its values. A constitution is then not only meant to express the aspirations of a nation's past, but also "the determination of those within the society who seek in some ways to transcend that past."⁵³ As Tushnet succinctly puts it, "Constitution makers must take the people as they are and, at the same moment, seek to make them something else."⁵⁴ It is that *something else* that concerns this article. More specifically, I seek to explore how constitutional norms pertaining to development cooperation shape a people: in what ways do they reflect a people's aspirations for itself? How does development law contribute to constructing a nation's conception of itself and, in this act, make it anew?

Such questions can – and must – be linked to development discourse. As I will argue below, the process of transcending a nation's past through constitutional law can be linked to and facilitated by development discourse, as was the case for Switzerland. Constitutional law can indeed be analyzed as a crucial part of development discourse: since constitutions, both symbolically and practically, are intimately bound up with a nation's identity and self-conception, the constitutional enshrinement of development is a particularly potent vector of development discourse.

⁵⁰ Rosenfeld, 'The Problem of 'Identity' in Constitution-Making and Constitutional Reform' (2005), *Cardozo Legal Studies Paper No. 13*, 2.

⁵¹ Červinka, 'Constitutions as Mediums of Collective Identities' (2024) *German Law Journal* 351, 366.

⁵² Červinka, 'Constitutions as Mediums of Collective Identities', 366.

⁵³ Klug, 'Constitutional Identity and Change' (2011), *Tulsa Law Review* 41, 46.

⁵⁴ Tushnet, 'How do constitutions constitute constitutional identity?' (2010), *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 671, 672.

V. The Creation of Benevolent Subjects: The Case of Switzerland

A. The Provision of Development Assistance as a Constitutional Obligation

As briefly mentioned above, the obligation to provide development assistance is enshrined in art. 54 par. 2 of the Swiss Constitution, which lists the foreign policy aims the Swiss Confederation must follow. As the article provides, “The Confederation shall ... in particular assist in the alleviation of need and poverty in the world and promote respect for human rights and democracy, the peaceful co-existence of peoples as well as the conservation of natural resources.” The foreign policy aim of poverty and need alleviation has been uniformly interpreted by Swiss legal doctrine as implying the obligation for Switzerland to provide development assistance⁵⁵. Through this inclusion in the supreme law of Switzerland, development is granted both symbolic and legal importance.

But the *legal* enshrinement of development cooperation predates the adoption of the 1999 Swiss Constitution. Indeed, Switzerland adopted a law pertaining to development cooperation as early as 1976. To understand the striking – and early⁵⁶ – legal weight afforded to development in Swiss law, a brief look into the country’s history seems necessary. Indeed, Swiss history shows that development discourse and the law that it includes has participated in cementing two key aspects of the Swiss’ collective (self-)image and national identity: Switzerland as a land of prosperity and Switzerland as a land of solidarity.

B. Lessons from Swiss History

For centuries, the region now known as Switzerland was rural, poor and – to put it in terms introduced by development discourse – *underdeveloped*. This situation drastically changed in the late 19th and early 20th century, once banking and tourism started gaining traction. The banking sector was strengthened by the banking secrecy which has been protected by Swiss law starting in 1934.⁵⁷ As David and Mach summarize, “For most scholars, this ‘Swiss success story’ resulted from a combination

⁵⁵ See for instance Epiney, ‘art. 54 par. 2’, in Waldmann(Belser/Epiney (eds.), *Basler Kommentar Bundesverfassung*, n. 30; Maroonian/Kolb, in Martenet/Dubey *Commentaire Romand de la Constitution Fédérale*, art. 54, n. 48.

⁵⁶ Most European countries developed domestic legislation much later. For instance, France adopted its development law in 2021; Italy in 2014; Spain in 2023; Belgium in 2013; Austria in 2002; and Denmark in 2013.

