Influences on the Knowledge and Beliefs of Ordinary People about Developmental Hierarchies

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ABSTRACT

This paper is motivated by the idea that development and developmental hierarchies have been constructed and embraced for centuries by scholars and policy makers. Recent research also demonstrates that the construct of development and developmental hierarchies has been disseminated widely among ordinary people, with the views of many ordinary people about developmental hierarchies being consistent with elites at international organizations, such as the United Nations. In this paper, we extend this research by examining how gender, age, and education influence ordinary people's beliefs about development and developmental hierarchies in six countries: Argentina, China, Egypt, Iran, Nepal, and the United States. We found that a large proportion of individuals in each of the countries are able to rate countries on development and that these ratings correspond highly with the UN Human Development Index scores. Univariate and multivariate analyses indicate men and more educated individuals, as compared to their counterparts, have views of developmental hierarchies that are closer to the UN evaluations. The magnitude of these differences varies across countries. In those societies in which women have a lower status relative to men, and countries where a substantial fraction of people does not complete or surpass elementary school, the magnitude of these differences across groups is higher. The association of age with developmental thinking is inconsistent across the countries, which may be interpreted as age cohorts having differential exposure to developmental ideas across settings.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper we examine the influence of age, sex, and education on the extent to which ordinary people in various countries around the world understand and believe in developmental hierarchies. Our research is motivated by the understanding that elites in different countries, including scholars and policy makers, have for centuries embraced developmental hierarchies in their thinking about geographical and temporal differences among societies. Policy makers also have used these developmental models to formulate and implement public policies on a wide set of issues, including foreign policy, governmental forms, and gender, family, and demographic matters.

Our paper adds to an understanding of the dissemination of world culture, a powerful force in driving social change in many parts of the world (Krücken and Drori 2009; Meyer et al. 1997; Thomas et al. 1987). World culture has been described as including many elements, such as endorsement of individualism, freedom, equality, justice, human rights, science, and education. The ideas of development, modernity, and progress are also important elements of world culture. This correspondence is exemplified by the fact that the United Nations and many other international organizations specify development to be a central goal for the world's countries. The UN has created development indicators, regularly monitors the development of countries, and annually rates countries on development. Similarly, development is enthusiastically endorsed by national governments and national and international non-governmental agencies, and they actively strive to increase it.

Of course, like human rights, equity, and justice, the concepts of development and developmental hierarchies are not physical facts or realities but are socially constructed. These constructs provide a system for evaluating countries and for understanding social change. These constructs also have existed for hundreds of years in the Western world and commonly provide frameworks to understand the world and how to live in the world.

Indeed, the social constructs of development and developmental hierarchies have become so engrained within the worldviews of so many people around the world that these constructs are often taken for granted as realities. In other words, these constructs have come to be seen as natural and inevitable. Still, the constructed nature of developmental

hierarchies is clear, in that there are no direct indicators for development, and so observers must measure it through indirect indicators, such as technology, education, income, and health. Importantly, education, income, and life expectancy are real in that they specify the average number of years of school completed, the average amount of money that people receive, or the average years of life to be lived. Development is an abstract concept that does not have the same physical reality as does education, income, and life expectancy.

Although research has documented the dissemination of world culture, including its developmental aspects, to governments and other national organizations around the world, this literature has provided little systematic or large-scale evidence of the dissemination of the elements of world culture to the lives of ordinary people in everyday life. That is, the world culture literature has been focused primarily at the macro or organizational level rather than the micro or individual level. Nevertheless, a growing body of ethnographic research is documenting that the social construction of development and modernity has been disseminated widely to ordinary people in everyday life in several settings including, for example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, China, India, Nepal, and New Guinea. Ordinary people in these settings understand the constructs of development and developmental hierarchies and incorporate them into their worldviews (Ahearn 2001; Amin 1989; Blaut 1993; Caldwell et al. 1988; Dahl and Rabo 1992; Ferguson 1999; Gunaratne 1998, 2001; Justice 1986; Osella and Osella 2006; Pigg 1992, 1996; Wang 1999). Furthermore, new research using survey data indicates that the social construct of development and developmental hierarchies is widespread among ordinary people in everyday life in a wide range of countries, including Albania, Argentina, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Malawi, Nepal, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States (Binstock and Thornton 2007; Melegh et al. 2010; Thornton, Binstock and Ghimire 2008; Thornton et al. 2011). It is also likely that the acceptance of worldviews including development and developmental hierarchies have important implications for the lives of ordinary people.

Although the evidence for beliefs about development and developmental hierarchies among ordinary people in everyday life is beginning to grow, very little systematic information exists about how social, demographic, educational, family and economic factors influence these beliefs. This is unfortunate because knowledge of the factors

influencing such beliefs is important to understand the mechanisms transmitting knowledge and the elements facilitating or hindering its acceptance by individuals in everyday life. The goal of this paper is to fill some of this gap by examining the influence of three basic factors--gender, age, and education on these beliefs. We address the questions whether belief in development and developmental hierarchies is greater among women or men, among the old or the young, and among the more or less educated. We aim to provide insights on such relationships in Argentina, China, Egypt, Iran, Nepal, and the United States.

We recognize that there are other attributes besides these three that are interesting and likely important influences on people's beliefs about development. We prioritize the factors of gender, age, and education, since this allows us to examine such influences in six widely diverse countries. Although other predictor variables are available in certain countries, gender, age, and education are the three variables that are available in all six countries. Although research on the influence of other factors is beyond the scope of this paper, we advocate future research on other factors.

CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF DEVELOPMENTAL HEIRARCHIES

The social construction of development, developmental trajectories, and the placement of individual societies along a hierarchy of development has been influential among the elites in Europe and the migrant populations from Europe for centuries. These centuries-old models of development, developmental trajectories, and developmental hierarchies—also sometimes described as modernization models—have assumed that each society or country progresses along the same uniform pathway of progress (Harris 1968; Mandelbaum 1971; Nisbet 1969; Sanderson 1990; Thornton 2001, 2005). In other words, these models of development have interpreted the construct as a reality to be achieved. In these models, the speed of development is believed to vary across societies, and societies are seen as being at different levels of development at any one point in time. The result of this kind of thinking is a belief in a cross-sectional developmental hierarchy. For the past several hundred years, it has been common for scholars and other elites to locate northwest Europe and its diaspora populations in North America and Australia at the top of the ladder

of development. These scholars and elites also often located the indigenous peoples of America, Africa, and Australia at the other end of the developmental hierarchy. Other countries were pictured as being scattered in middle positions along this developmental trajectory. In more recent years, Japan and other East Asian countries have reached the top (or near the top) of the developmental hierarchies of many elite organizations such as the UN.

