

RANK-ORDERING MODERNITY: PERCEPTIONS OF GLOBAL HIERARCHIES AND DEVELOPMENT IN HUNGARY

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Abstract

In my thesis, I analyze how ordinary non-elite Hungarians perceive the developmental level of twelve countries within and outside of Europe, and the possible factors that influence these beliefs. Development is a commonly used but porous concept, a belief system present in the academic sphere and in our everyday life, and it is also a recurring notion in the vocabulary of several international organizations. In my paper I focus on these organizations and mass media and analyze their effect on peoples' understanding of development through two approaches. By using data from a 2010 survey I examine how development is perceived by Hungarians and which international scales are in line with these findings. The second, qualitative section is based on the extensive analysis of three types of media sources (television, radio, newspapers) and focuses on the possible links between the hierarchy constructed by ordinary people and the media.

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1. Introduction

“For the Japanese work is a sacred duty. For the Americans it is a chance to break out and prove oneself. For a significant part of the Hungarians work is a mere constraint. Kind of like a conscription in civil life.” (NOL1)¹ These are the words of János Sebeők published in mid-March, 2010 in Hungary’s most widely distributed conservative newspaper, *Magyar Nemzet*. The piece is about the current developmental state of the country and its absent work ethic embedded in a political context. The noteworthy message here is the emphasis on the “present of the not yet” (Böröcz rephrasing Chakrabarty’s terms 2006:116). According to the author the country has not reached its desired developmental destination, because the stomachs are clenching from anxiety when the taps start dripping: everyone knows that the plumber will not come on time. Hungary will arrive only if the plumber comes to your house on the very day you call him.

Although the author is not explicit about the concept of development, it is clear that he has a certain perception of it. According to the text it is a process which has a starting and an ending point, and of which time and work ethic serve as important units of comparison. In this simplified context Hungarian’s work ethic is far from that of an American or Japanese person’s. It also means that there is no hope, until the Hungarians do not understand that they have to work for their own personal sake and for the benefit of their country and not for their bosses.

Development is a commonly used but porous concept. Even though we encounter this term both in the academic sphere and in our everyday life, its definition is far from fixed. But since we use it, hear it and read it frequently, we as ordinary people or social scientists all have a certain perception of it. Furthermore, it is not only a simple concept detached from

¹ Since I quote many articles during my thesis, I developed a system by referring only to the abbreviation of the sources. For the full reference list see Appendix.

other meanings. On the contrary: it is relational and can not exist without a reference point. Being developed is a stage above the less developed, undeveloped or underdeveloped and the same is true in the other direction. It means that by using this term we inadvertently apply a scale-like cognitive schema on which the cases (e.g. different countries) constitute a hierarchical order. Although people of one nation go through similar stages of education and receive the same set of curriculum, they lead different ways of life and rely on different sources of information; thus the hierarchies (in plural) constructed by them may vary across the society. As seen above, one measures it with time and work ethic, others with economic data and the 'level of' cultural development, for some it depends on a sum of various other factors.

These hierarchical scales exemplify the strength of the modernist mission: development has become a commonly used term with a direction indicator embedded in our everyday thinking and speech. Even if we criticize it, the discourse is still there. Since individuals, powerful institutions, the state and other players define development in a slightly or even significantly different manner, it can confirm various ways of actions (e.g. segregating a Roma community in the framework of a false cultural development program).

Development and developmental hierarchies are not physical but cultural ideas, such as justice and nation and similarly, they are socially imagined and constructed (Anderson 2006, Berger and Luckmann 1966 or Melegh et al. 2012). But even though these hierarchies are constructed, they exist, and permeate the belief system of policy makers and elites, influence public affairs, our thoughts and interpretations, and have material consequences. Certainly, there are many elements in the complex ongoing process of construction, but there are also some distinguished ones, such as mass education, mass media and certain organizations (UN and the churches, political and economic movements) (Thornton 2005: 134).

In my thesis, I choose to analyze a small segment of this ongoing process in a specific time and space. Inspired by such materials as the article above, I intend to find answers to a set of hypotheses focusing on the scaling aspect of development and the way ordinary non-elite Hungarians order the countries of the world. I assume that:

- a) Ordinary Hungarians have a hierarchical understanding of development
- b) The hierarchy constructed by them resembles the most widely used developmental scales such as GDP, HDI, Democracy Index or Gender Inequality Index
- c) A similar scale can be perceived in Hungarian mass media (press, TV, radio)

In order to prove or refute these hypotheses, after a theoretical introduction, I am going to analyze a database collected in 2010 about the developmental perceptions of non-elite Hungarians and compare them to the international scales included in the second hypothesis. In addition, I will also analyze those factors, which influenced the ranking of the countries. In Chapter 4 I am going to test whether Hungarian mass media (two printed newspapers, one web portal, one television and one radio evening news program) represents a similar scale about these countries, thus plays an influential role in constructing a developmental idea, or if this is not the case. Throughout the analysis, I will also try to unveil some of the inner mechanisms of the hierarchization process.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Development: a definition

Since I am particularly interested in the way development is grasped in Hungary by its citizens and the mass media, I will rely on a broader popular definition and leave room for all the possible elements that appear in the upcoming chapters.