⁵⁷ Studer, ‘When Did the Swiss Get so Rich? Comparing Living Standards in Switzerland and Europe, 1800-1913’ (2008), *The Journal of European Economic History* 405 ss, *The Journal of European economic history* 37(2).

of a privileged position at the heart of Europe, a neutrality status that preserved the country from the World Wars, and a successful integration in the international economy.⁵⁸ The so-called ‘Swiss miracle’ has also been attributed to the prominence of the Protestant work ethic in Switzerland, as well as the absence of patent law in the country until 1907.⁵⁹ Further, though Switzerland has never been an official colonial power, it is worth underlining that it did reap “the benefits of colonial constellations without having to shoulder military responsibility.”⁶⁰ As a result, Switzerland became one of the richest countries in the world in the period between 1870 and 1940, though many rural, especially mountainous areas remained poor well into the 20th century.⁶¹ The growing popularity of development assistance as a foreign policy tool after the Second World War thus coincides with Switzerland’s new ability to provide it, as the country itself was struggling a few decades prior. To provide development assistance was thus symbolically potent: it marked Switzerland’s shift from a deprived to an affluent country, from a struggling economy to a success story. In other words, it marked Switzerland’s ascendancy to the rank of developed countries, not only willing but also able to position themselves as charitable. Further, the export of know-how and technology through development aid materially benefited the country’s economy.⁶² The practice of development thus discursively and materially participated in shaping Switzerland’s (self-)image and position as a wealthy country with a thriving economy.

Development cooperation also benefited Switzerland’s relations to other Global North countries. As is well-known, Switzerland remained neutral during the Second World War. The country’s neutrality policy, however, led to forms of collaboration with Axis powers that were not well received by the Allies. Indeed, Switzerland’s foreign policy during the war relied on a triangular strategy: not only did the country seek to maintain diplomatic normalcy towards Western democracies, but it also sought to appease Nazi Germany and strengthen its ties to Italy.⁶³ Some scholars even argue that Swiss diplomacy in the late 1930s was marked by a rapprochement towards

⁵⁸ David and Mach, ‘Institutions and Economic Growth: The Successful Experience of Switzerland (1870-1950)’ (2006), WIDER Research Paper 2006/101, 220.

⁵⁹ Studer, ‘When Did the Swiss Get so Rich?’, 405 ss.

⁶⁰ Purtschert, Falk, and Lüthi, ‘Switzerland and ‘Colonialism without Colonies’’ (2016), *Interventions* 286, 291.

⁶¹ David/Mach, ‘Institutions and Economic Growth’, 220.

⁶² See Elmer, Kuhn, and Speich Chassé, ‘Handlungsfeld Entwicklung: Schweizer Erwartungen und Erfahrungen in der Geschichte der Entwicklungsarbeit’, *Itinera Schwabe* (Basel, 2014).

⁶³ Farquet, ‘Neutral Paradoxes. Switzerland and the Allies at the Beginning of the Second World War’ (2024), *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 605, 609.

Axis powers.⁶⁴ It is, however, Allied countries that shaped the post-war world order, including the international legal system and its institutions. Switzerland therefore suffered a clear disadvantage on the international stage after 1945 as a result of its ties to Axis powers during the Second World War.

Development played a key role in redressing this situation. Some states indeed used development early to gain visibility on the international stage⁶⁵; Switzerland was one of them. After the Second World War, the Swiss Confederation quickly identified development cooperation as an instrument to improve its reputation, which had significantly suffered due to the country's adaptation to – and, at times, cooperation with – fascist regimes during the war.⁶⁶ Development thus served the strategical purpose of reframing Switzerland, as it greatly participated in shifting the country's image from an Axis-collaborating state to a proponent of international solidarity, cooperation, and rule of law.⁶⁷ Development cooperation as a Swiss practice thus significantly helped to create the image of Switzerland as a country left “politically and morally unscathed”⁶⁸ by the Nazi-era, a narrative that was only significantly challenged in the 1990s.⁶⁹ Development was also instrumental in enabling Switzerland to carve itself a particular and significant role on the international stage as a neutral, peaceful, and internationally-oriented arbiter. Development thus served the double function of increasing the country's visibility while restoring its image on the international stage after the Second World War.

C. Benevolence: An Essential Part of Swiss National Identity

In terms of national identity-building, this was far from an insignificant process: Switzerland is still anchored in popular imaginaries as a state playing a central role in fostering international dialogue and peace. It remains to this day more visible on the international stage than many states of similar size and economic importance, while enjoying good repute for both its commitment to international cooperation and its

⁶⁴ See for instance Bourgeois, *Le Troisième Reich et la Suisse, 1933-1941*, (Neuchâtel, 1974), 71-84.

⁶⁵ Unger, ‘International Development’, 250.

⁶⁶ Unger, ‘International Development’, 250.