Today, this developmental worldview, with its ladder of development, has permeated the thinking and actions of many influential individuals and organizations around the world (Latham 2000; Meyer et al. 1997; Nisbet 1980). Several indirect indices of development are now being used, with the countries of the world differentially rated and ranked on these indices. The Human Development Index (HDI), which the United Nations calculates on an annual basis, is probably the best known of these developmental hierarchy indices (UNDP 2007-8). The UN HDI is an equally-weighted composite of three factors: per capita GDP; life expectancy at birth; and a composite of literacy and school enrollment.

As many scholars have explained, social constructs not only give people frameworks and models for understanding the organization and functioning of the world, but they also give them frameworks and models for living and succeeding in the world (Geertz 1973; Fricke 1997a, 1997b). Worldviews provide individuals information to evaluate what things in life are good and should be achieved. They also provide people frames or schema for how to live in the world and how to achieve things that are desired (D'Andrade 1984; Johnson et al. forthcoming; Swidler 1986; Thornton et al. 2011).

In this way, the worldview of development and developmental hierarchies is not just an inert framework for categorizing countries, but is a system for evaluating many different and important aspects of life (Thornton 2001, 2005). By designating which societies are located at the top of the developmental ladder, this worldview indicates which societies have achieved success and should be emulated in striving for progress. More specifically, this worldview designates that the forms of government, economy, family life, and human rights that are found in developed societies are good and to be sought after. Similarly, the developmental worldview indicates which societies should not be emulated because they are perceived to be at lower levels of development. Furthermore, the worldview indicates

that societies low in the developmental hierarchy are the most in need of change to be able to reach the levels of the societies that are seen as most developed.

This developmental worldview also indicates appropriate mechanisms to use in accomplishing further development. It states that there are causal connections between the kind of standard of living a country has and the country's family life, government, economy, and handling of human rights. This causal model is powerful because it posits economic well being both as a product and a cause of these other elements of human life. In this way it provides not only a goal or destination for developmental efforts but a roadmap for achieving the goal.

Given the scope of the developmental model as a framework for both understanding and dealing with the world, it is very likely that the ways in which the ideas are accepted, rejected, or modified greatly influence the decisions and behavior of policy makers (Melegh 2006). Scholars have argued, for example, that such views of developmental hierarchies were pivotal in the events following World War II that led to the east-west division of Europe (Wolff 1994). Others also have suggested that, in more recent decades, this developmental worldview and the perceived locations of various countries on the developmental hierarchy were important influences in how countries were considered for European Union admission (Böröcz 2000). These developmental models are also currently used by many government and nongovernmental organizations as they decide their policies and programs (Latham 2000; Meyer et al. 1997; Nisbet 1980).

The acceptance, rejection, or modification of such developmental worldviews will also influence people in everyday life. People who accept these developmental models will likely behave differently on a range of issues than people who reject these ideas. It is also important to recognize that these outcomes are likely to occur whether or not the various elements of the models are actually true or false, good or bad.

Although evidence is accumulating that developmental worldviews have been disseminated widely around the world, we expect that there are important differentials in such understandings and perceptions. Such differentials are probably the result of differential access to information and the differential ways that such worldviews intersect with the lives of individuals. We expect that differential acceptance of developmental worldviews will vary along the important lines of education, age, and gender.

We hypothesize that one of the most important influences on worldviews is a person's position in the socioeconomic structure, including education. Education is particularly important because it provides individuals with access to information and ideas. Of central importance for our purpose, is that education in many settings provides important ideas about the larger world, including the world that is far from home (Abbasi-Shavazi, Lutz, Hosseini-Chavoshi and K.C. 2008; Kasarda, Billy and West 1986; Lutz, Crespo Cuaresma and Abbasi-Shavazi 2010; Barber 2004). Schools have been known to teach young people about developmental hierarchies and the relative positions of various countries on the developmental ladder in ways that are consistent with elite international constructions. For example, some school textbooks in Nepal explicitly teach about development and Nepal's location in the UN development hierarchy (Ghimire et al. 2008). Also, people with higher socioeconomic status are likely to have more knowledge of developmental worldviews in the international arena. Furthermore, their higher positions in the social structure would likely give them lifestyles and interests that are more consistent with international views of developmental hierarchies and differentiations.

We also hypothesize that in many parts of the world women will have less knowledge of developmental hierarchies than men. We have this expectation because many social systems allocate to women positions in the social structure that are secondary to those of men, with fewer opportunities to learn about and deal with the larger world. One clear example of this allocation has been historically large differentials in women's and men's schooling, occupations, and earnings (Bobbitt-Zeher 2007; England 2010; Pampel 2011.) We expect that such gender differences would lead to women having less social mobility, smaller social networks, and less access to information, which would lead them have less exposure to the ideas of developmental hierarchies.

Our expectation is that some of the gender differences in evaluating country developmental hierarchies are due to educational differences between women and men. That is, if women obtain less education than men, as they still do in many places, and education increases awareness of developmental hierarchies, then the lower educational attainments of women would be one reason women have less awareness of development hierarchies.

We have contradictory expectations concerning the influence of age, which arise partly from the fact that age groups in cross-sectional studies capture both stages of the life course and historical periods of socialization. On the one hand, as people age, they have additional opportunities to learn about the world. This hypothesis suggests a positive correlation between age and knowledge and acceptance of developmental models. On the other hand, the system of socialization in many parts of the world has changed dramatically in recent years, with many new ways for learning about the larger world. These changes in socialization have been particularly important for the young who have been socialized under these new circumstances. Because people are especially open to new ideas during their youths, we believe that such new patterns of socialization will be particularly powerful for young people. We do not have expectations concerning the relative power of these two causal mechanisms producing differentials by age.