First of all, development is a belief system originating from the West, which has been widespread among politicians, scholars – the members of the elite – since the 18th century (Melegh et al. 2012). It is a social process with an embedded compass that points front or behind, during which the application of a specific blueprint is of high importance. The elements of this plan are various and interconnected; it involves human rights, behavioral patterns, high level of education, freedom and economic prosperity among others. Based on these criteria the regions and countries around the world are classified in a relational developmental scale. As Portes claims, development is relational because it refers only to the western countries, thus they constitute the basis of comparison. Furthermore, he thinks that the important spheres (and not elements) of the developmental process can be defined by its interrelated criteria of three kinds: economic, social and cultural (Portes 1973:253). By economic development he means the “sustained ideas in national product”, by social the redistribution of national income, and by the cultural the “emergence of a new national self-image” (ibid.). Although Portes is writing primarily about ‘national’ development, his analytical segregation (different of the elite-non-elite one) will enable a more detailed analysis.

In addition, it is important to note that developmental ideals, which in a cultural analysis translate into Westernization, have many alternative names, such as economic and

social development, the march of civilization, progress and modernization (Thornton 2005: 134). Since these concepts are basically the combination of the same thing, but each highlights a different perspective, in the next sections I will try to take a closer look and define what civilization and modernity means.

2.2. Civilization

Civilization is a concept referring predominantly to the qualitative features of development. Although its meaning has been slightly changed over time, the major characteristics have remained the same.

For Larry Wolff civilization is a specific historical concept typical for the Enlightenment period. In his extensive analysis about inventing Eastern Europe, civilization appears as a defining concept of the West opposed to which the barbarism of the East could be grasped and invented (Wolff 1994: 360). Furthermore, in the 18th century civilized people were defined as enlightened, free, unprejudiced French and Anglo-American people (Wolff quotes Condorcet 1994:13). Similarly, the western domination is apparent in Michael Adas's book about the last embodiment of the ideological superiority of the civilizing mission, the modern technology. He defines civilization as "the measure of men", indicating also the powerful male domination over other males and the exclusion of women (Adas 1989: 13). However, the broadest definition comes from Elias, according to whom civilization is a concept, which "refers to a wide variety of facts: to the level of technology, to the type of manners, to the development of scientific knowledge, to religious ideas and customs. It can refer to the type of dwelling or the manner in which men and women live together, to the form of judicial punishment, or to the way in which food is prepared" (Elias 2000: 5).

These three approaches are not exclusive. On the contrary, Elias's concept includes Adas's and also Wolff's definitions. They all refer to this concept as a basis of creating a

binary opposition between “civilized” and “uncivilized” societies and individuals strictly from the Western perspective. Besides, they emphasize the cultural aspects of development and do not include explicitly the role of capital.

I assume that civilization as a broad idea is still alive, cannot be restricted only to the analysis of the past events, and it is often used as an indicator of development. As it will be presented in the third chapter, this usually happens in the case of mass media products. For this reason I will use civilization as a synonym of development, bearing in mind that it refers more to the cultural aspects of the ‘development’ process while the economic aspects are not dominant in the definitions.

2.3. Modernity

In contrast to the above described definitions, in this context modernity refers to the rather quantitative aspects of development. Since IMF and the World Bank, two of the major international institutions involved in the second hypothesis apply the logic of this approach, it is particularly important to my research.

First of all, I am going to highlight the differences between modernity and development, since they are often used as synonyms. While development is a process with its economic, social and cultural criteria, “a towering lighthouse guiding sailors towards its ends” (Sachs 2010: xv), modernism is the desired outcome, the shore, and the point where the developmental process can end. However, the difference between the process and the result is not so simple.

When making a distinction between the early and late development, Portes points out that while the former was a spontaneous process of the West, not influenced by others, late development is purposeful and the goals are predefined based on the experiences of the already developed countries (Portes 1997: 244-245.). Applying such blueprints resembles the

way early anthropologists supported the colonizers' missions. For example Tylor argues that the apparent differences between the cultures are only the stages of progress (Tylor 1971). Such biological parallels are often drawn between the less developed and developed countries according to modernization theorists, for whom development stages resemble the human life-cycle (Timmons 2000: 9). Furthermore, while in Tylor's era Christian morality and the western lifestyle served as a basis of comparison, the liberal attitude towards the perception of history was very similar described by Mannheim (Mannheim 1979: 121). According to him liberals believed in a "progressively unilinear historical structure" and thought that the events can be theoretically evaluated by a 'measuring rod' (Mannheim 1979: 121, 197.).