⁶⁷ This, of course, was helped by the presence of the League of Nation's headquarters (and, later, the creation of United Nations' offices) in Geneva and the founding of the Red Cross by Swiss humanitarians such as Henri Dunant.

⁶⁸ Ludi, ‘What is so special about Switzerland?: Wartime Memory as a National Ideology in the Cold War Era’ in Lebow, Kansteiner and Fogu (eds.), *The Politics of Memory in Post-War Europe* (Durham, 2006), 214

⁶⁹ Dejung, ‘Dissonant Memories’ (2007), *Oral History* 57, 60.

technical know-how. This is central to the ways in which the Swiss conceive of their national identity to this day: though this ‘national value’ isn’t unanimously endorsed, a 2025 study showed that the Swiss generally place great worth on the Switzerland-as-solidary narrative.⁷⁰ The Swiss indeed tend to couch their national identity in terms relating to international solidarity, where both humanitarian and development aid explicitly play a central role.⁷¹ The study also notes a strong attachment to the image of Switzerland as a land with a strong humanitarian tradition, in which everyone is being taken care of by the state.⁷² This link between Swiss identity and benevolence manifests itself in numerous ways. For instance, a 2023 study similarly showed that a majority of the Swiss report being preoccupied by world poverty, with 58% of the surveyed claiming they support an increase in the federal budget dedicated to development cooperation.⁷³ However, no national narrative is as popular as the Switzerland-as-economically-prosperous one: the image of the Swiss as economically successful and stable, zealous, and innovative is indeed the most popular national narrative across party lines.⁷⁴ As argued above, both of these central national identity tropes are, in part, created and strengthened by the law and the larger discourse of development.

D. Functions of Development (Legal) Discourse

It therefore seems unsurprising that development cooperation appears in a document as fundamental to Swiss national identity as the Constitution. In art. 54 par. 2 Const., the Swiss Constitution fulfils one of its core socio-political functions: it paradoxically reflects a preexisting national identity – that of a peaceful, solidary, and benevolent people – shaped in part by the Swiss practice of development. At the same time, it contributes to cementing and therefore creating it – in this case, by ensuring that Switzerland continues to provide development assistance and therefore maintains the collective identity this practice shapes.

For the same reasons, it is unsurprising that Switzerland adopted a law on development as early as 1976. The Swiss law on development was introduced by the Federal Council law as a way to cement official development aid as an important part of Switzerland’s foreign affairs and conceptualize it as a task of the country’s foreign

⁷⁰ Bret et al., ‘Heimat Neu Erzählen’, 88.

⁷¹ Bret et al., ‘Heimat Neu Erzählen’, 32.

⁷² Bret et al., ‘Heimat Neu Erzählen’, 32.

⁷³ Meili et al., ‘Enquête Coopération Globale Suisse 2023 : Attitudes à l’Égard de la Coopération Globale - Une Perspective sur Trois Ans’ (Zurich, 2023), 2.

⁷⁴ Bret et al., ‘Heimat Neu Erzählen’, 88.

economic policy.⁷⁵ The 1976 Law on Development was later understood as the legal concretization of the constitutional obligation to provide development, introduced through the 1999 Constitution. Though other factors might explain the adoption of the 1976 law, I argue that the importance of development cooperation in the nation's identity explains it in part.

Many parliamentarians stressed the *moral* importance of Switzerland providing development aid during the debates preceding the adoption of the law. As Parliamentary Allgöwer, for instance, states in 1973: "Development aid is necessary, and we feel an obligation to provide it, but not because we are under pressure ... not because of our foreign policy, not because of the advantages we may be able to gain, but solely out of a sense of responsibility towards peoples in need."⁷⁶ Both the law and the parliamentary debates leading to its adoption thus reproduce the subject-making processes of development discourse: they construct the moral, generous, and selfless Global North nation while simultaneously strengthening a miserabilist rhetoric, shaping its image of and interactions with 'peoples in need'.

As demonstrated above, development law provides a great opportunity for a state to declare its commitment to grand, positive values. This is also the case for Switzerland, as the value of solidarity, for instance, is anchored in Swiss development law. The Law on Development itself stresses the importance of international solidarity to the Swiss state: "International development cooperation and humanitarian aid express solidarity, one of the principles governing Switzerland's relations with the international community ..."⁷⁷ (art. 2 par. 1 Swiss Law on Development). This is reminiscent of the preamble of the Swiss Constitution ("... in a spirit of solidarity and openness towards the world ..."). International solidarity - a manifestation of which is the provision of development assistance - is thus constitutionally and legally etched into the Swiss national identity with the help of development law.