It is also important to consider the possibility that developmental worldviews have been so widely disseminated around the world that there are few differentials in understanding and acceptance of them. That is, while there may have been differentials when such worldviews were first introduced, such differentials may have disappeared as populations have been saturated with developmental perspectives.

The goal of the research reported in this paper is to provide a better understanding of the factors that influence people's developmental worldviews. We do so by creating measures of people's views of developmental hierarchies in surveys and then investigating how such views are influenced by age, gender, and education. We investigate these issues using both bivariate and multivariate approaches. Our research uses data from six widely disparate countries: Argentina; China; Egypt; Iran; Nepal; and the United States.

We proceed in three steps. We begin by describing our survey data and approach to data analysis. Our second step is presentation of our findings concerning the various factors influencing views of developmental trajectories. In our final section, we present our conclusions.

Before proceeding, we also should mention that our interest in developmental hierarchies is not motivated by a belief that developmental worldviews and models are useful tools for either conducting research or designing and implementing public policy. We understand that such developmental models have come under strong criticism in recent

decades (see Baker 1998; Bock 1956; Hodgen 1964; Jennings 1975; Mandelbaum 1971; Nisbet 1969, 1980; Szreter 1993; Tilly 1984). Rather, we are motivated to study developmental worldviews because we believe that they have been disseminated widely among both the elites and non-elites of the world and provide important decisionmaking frameworks for everyday life. Our desire is to understand the factors influencing such worldviews.

DATA COLLECTIONS

The empirical data for this paper come from regional or national data collections that we carried out in the six countries of Argentina, China, Egypt, Iran, Nepal, and the United States. The six countries we included in this study cover a geographical diversity of countries ranging from Argentina and the United States in South and North America, to Egypt in North Africa, to Iran straddling the Middle East and South Asia, to Nepal in South Asia, and to China in East Asia. The six countries also represent a diversity of religions, levels of literacy and education, fertility, per capita income, urbanization, etc. The six data collections were conducted from 2006 to 2009.

The six data collections were each constrained by tight budgetary restrictions. These constraints required that somewhat different procedures for sampling and interviewing be used in the six data collections. Central attributes of each data collection are summarized in Table 1. Attributes of the respondents in each survey are shown in Table 2. For methodological reasons, comparisons across the six countries must be tentative, but they nevertheless give useful insights. Our main emphasis is the overall influence of the various factors on developmental understanding in these various settings.

Only one of our surveys—the one in the United States--was representative of the entire adult population. The survey in the United States was conducted by telephone, while each of the other five surveys was conducted using face-to-face interviews.

********* Table 1 around here **********

The survey in Argentina was national, but was limited to residents of urban agglomerates of 500,000 people or more. Such urban areas represent about 60 per cent of Argentina's population[1].

The surveys conducted in China, Egypt, Iran, and Nepal were constructed to represent a particular region, province, or city. The Chinese data collection was conducted with adults living in Gansu Province, which is a low-income part of the country located in West-central China. Gansu has a majority Han population, but also has a significant Muslim minority[2].

Our Egyptian sample was drawn from two districts--one located in Qaliubia Governorate north of Cairo and the second located in Fayoum Governorate, which is south of Cairo. We selected these districts to draw from both Upper (Southern) and Lower (Northern) Egypt and to have a diversity of respondents by education, rural-urban residence, and ethnicity. Our sample represents women aged eighteen to fifty-four years, plus the husbands of the married women.

The Iranian survey was conducted in Yazd, a religious and conservative city in central Iran with more than 400,000 people. Yazd contains a population that is relatively homogeneous, with most of the population being Persian and Shi'a. Although Yazd has a relatively high level of industry and income, it retains much of its historical family and religious heritage. One married woman aged fifteen to fifty-four was interviewed in all sample households (548 respondents). For sample households with a never married woman aged fifteen to twenty-nine, one of these never married women was also interviewed (155 respondents) (Abbasi-Shavazi and Askari-Nodoushan forthcoming)[3].

The data collection in Nepal was designed to represent adults living in the Chitwan Valley located in the South-Central part of the country, and combines data from two samples of adults. The first sample consists of adults aged fifteen to fifty-nine living in the study area in 1996, plus the non-resident spouses of these adults. The data were gathered in 2008 from the 1996 sample members who had moved elsewhere in Nepal between 1996 and 2008 as well as those who stayed in the study area. The second sample includes adults fifteen and over in 2008 living in the study area, plus the non-resident spouses of married residents aged fifteen to thirty-four in 2008 and the non-resident parents of unmarried residents in 2008 aged fifteen to thirty-four.

********* Table 2 around here **********

MEASUREMENT AND ANALYSIS

The central substantive issue for this research concerns the extent to which individuals in our six surveys have worldviews that include developmental hierarchies, the extent to which the developmental hierarchies they hold match those commonly used by scholars and policy makers, and the extent individual views vary by gender, by age, and by education. In order to evaluate individual developmental hierarchies we compared them with the one created and published by the United Nations in its Human Development Index, the most common and authoritative of such development indexes. The HDI scores are estimated by the UN as an index consisting of three indicators: the combination of national adult literacy and the gross school enrollment ratio in primary, secondary, and tertiary school; life expectancy at birth; and per capita GDP. In Table 3 we list the UN HDI scores (multiplied by ten) for a set of countries for the year 2005.

In each of our six surveys, we asked individual respondents to rate the development levels of the countries listed in Table 3. In these surveys we did not define what was meant by development, but instead let respondents provide their own definitions. This was important because it allowed the respondents' own constructions of development to dictate their ratings rather than have those ratings determined by the social construction that we might have provided. Respondents in each of the data collections rated a country's development level from zero to ten, with ten being the highest (most developed) and zero being the lowest (least developed).

In each of the six surveys, the topic of development was introduced as follows:

> 'We would like you to think about development in different countries around the world today. We'll be talking about countries as varied as England and Mongolia. Think of a development scale that rates countries from zero to ten. The least developed places in the world are rated zero and the most developed places in the world are rated ten. You can use both of those numbers for rating countries plus

all of the numbers in between. Using this development scale, where would you put Japan?'[4].

Some respondents indicated that they did not know where to rate Japan. For them, we asked the following probe: 'Even if you don't know exactly, about where would you put Japan?' The original question and probe were repeated as necessary for all of the countries rated. In our analyses we did not distinguish between answers provided without a probe and those provided following a probe because there were relatively few respondents needing a probe.

We analyzed from both aggregate and individual-level perspectives the country ratings on development that our survey respondents provided. For the aggregate perspective, we calculated for each country rated the average rating for all individuals rating that country. These average ratings are reported in Table 3 for each of the surveys, along with the UN HDI scores for those countries (multiplied by ten) for the year 2005. In our analyses of the aggregate data, we compared the average ratings provided by respondents with the UN HDI scores for the same countries. As a summary measure of the correspondence between aggregate country averages and the HDI, we estimated Pearsonian correlations between the UN HDI scores for countries with the average scores provided by respondents for the same countries. These correlations are provided in Table 3 separately for each of the six surveys.

For the individual-level analysis, we calculated a Pearsonian correlation between each individual's country ratings and the UN HDI scores. This was done for every person in each survey using the same procedure as used to calculate the average aggregate correlations with the UN HDI. That is, for every n individuals in a data set, we estimated n correlations between those individual scores and the HDI of the UN. These correlations provided our indicator of the correspondence between an individual's views and the hierarchical ratings of the UN. We summarize these individual correlations in Table 4 by listing the decile distributions.

We calculated the distribution of correlations for each group based on age, gender, or education (Figures 1a, 1b, and 1c). We also used these same individual-level correlations in several ordinary least squares regression models to estimate the associations of each of the predictor variables adjusted for the others (Table 5).

We also considered the possibility that gender, age, and education predict differently each of the dimensions that comprise the HDI index. For example, each of these variables might have a stronger influence predicting the living standard index (per capita GDP) than the human development index, the life expectancy index, and the education index. Another alternative is that these individual-level factors may have opposite influences on the three dimensions that comprise the HDI. That is, gender might have a positive influence on the education index but a negative influence on the living standard index, suggesting that men and women emphasize different aspects when rating countries on development. In addition, these patterns might not be consistent across the study settings. The results of these additional analyses predicting separately each of the HDI components in each country turned out to be extremely similar to the results predicting the overall HDI index, suggesting that views of development are not weighted differentially by people's gender, age, and education in the countries studied here (results not shown in tables).

For our analysis of the predictors of the individual-level correlations between respondent and UN scores, we treated each of the predictor variables as temporally preceding the views of the respondents about developmental hierarchies. This approach is clearly justifiable in the case of gender and age (or birth cohort), as each is set at the time of birth and is exogenous relative to views of developmental hierarchies as reported at the time of the survey. We also follow standard conventions and treat education as a predictor variable, although we recognize that education is achieved cumulatively across the lifecourse, which creates the potential for reciprocal causation between individuals' schooling and their views and beliefs. That is, people with higher adherence to developmental worldviews may, in turn, stay longer in school and have higher educational achievements. Nevertheless, we see the bulk of the relationship between worldviews and education being the result of the effect of education on worldviews, although we emphasize the possibility of the relationship being partially the result of worldviews affecting education.

In addition to the binary variable for gender (with men as the referent), we also dichotomized the measures for age (less than fofrty, at least forty) and education. The categories for education varied across countries, taking into account their differences in

schooling attainments. In the case of China, Egypt and Nepal, those with complete elementary education or less were coded as low education whereas those with incomplete high school or more are coded with high education. In Argentina, Iran, and US those with complete high school or less are coded with low education whereas those with more than complete high school are coded with high education.

Low correlations between a respondent's country ratings and the ratings of the UN can indicate several phenomenon. The respondent may not have a construction of development or may have a different construction from that of the UN HDI. Low correlations can also be produced by respondents having difficulty utilizing our development rating scale reliably or not knowing the countries being rated

RESULTS

Average Ratings

Table 3 shows the average ratings given by the respondents across the six studies. As expected, and consistent with previous results (Thornton et al. 2011), some countries are rated high while others are rated low, with great similarity in the ways the various countries are rated in the six different settings. There also is close correspondence in the six study sites between the developmental hierarchies in ordinary people's minds and the UN HDI. As indicated at the bottom of Table 3, the Pearson correlations between the average survey ratings and the UN scores are extremely high, ranging from a low of 0.89 in China and Nepal to a high of 0.97 in Iran, with the rest of the countries having correlations around 0.9, suggesting that at least at the aggregate level, the existence of similar views concerning development hierarchies.

********* Table 3 around here **********

Individual Respondent Ratings

We now turn our attention to an individual perspective, and examine the extent that each individual in the surveys rates the various countries similarly to the UN HDI. We

estimated a Pearson correlation for each individual, as described in the previous section, and summarize the results by decile in Table 4.

The majority of the individual correlations were positive and substantial for the individuals in the six countries, as revealed by the correlation levels at the different per centiles. The medians range from a low of 0.57 to a high of 0.86, indicating that at least half of the people in each sample had correlations of 0.56 or higher.

A complementary way to describe the individual correlation distributions is by the percentage of respondents having correlations of 0.5 or higher, or correlations of 0.7 or higher, which are reported at the bottom of Table 4. Between 56 and 94 per cent of respondents have correlations of 0.5 or higher. And when we raise the standard to correlations of at least 0.7 level, the percentage of respondents is still remarkably high, ranging from 35 to 84 per cent.

While the results show that a significant fraction of individuals in the six study sites understand development hierarchies and do so in ways that are consistent with the UN HDI, we also observe important differences across settings. Nepalese respondents consistently show higher discrepancies with UN HDI ratings, followed by respondents in China and Egypt. On the other end, Argentina, the US, and Iranian respondents consistently show the highest correspondence between people's development scores and those of the UN.

********* Table 4 around here **********

Influences of Gender, Age, and Education

Bivariate Results

Figure 1a shows selected percentiles of the distributions of the individual correlations between individual's ratings and the UN HDI scores separately for men and women. The Iranian sample is excluded because it included only women.

Consistent with our expectations, men had higher correlations than their female counterparts, suggesting a closer match of their views with those of the UN. The magnitude of these differences is quite different across countries, being more important in those societies that assign women a much lower status than men, as is the case of Nepal, China and Egypt. In the case of Argentina and the US, where women have participated

more fully in society for an extended period of time, men show only slightly higher correlations, and in the case of the US the difference is not statistically significant.