⁷⁵ Federal Council, 'Message du Conseil fédéral à l'Assemblée fédérale à l'appui d'un projet de loi sur la coopération au développement et l'aide humanitaire internationaux (du 19 mars 1973)', 838.

⁷⁶ "Die Entwicklungshilfe ist notwendig, und wir fühlen eine Verpflichtung zu dieser Entwicklungshilfe, aber nicht, ... wegen unserer Aussenpolitik, nicht wegen der Vorteile, die wir eventuell ergattern können, sondern allein aus Mitverantwortung gegenüber notleidenden Völkern", Allgöwer, "Entwicklungszusammenarbeit und humanitäre Hilfe; Botschaft und Gesetzentwurf vom 19. März 1973 (BB11,869), Siebente Sitzung, 14.07.1973", 670 (translation from the German is mine).

⁷⁷ "Die internationale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit und humanitäre Hilfe sind Ausdruck der Solidarität, die eines der Prinzipien darstellt, nach denen die Schweiz ihr Verhältnis zur internationalen Gemeinschaft gestaltet ... " (translation from the German is mine).

Development law thus serves the purpose of discursively constructing Switzerland as a solidary, benevolent land, despite ample proof to the contrary. It participates in creating the necessary leeway for Switzerland to maintain its positive international image as an open and benevolent state, despite strikingly restrictive migration policies resulting from decades of pervasive populist xenophobic sentiment in Swiss politics⁷⁸, its passivity when faced with crimes against humanity perpetrated by other states⁷⁹, and the blatant and numerous human rights violations caused by Swiss multinationals for the sake of profit that remain largely ignored by the state.⁸⁰ Domestic development law thus creates a kind of contradiction: it constructs an absolutely positive image of a state's (foreign) policy, despite ample empirical proof of a much more complex and murkier reality.

E. Summary

To summarize, development discourse and the law that is an integral part of it were and remain especially important to Swiss national identity construction. Economic success, generosity, solidarity and technical know-how are all elements of 'Swissness' that were shaped and, in part, created by development cooperation and anchored through the law pertaining to it. In more precise terms, development discourse, as analyzed through the lens of post-development theory, was especially central in both creating and cementing the image of Switzerland and its citizens as prosperous, virtuous, and generous. It enabled a departure from previous narratives of Switzerland as deprived and, after the Second World War, as collaborating with Axis powers. The strong presence of development in Swiss law, including its constitutional anchoring, both reflects and strengthens its importance in Swiss national identity-building processes. Domestic development law does not simply reproduce

⁷⁸ Riano and Wastl-Walter, *Immigration policies, state discourses on foreigners, and the politics of identity in Switzerland*, 1693; Manatschal, 'Switzerland – Really Europe's Heart of Darkness?' (2015), *Swiss Political Science Review* 23, 23.

⁷⁹ As exemplified by the Swiss state's refusal both to recognize the state of Palestine (cf. Lema, 'Reconnaissance de la Palestine: malgré la pression internationale, Berne reste en retrait' (Le Temps, 02.09.25), <https://www.letemps.ch/monde/reconnaitre-la-palestine-la-suisse-continue-de-tergiverser>, accessed 8 October 2025) or to sanction Israel for the genocide it is committing in Gaza ('Le Parlement ne veut pas de sanctions contre Israël' (RTS, 11.09.25), <https://www.rts.ch/info/suisse/2025/article/le-parlement-suisse-rejette-les-sanctions-contre-israel-malgre-gaza-28995715.html>, accessed 8 October 2025).

⁸⁰ The Federal Council for instance recently opposed a popular initiative to hold Swiss multinational companies accountable for the (environmental) harm they cause abroad, claiming that 'it goes too far' ('Le Conseil fédéral estime que l'initiative sur la responsabilité environnementale 'va trop loin'') (RTS, 23.01.25), <https://www.rts.ch/info/suisse/2025/article/initiative-environnementale-le-conseil-federal-met-en-garde-contre-ses-impacts-28749814.html>, accessed 8 October 2025).

development discourse by anchoring some of its rhetoric into law; it also ensures that development will remain a practice that will, in turn, keep producing subjects according to its Western-centric, binary logic. Development law can thus play a key role in constructing and endlessly reproducing a benevolent, Global North subject, as exemplified by the Swiss case. Since, as explained above, Global North and Global South subjects are constructed as polar opposites, national development law then necessarily plays a part in constructing Global South subjects as deprived and helpless as well.