********* Figure 1a around here **********

Developmental hierarchies are similarly conceptualized among people from different age groups (Figure 1b). The distributions of the correlations classified by age are relatively similar across countries. We found small differences in Nepal and Iran, with younger individuals producing higher correlations than their older peers. In contrast to Nepal and Iran, Argentina, Egypt, and the US, have the opposite pattern, although differences are small and marginally significant.

********* Figure 1b around here **********

In each country, people with more education have higher correlations between their own country development ratings and those of the UN than do their counterparts with less education (Figure 1c). This finding is consistent with the expectation that people with more education have been more exposed to the ideas about the larger world and to the elite view of country development hierarchies. These differences are more pronounced in Nepal, Egypt, and China, whereas in Argentina, Iran, and the US, they are more modest. In understanding country differences it is important to take into account that many individuals coded with low education in Argentina, Iran, and the US have achieved more formal education than individuals coded with high education in Nepal, Egypt, and China. In other words, the majority of people coded with low education in the former countries have at least completed elementary school.

********* Figure 1c around here **********

Multivariate Results

The next step in the analysis is to examine gender, age and education in a multivariate context, to estimate the net effect of each of these variables on individuals'

perceptions of developmental hierarchies. Table 5 shows the results for each country: the univariate column indicates the effect of that variable when it is the only regressor: the multivariate column indicates the effects of the variable net of the other variables.

Multivariate results largely replicate those detailed in the bivariate section, indicating independent effects of gender and education in influencing people's world views. That is, men and individuals with more education in each country view development hierarchies more similarly to the UN than women and individuals with lower education. In China and in Iran, the effect of age is negative whereas in Argentina, Egypt and the US the effect of age is positive.

Nepal stands out as the setting in which both education and gender have stronger independent effects than in the other countries. Also, it is the only country where the effect of age changes sign once education is controlled, as shown by the results from the comparison from the univariate to the multivariate models in Table 5. This suggests that younger people's views of development hierarchies are closer to the UN HDI index mainly because they have higher educations than their older peers. Once education is taken into account, the effect of age is reversed, with older individuals having views closer to the UN HDI.

In our theoretical section, we hypothesized that educational differences between women and men would explain a substantial part of the gender differences in evaluating country developmental hierarchies similar to the UN evaluations. However, the data in Table 5 suggest that schooling attainment explains either little or none of the gender effect. This conclusion is based on the fact that the gender coefficients are very similar with and without the multivariate controls for education. Apparently, the differences between women and men in views of developmental hierarchies primarily operate independently of any gender differentials in educational attainment. If anything, we note that both in China and Iran, the effect of education explains an important part of the effect of age. That is, once education is controlled, the magnitude of the effect of age reduces substantially suggesting that younger people's views of developmental hierarchies are closer to the HDI index mainly because they have higher educations than their older peers.

********* Table 5 around here **********

CONCLUSIONS

Our research is motivated by the idea that development and developmental hierarchies have been constructed and embraced for centuries by elites, including scholars and policy makers, in their thinking about geographical and temporal differences among societies. In fact, the developmental social construction has been so thoroughly disseminated and inculcated that it is often taken-for-granted as a physical reality rather than a socially constructed idea. We posit that the construct of development and developmental hierarchies has also been disseminated widely among ordinary (non-elite) people, with the views of many ordinary people about developmental hierarchies being consistent with those of the international elites, such as the United Nations. Previous ethnographic research and recent research using survey data in a range of countries indicates that worldviews concerning development and developmental hierarchies are widespread among ordinary people, and that large fractions of people have understandings of development that are quite similar across diverse countries around the world.

The goal of this paper is to move a step further by examining how basic social factors such as gender, age, and schooling influence ordinary people beliefs about development and developmental hierarchies in six countries: Argentina, China, Egypt, Iran, Nepal, and the United States. We hypothesized that the understanding and adherence of developmental worldviews will vary by education, gender, and age.

The results are largely consistent with our hypotheses. We found that a large proportion of individuals in each of the study sites rate countries in a fashion that corresponds highly with the UN HDI scores. Also, ordinary people's hierarchical worldviews vary according to gender and schooling across the countries studied. Both univariate and multivariate results indicate men and individuals with more formal schooling have views of developmental hierarchies that are closer to the UN evaluations. The magnitude of these differences varies across countries. In those societies that assign women a lower status, and countries where an important fraction of people does not complete or surpass elementary school such as Egypt, Nepal and China, the magnitude of these differences across groups are higher. The effect of age is not consistent across the

countries, with a positive effect in Argentina, Egypt, Nepal, and the US, but is negative in China and Iran.

Contrary to our expectation that gender differences in views of developmental hierarchies could be partially explained by their educational differences, we found independent effects of each variable in each of the settings studied. This finding suggests that, independent of education, women have less knowledge of development hierarchies than men, particularly in societies that allocate to women secondary social positions.

In large part, our results corroborate the premises of this study: that developmental worldviews have been disseminated widely around the world, and that there are important differentials in such understandings across basic social factors. We found that a large proportion of individuals have understandings of development that are quite similar across settings, and consistent with the UN HDI. In addition, the understanding and perception of developmental hierarchies varies by the basic social factors of gender, age, and education. These are important factors because they are dimensions that social systems use to position individuals in the social structure, providing differential access to information and ideas. These data suggests that these are among the important mechanisms for individuals gaining knowledge of development and development hierarchies. More research is needed to continue identifying individual and community factors predicting people's views of developmental hierarchies.

As we argued in the introduction, the acceptance, rejection, or modification of such developmental worldviews will influence people in everyday life. People who accept these developmental models will likely behave differently on a range of issues than people who reject these ideas. More research is needed to evaluate the extent that awareness of developmental hierarchies is also endorsed as a good or as a bad thing by people and, in turn, how these have consequences for family, demographic, and other outcomes.

We conclude by recognizing some limitations of our research, including the fact that we have interpreted the coefficient for education as representing education's influence on beliefs even though educational attainments may have been influenced by beliefs. This is a common methodological problem in cross-sectional research and we advocate longitudinal research to separate the reciprocal effects of education and beliefs about development.

There are also methodological differences in the sampling and interviewing procedures used in each country that limits our ability to make strict comparisons across countries. Although we recognize this limitation, we believe that the overall pattern of results we have observed is not substantially affected by these differences, although more research concerning such potential method influences would be useful. Another important need is similar research investigating these same issues in other countries.

Notes

[1] The Argentina sample was drawn using a multi-stage procedure with urban agglomerates and clusters within agglomerates being randomly selected. Households were chosen through a random walk to find whether an individual residing in the household fits a quota of gender and age previously locally established.

[2] The sample was selected using a multi-stage procedure, with random selection at all levels.

[3] The sampling frame was drawn using a two-stage stratified cluster sampling technique by the Statistical Centre of Iran (SCI).

[4] The introduction in the US survey and the Nepal survey mentioned 'France and Mongolia' rather than 'England and Mongolia'. In Argentina, this sentence was not included. In the Nepal study, the sentence telling respondents that they could use both zero and ten and all numbers in between was omitted.

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Table 1. Characteristics of Sample Surveys

Countries surveyed	Study Location	Respondent Ages	Respondent Sex	Interview Mode	Study Dates	Sample Size
Argentina	Urban Agglomerates ≥ 500,000	Adults	Both	Face-to-face	2008	1,003
China	Gansu Province	Adults	Both	Face-to-face	2007	633
Egypt	One District each in Fayoum and Qaliubia Provinces	Women 18-54 and their husbands	Both	Face-to-face	2007-2008	1,500
Iran	Yazd City	Married: 15-54 Unmarried: 15-29	Women	Face-to-face	2007	703
Nepal	Chitwan Valley	15 and older	Both	Face-to-face	2008-2009	7,455
USA	National	Adults	Both	Telephone	2006	486

Table 2. Respondents' demographic characteristics

Respondents' characteristics	Argentina	China	Egypt	Iran	Nepal	US
Gender (% Female)	52,6	51,3	58,3	100,0	57,1	54,9
Age						
Mean	41,6	41,5	36,0	34,9	36,6	52,0
(Std. Dev.)	(16.7)	(14.1)	(11.6)	(12.4)	(14.5)	(17.5)
Marital status						
Single	31,5	8,7	11,3	22,0	17,7	14,3
Married or cohabiting	51,9	86,3	85,7	74,8	76,9	56,3
Separated/Divorced	10,4	0,9	1,1	0,1	1,5	17,0
Widowed	6,1	4,1	1,8	3,0	3,9	12,4
Educational attainment[a]						
Never attended to school			26,4	3,1	30,9	
Below elementary	6,2	21,4	13,5	17,8	10,5	
Complete elementary	16,0	23,0	3,5	8,8	6,3	1,2
Incomplete high school	17,8	32,7	11,3	21,1	25,6	4,6
Complete high school	27,3	12,0	29,1	31,6	5,8	26,8
Superior	32,7	10,6	16,2	17,6		
Some College - No degree					17,4	18,9
College/Post Graduate Degree					3,5	48,4
Religion Affilation						
Buddhism	0,1	9,1			11,5	1,1
Catholic	74,9					22,7
Christian - Not further specified	0,3	1,4	1,5		1,5	4,3
Muslim		9,3	98,5		0,6	0,4
Protestant	8,4					57,9
Hinduism					83,0	
Other	0,4	0,8			1,5	4,1
None/Atheist/Agnostic	15,2	79,5			1,9	9,5
Importance of Religion						
Very important	33,0	12,7	99,1		56,1	64,1
Somewhat important	47,5	13,1	0,8		40,6	22,0
Not important at all	19,6	74,2	0,1		3,4	14,0
Unweighted N	1.003	633	1.500	703	7.455	486

[a] In China, education was registered as the highest level completed, therefore it may be underestimating the actual highest level achieved (e.g., those attending Junior High School has been registered as Complete Elementary).

Table 3. Respondents' Mean Country Scores on Development and United Nations HDI

	Argentina	China	Egypt	Iran	Nepal	US	UN HDI 2005
Brazil	6,5	5,6	5,9	6,5	6,6	6,1	8,0
Central African Republic	3,4	4,7	4,4	3,1	5,6	3,4	3,8
China	7,7	6,9	8,1	7,8	7,4	7,5	7,8
France	7,7	6,7	7,6	7,9			9,5
India	3,6	5,1	5,8	4,6	5,8	5,3	6,2
Japan	8,8	7,2	8,2	8,7	8,2	8,8	9,5
Nigeria	3,5	4,4	5,2	3,4	5,6	3,3	4,7
Pakistan	3,8	5,0	5,6	4,4	5,1	4,1	5,5
Sweden						7,4	9,6
United Kingdom					7,5		9,5
USA	8,4	8,4	8,6	8,6	9,1	8,8	9,5
Correlations between each country respondents' score and UN HDI [a]	0,94	0,89	0,91	0,97	0,89	0,96	--

[a] For US, France, since was no rated, was replaced by Sweden. Nepal survey didn't include France among the countries to be rated, therefore it was replaced by United Kingdom for the correlation.

Table 4. Bivariate correlations between Individual respondents´ ratings of Development and the United Nation´s Human Development Index

	Argentina	China	Egypt	Iran	Nepal	US
Decils						
10th	0.61	0.15	0.23	0.43	0.04	0.51
20th	0.73	0.33	0.47	0.67	0.23	0.68
30th	0.79	0.48	0.59	0.76	0.36	0.75
40th	0.83	0.58	0.67	0.80	0.46	0.80
50th	0.86	0.68	0.73	0.84	0.57	0.84
60th	0.88	0.74	0.78	0.87	0.65	0.88
70th	0.90	0.79	0.83	0.90	0.74	0.91
80th	0.92	0.85	0.87	0.92	0.81	0.93
90th	0.94	0.90	0.90	0.94	0.88	0.95
% with corr .5 or higher	94.3	69.6	78.5	89.1	56.5	91.1
% with corr .7 or higher	83.8	48.3	56.4	76.5	34.7	77.2
N	927	627	1,337	660	7,385	473

Note: For US, France, since was no rated, was replaced by Sweden. Nepal survey didn't included France among the countries to be rated, therefore it was replaced by United Kingdom for the correlation.