VI. Conclusion: (Constitutional) Development Law and the Construction of the Global North Subject

According to post-development scholars, development cooperation isn't a politically neutral, generous foreign policy. It is a discourse, a set of representations and practices that *creates* the Global South and its subjects. In other words, development discourse spoke and represented the Global South and the underdevelopment that plagues it into existence. This development discourse can take many forms, one of them being national development law. Not only does development law etch a positive image of the Global North state into its legal framework, but it also ensures that the set of practices that conveys this image and the worldview that underpins it in the form of official development aid is perpetuated. In other words, though this particular iteration of development discourse tends to be ignored in post-development analyses, development law importantly cements development as a practice while constructing a positive image of donor states and the subjects they represent. Development law thus plays an important role in national identity-building processes. This is especially the case when constitutions are involved, as they represent particularly authoritative and potent symbols of national identity.

To explore the ways in which development (legal) discourse shape national identities, Switzerland has been chosen as a particularly telling case study. Benevolence and solidarity, as well as economic opulence, play a central role in Swiss national identity. As I argue in this article, these elements are partially constructed by development discourse and the law that it includes. In a paradox typical of the ways in which constitutions function, the (constitutional) law pertaining to development both reflects and creates the importance of development in Swiss identity. I thus argue that development is both present in national law as early as 1976 and anchored in the Swiss Constitution, in part because it represents a central element of Switzerland's (self-)image. In my view, development law was both used to anchor Switzerland's newly secured opulence as a component of national identity and instrumentalized to restore the country's image after the Second World War. Swiss development law

ultimately served to create both the international image and self-understanding of Switzerland and its people as particularly benevolent, affluent, and internationally-oriented.

There remains a crucial question: is there anything *wrong* with this? Isn't it a net positive if a people, like the Swiss, generally considers itself to be charitable, resulting in generosity towards philanthropic organizations and effective support of international cooperation? As the aim of discourse analysis cannot lie in critique for its own sake, such questions are worth examining. The issue in the construction of Global North subjects as benevolent through development (legal) discourse is twofold. Firstly, as has been mentioned above, Global North and Global South are discursively constructed as reductive polar opposites. Any flattering or empowering portrayal of Global North subjects as generous and helpful is synonymous with a paternalistic image of Global South subjects as poor and helpless. Its anchoring into law only ensures the longevity of such representations.

Secondly, a people that considers itself to be – and strives to remain – benevolent or charitable runs the risk of ignoring the ways in which it might be exploitative. Development discourse creates the image of Global North subjects as caring rather than complacent, magnanimous rather than guilty. Development discourse as anchored in national development law indeed raises the same issue it does in other contexts: it focuses on charitable gestures from the Global North and sidelines any attempts to aim towards an international order where charity isn't desired or needed. Development is not truly redistributive, nor does it focus on tackling the structural causes of economic inequality; it shapes international solidarity into a synonym of generosity, thereby excluding any attempt to define it in more political terms. Such a political perspective would move away from conceiving of development as a politically neutral, universal good, instead highlighting the ways in which development – both as an aim and as a process – is shaped by various and contradicting economic and foreign policy interests. As Ziai writes, “Development discourse conceptualised the newly perceived problem of inequality in terms of a lack of capital, knowledge and technology and provided corresponding solutions ... A perception of global inequality in terms of exploitation, power relations and hierarchies in the global political economy was thus excluded.”⁸¹ The result of development discourse is thus the depoliticization of wealth inequalities. The charitable Global North subject that development (legal) discourse constructs is comforted by this worldview: it gets to appear benevolent while holding onto a world economic order it ultimately greatly benefits from at the expense of most of the world's population. A critical appraisal

⁸¹ Ziai, *Development Discourse and History*, 46.

by legal scholars of national development law and its ideological underpinnings thus seems of great importance to uncover and challenge the role law plays in cementing neocolonial relations. This article represents an attempt to contribute to such a critique.