Figure 1.A: Bivariate correlations between Individual respondents' ratings and UN's HDI, by Gender. - Selected percentiles-

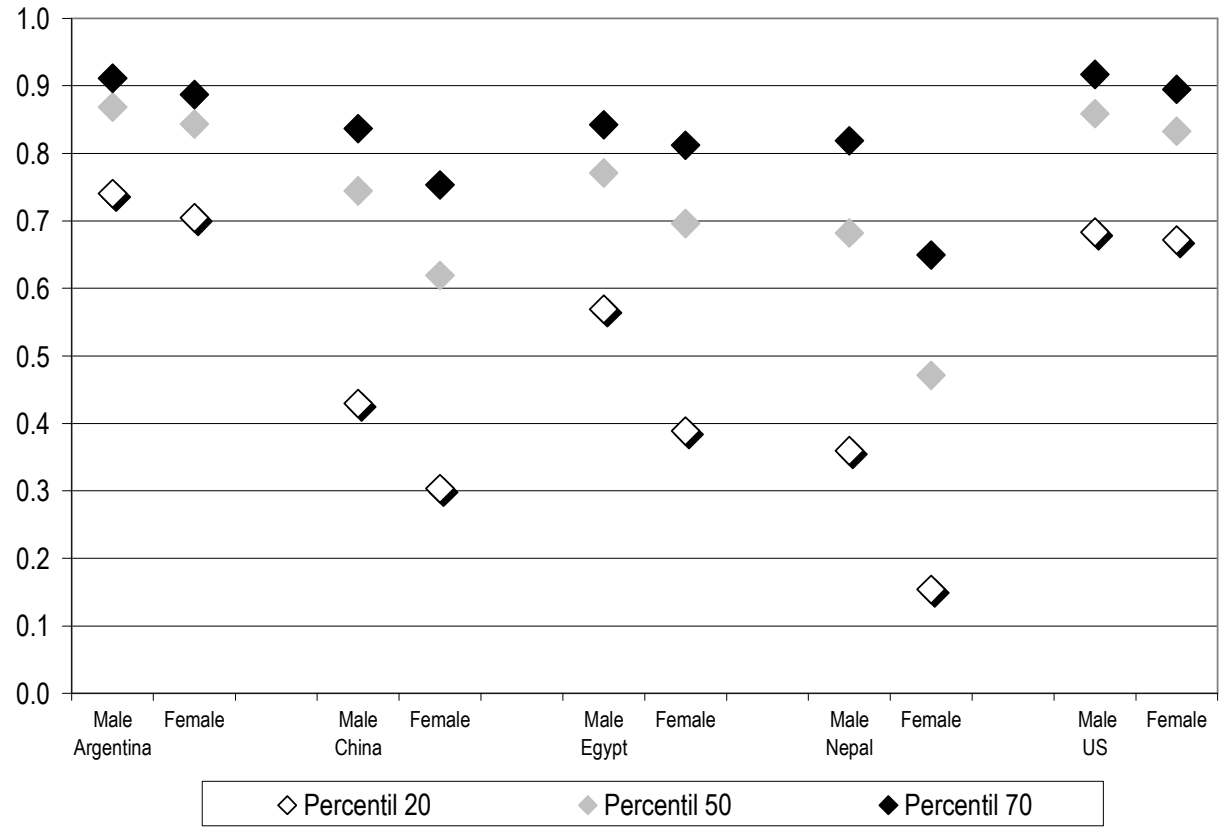

Figure 1.B: Bivariate correlations between Individual respondents' ratings and UN's HDI, by Age Group. - Selected percentiles-

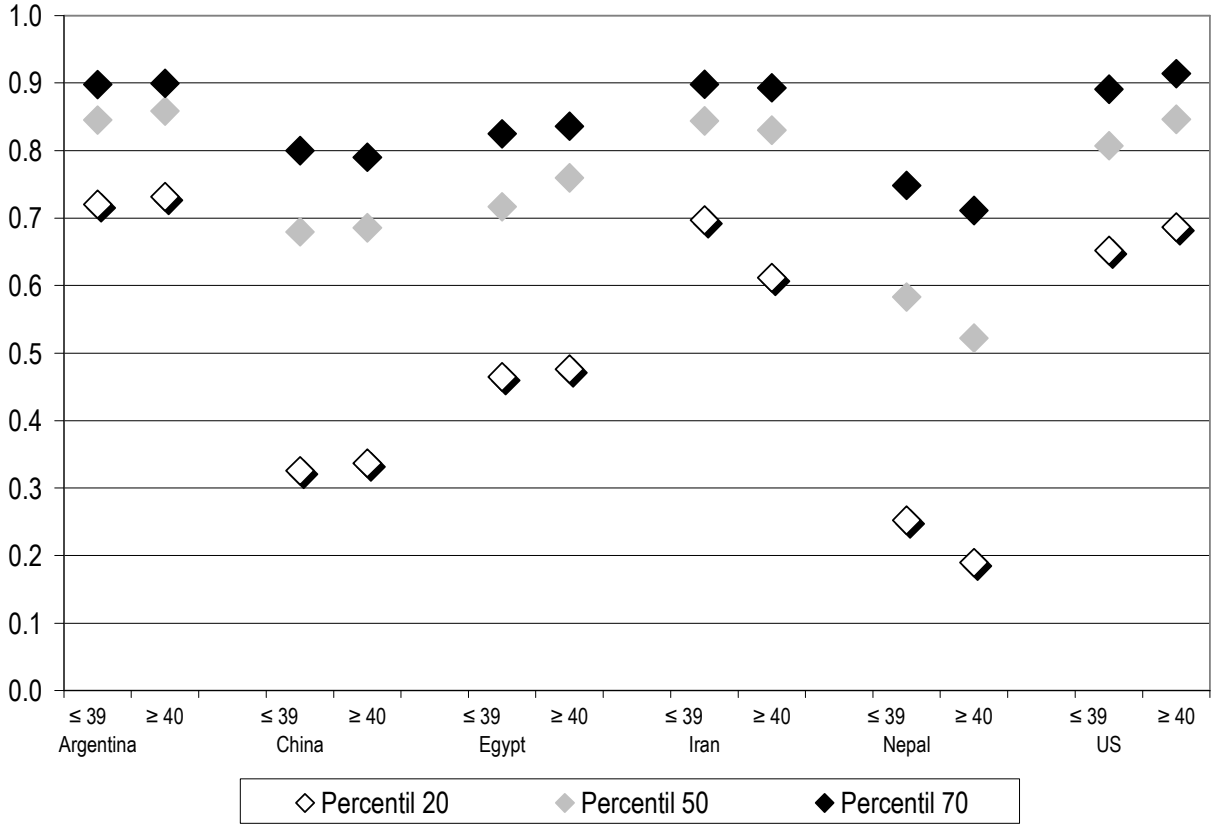

Figure 1.C.: Bivariate correlations between Individual respondents' ratings and UN's HDI, by Level of Schooling. - Selected percentiles-