VII. Bibliography

A. Primary Sources

Entwicklungszusammenarbeit und humanitäre Hilfe; Botschaft und Gesetzentwurf vom 19. März 1973 (BB11,869), Siebente Sitzung, 14.07.1973

Federal Council, “Message du Conseil fédéral à l'Assemblée fédérale à l'appui d'un projet de loi sur la coopération au développement et l'aide humanitaire internationaux (du 19 mars 1973)”, 11570

Truman, Harry S., “The Fourth Point in President Truman’s Inaugural Address, January 20, 1949”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 268 (1950):183.

B. Academic Literature

Bourgeois, Daniel, *Le Troisième Reich et la Suisse, 1933-1941* (Neuchâtel, 1974)

Bret, Raphael, Frouzakis, Pavlos, Grunder, Silvana, Palanza, Aurora and Zambelli, Lorenzo, *Heimat Neu Erzählen: Narrative der Schweiz im Wandel* (Zurich, 2025)

Červinka, Lukáš Lev, “Constitutions as Mediums of Collective Identities” (2024), *German Law Journal* 351

Craggs, Ruth, “Development in a Global-Historical Context” in Vandana Desai and Robert Potter (eds.), *The Companion to Development Studies* (London, 2014)

Corbridge, Stuart, “‘Beneath the pavement only soil’: The poverty of post-development” (1998), *The Journal of Development Studies* 138

Dann, Philipp, *The Law of Development Cooperation – A Comparative Analysis of the World Bank, the EU and Germany* (Cambridge, 2013)

David, Thomas and Mach, André, “Institutions and Economic Growth: The Successful Experience of Switzerland (1870-1950)” (2006), *WIDER Research Paper* 2006/101

Dejung, Christof, “Dissonant Memories” (2007), *Oral History* 57, 60

Elmer, Sara, Kuhn, K.J., and Speich Chassé, Daniel, “Handlungsfeld Entwicklung: Schweizer Erwartungen und Erfahrungen in der Geschichte der Entwicklungsarbeit”, *Itinera Schwabe* (Basel, 2014)

Epiney, Astrid, “art. 54 par. 2”, in Bernhard Waldmann, Eva Maria Belser, Astrid Epiney (eds.) *Basler Kommentar Bundesverfassung*, 1st edn. (Basel, 2015)

Escobar, Arturo, “‘Post-Development’ as Concept and Social Practice”, in Aram Ziai (ed.), *Exploring Post-Development: Theory and Practice, Problems and Perspectives* (London, 2007)

Escobar, Arturo, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, 2011)

Esteva, Gustavo, “Development”, in Sachs, Wolfgang (ed.), *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power* (London, 1992)

Farquet, Christophe, “Neutral Paradoxes. Switzerland and the Allies at the Beginning of the Second World War” (2024), *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 605

Foucault, Michel, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language* (New York, 1972)

Frank, Andre Gunder, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* (New York, 1967)

Grajales, Jacobo and Saiget, Marie, “Repolitiser l’étude de l’aide au développement” (2022), *Cultures & Conflits* 7

Gudynas, Eduardo, “Postdevelopment and other critiques of development” in Henry Veltmeyer and Paul Bowles (eds.), *Race in/and development* (London, 2021)

Hettne, Björn, “The Development of Development Theory” (1983), *Acta Sociologica* 247

Kiely, Ray, “The last refuge of the noble savage? : A critical assessment of post-development theory” (1999), *The European Journal of Development Research* 30

Klug, Heinz, “Constitutional Identity and Change” (2011), *Tulsa Law Review* 41

Kolb, Robert, Maroonian, Anaïs, “art. 54”, in Vincent Martenet and Jacques Dubey, *Commentaire Romand de la Constitution Fédérale*, 2021.

Kothari, Uma, “Commentary: History, Time and Temporality in Development Discourse” in Vijayendra Rao and C.A. Bayly (eds.), *History, Historians and Development Policy* (Manchester, 2020)

Leys, Colin, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism, 1964-1971* (London, 1975)

Ludi, Regula, “What is so special about Switzerland?: Wartime Memory as a National Ideology in the Cold War Era” in Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner and Claudio Fogu (eds.), *The Politics of Memory in Post-War Europe* (Durham, 2006)

Manatschal, Anita, “Switzerland - Really Europe's Heart of Darkness?” (2015), *Swiss Political Science Review* 23

McGregor, Andrew, “New Possibilities? Shifts in Post-Development Theory and Practice” (2009), *Geography Compass* 1688