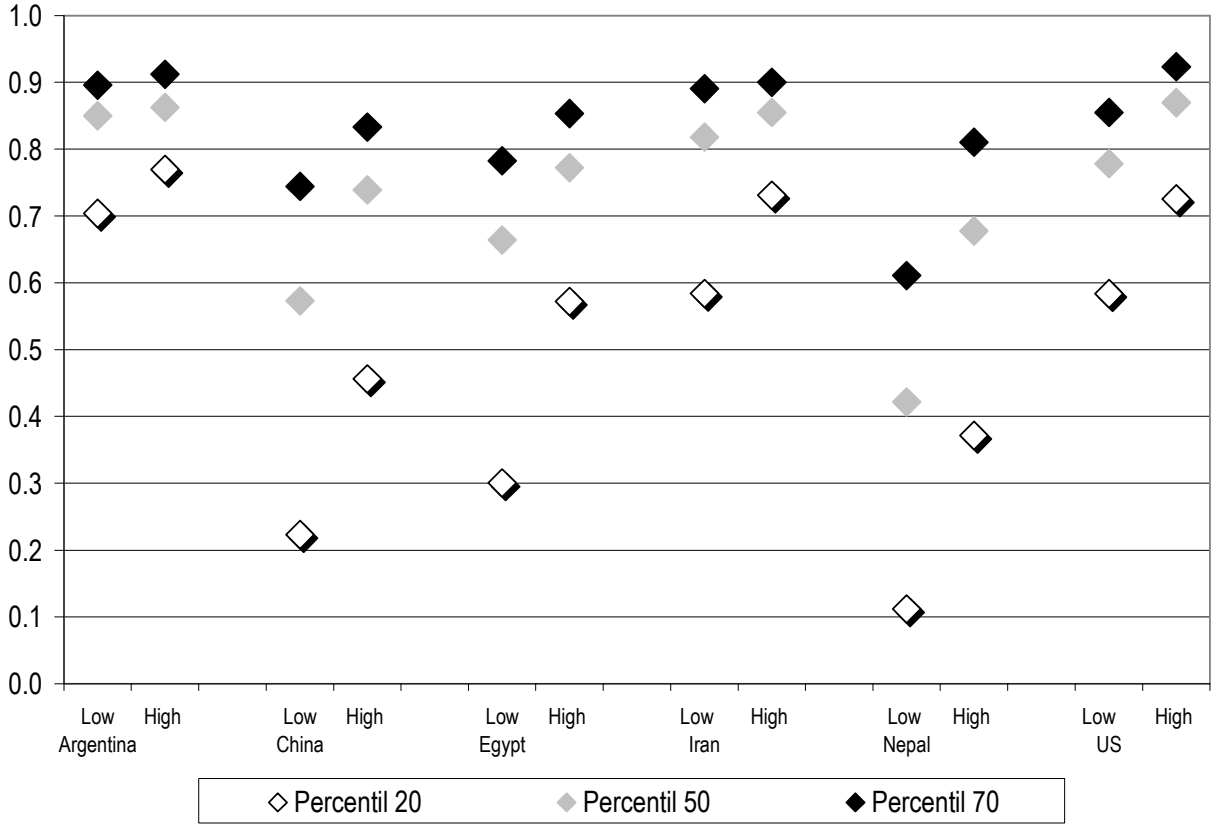

Table 5: OLS Regression model. Dependent variable: Correlations between INDIVIDUAL respondents´ ratings of Development and the United Nation´s Human Development Index[a]

	Argentina		China		Egypt		Iran		Nepal		US	
Model[b]	Univariate	Multivar.	Univariate	Multivar.	Univariate	Multivar.	Univariate	Multivar.	Univariate	Multivar.	Univariate	Multivar.
Constant		0,785 ***		0,551 ***		0,590 ***		0,728 ***		0,460 ***		0,676 ***
Gender												
Male (omited)												
Female	-0,033 **	-0,036 **	-0,088 ***	-0,077 **	-0,089 ***	-0,076 ***			-0,168 ***	-0,136 ***	-0,006 *	-0,001
Age Group												
Younger than 40 (omited)												
40 and older	0,014	0,026 *	-0,023	-0,005	0,014	0,020	-0,035 *	-0,009 *	-0,040 ***	0,040 ***	0,018	0,025
Educational attainment[c]												
Low (omited)												
High	0,047 ***	0,053 ***	0,130 ***	0,121 ***	0,149 ***	0,148 ***	0,077 ***	0,074 ***	0,206 ***	0,206 ***	0,124 ***	0,125 ***
R2		0,026		0,059		0,083		0,028		0,149		0,079
Adjusted R2		0,023		0,054		0,081		0,025		0,148		0,073
DF		4		4		4		3		4		4
N	933		623		1.337		660		7.385		466	

Notes:

[a] For US, France, since was no rated, was replaced by Sweden. Nepal survey didn't included France among the countries to be rated, therefore it was replaced by United Kingdom for the correlation.

[b] Model Univariate is a model with only one of the independent variables. The constant for each model is not reported nor the fit of the model, only the coefficient of the variable for each independent variable.

[c] The cut point for Education differs from one country to another, as follows: Argentina, Iran and USA: Complete high school and less / Higher than complete HS, whereas for China, Egypt and Nepal is: Complete Elementary and less / Higher than Complete Elementary

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$