Meili, Dario, Brugger, Fritz, Büttner, Nicolas, Patel, Shruti, and Günther, Isabel, *Enquête Coopération Globale Suisse 2023: Attitudes à l'Égard de la Coopération Globale - Une Perspective sur Trois Ans* (Zurich, 2023)

Nested, Knut G., “Development: the Devil we know?”, in Aram Ziai (ed.), *Exploring Post-Development: Theory and Practice, Problems and Perspectives* (London, 2007)

Nussbaum, Martha, “Capabilities and Social Justice” (2002), *International Studies Review* 123

Peet, Richard and Hartwick, Elaine, “Theories of Development: Contentions, Arguments, Alternatives” (New York/London, 2015)

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen, “After Post-Development” (2000), *Third World Quarterly* 175

Purtschert, Patricia, Falk, Francesca, and Lüthi, Barbara Lüthi, “Switzerland and ‘Colonialism without Colonies’” (2016), *Interventions* 286

Ranehma, Majid, “Towards Post-Development: Searching for Signposts, a New Language and New Paradigms” in Majid Ranehma and Victoria Bawtree (eds.), *The Post-Development Reader* (London, 1997)

Riano, Yvonne and Wastl-Walter, Doris, “Immigration Policies, State Discourses on Foreigners, and the Politics of Identity in Switzerland” (2006), *Environment and Planning* 1693

Rist, Gilbert, *Le développement: Histoire d'une croyance occidentale* (Paris, 1996)

Rosenfeld, Michel, „The Problem of ‘Identity’ in Constitution-Making and Constitutional Reform” (2005), *Cardozo Legal Studies Paper* No. 13

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* (New York, 2015)

Said, Edward W., *Orientalism* (London, 2007)

Saunders, Kriemild, “Introduction: Towards a Deconstructive Post-Development Criticism” in Kriemild Saunders (ed.), *Feminist Post-Development Thought: Rethinking Modernity, Post-Colonialism, and Representation* (London, 2002)

Sen, Amartya, *Inequality Reexamined* (Oxford, 1992)

de Shazer, Steve, *Words Were Originally Magic* (New York, 1994)

Studer, Roman “When Did the Swiss Get so Rich? Comparing Living Standards in Switzerland and Europe, 1800-1913” (2008), *The Journal of European Economic History* 405

Tushnet, Mark, “How do constitutions constitute constitutional identity?” (2010), *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 671

Unger, Corinna R., *International Development: A Postwar History* (London, 2018)

Ziai, Aram, “‘I am not a Post-Developmentalist, but...’ The influence of Post-Development on development studies”, *Third World Quarterly* 38

Ziai, Aram, *Development Discourse and Global History: From colonialism to the sustainable development goals* (New York, 2015)

C. Newspapers and Websites

Année Politique Suisse, “Les Suisses sont plus généreux que jamais”, 06.01.2021, <https://anneepolitique.swiss/fr/prozesse/62953-les-suisses-sont-plus-generoux-que-jamais> accessed 7 October 2025.

Lema, Luis, “Reconnaissance de la Palestine: malgré la pression internationale, Berne reste en retrait” (Le Temps, 02.09.25), <https://www.letemps.ch/monde/reconnaitre-la-palestine-la-suisse-continue-de-tergiverser>, accessed 8 October 2025

Grassi, Sabrina, “Philanthropie sans frontières: les Suisses de l'étranger aussi” Le Temps, 27.11.2023, https://www.letemps.ch/opinions/debats/philanthropie-sans-frontieres-les-suisses-de-l-etranger-aussi?srsId=AfmBOopPlkLC3C8_WhhVALZhf3K1SXvhAComLLXB1Xao8Dd0QpopMaqN, accessed 7 October 2025

RTS, “Le Conseil fédéral estime que l'initiative sur la responsabilité environnementale ‘va trop loin” (RTS, 23.01.25),

<https://www.rts.ch/info/suisse/2025/article/initiative-environnementale-le-conseil-federal-met-en-garde-contre-ses-impacts-28749814.html>, accessed 8 October 2025

“Le Parlement ne veut pas de sanctions contre Israël” (RTS, 11.09.25), <https://www.rts.ch/info/suisse/2025/article/le-parlement-suisse-rejette-les-sanctions-contre-israel-malgre-gaza-28995715.html>, accessed 8 October 2025