Fernando Cardoso, the former President of Brazil and a major dependency theorist, derives the differences between the concepts of modernity and development from the distinction of traditional and modern societies. Since according to him relating development to modern society and underdevelopment to traditional society are very simplistic techniques, he argues in favor of reconsidering this connection. Based on his analysis the modernization mission can be seemingly successful, but even despite some modernity patterns are effectively applied (such as education and consumption), the level of development can still remain at a low level, if "by development we understood less dependency and self-sustained growth based on the local capital accumulation and on the dynamism of the industrial sector" (Cardoso 1979: 10).

After understanding the differences, it is crucial to point out, that many of the underlying criteria and the application of the western blueprint described above is driven by a capitalist materialist approach. One of the best examples for this is Rostow's *Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960). In it he applies the life-cycle logic and clearly identifies the preconditions of the "take-off", a "mature" stage in which growth and industrialization becomes a normal

condition. Similarly to his ideas Huntington and Nisbet praise an approach based on growth (Huntington 1968, Nisbet 1969).

Opposed to them, a post-development thinker, James Ferguson is explicitly criticizing modernization. According to him it is a myth, both, in a popular and anthropological way (Ferguson 1999). On the one hand, “the narrative of modernization was always bad social science; it was (and is) a myth in the first sense” (1999: 13). Secondly, “the myth of modernization (no less than any other myth) gives form to an understanding of the world, providing a set of categories and premises that continue to shape people's experiences and interpretations of their lives” (1999: 13-14). He shows that there is a contradiction between these two understandings of modernity and suggests that we should “find new ways of thinking about both progress and responsibility in the aftermath of modernism” (1999: 254). However since this is not accepted by a wide audience, especially not by the media products I intend to analyze, I will lean on his theory and try to capture the metanarrative behind the conceptions of development and see what categories does this myth provide to the Hungarian ordinary people.

Since I assume that even though these theories have been severely criticized, modernizing a country and its people still means an application of a blueprint driven mostly by several economic factors, and the newspapers and magazines in Hungary mediate primarily this approach regardless of their political stance and thus influence the perceptions of development.

2.4. A short history of the development concept and its interpretations

Although we can find the developmental elements already in the works of the founding fathers of sociology, but Marx, Tönnies or Durkheim were not talking explicitly about them. Their holistic approach was the product of the changes the industrial revolution

had brought about. Still one can see the concept of development in their work: the divisions between organic and mechanic solidarity (Durkheim) or community and society (Tönnies) have their developmental connotations (Portes, 1973, see also Bendix 1967).

The next big chapter in developmental studies, modernization theories (as already mentioned above) were and are rather simplistic in their nature. Strikingly, many years after the first anthropological works (Tylor 1871, Lévi-Bruhl 1910) – which dealt with the linear evolution of people around the globe – the modernists applied the same logic. Furthermore, a quantitative analysis designed by Inkeles tried to find out the definition of the modern men (Inkeles 1969, 1975). He tested his theoretical hypotheses in six so called developing countries and found that there is a connection between the answers in all of them. Education, urbanism and factory work became strong common elements. According to others modern technology and capital are more important factors when taking into consideration the development of traditional societies and poor countries.

On the other hand, modernists do not only emphasize the role of capital. Huntington sheds light on the importance of political modernization as well. According to him this process has three stages: rationalization of authority, differentiation of new political functions, and mass participation (Huntington 1968). However, in a 1971 article he gives a list of the characteristics of a modern society which very much resemble the conditions set by such international organizations as the World Bank: accumulation of knowledge literacy, mass communication, education, better health, longer life expectancy, higher rates of mobility, urban life, variety of occupations, commercial, industrial and nonagricultural activities and strong national feelings (Huntington 1971).

As a response to the previous theories, world system analysts have contributed to the discipline by introducing a new approach. They move from the national to a global, interconnected world-system level in which the nation states serve as the unit of analysis

created by the worldwide economic and political system itself. (Wallerstein 1979, Gunder Frank 1969). Drawing upon Marx, Wallerstein imagines a world system in which there are multiple cultural systems, but only one division of labor, thus world economy and capitalism “are the obverse sides of the same coin” (Wallerstein 1979: 6). Furthermore, he claims that this global system can be divided into four types of countries: center (the core countries), semi-periphery countries and periphery countries based on a global division of labor (of countries), but also external areas (those outside the capitalist world-economy). This gradually developed historical theory implies that there is a worldwide development scale, where the core countries hold the power and the peripheral areas are dependent on them.

Applying this theory Gunder Frank could build a strong argument against the modernist approach and claim that the process of modernization is basically the process of which the endpoints are the advanced, capitalist and thus pluralist and democratic societies (Gunder Frank 1969). However, the inherent opposition between traditional and modern is nothing else than the dependent relationship between the central and peripheral countries.

Postmodern thinkers try to step out from this debate and criticize not only the modernist, but also the world system approach. According to them these theories are outdated, oversimplified, do not concentrate on the diversity of the ‘Third World’ countries and omit the significance of class, gender (Schuurman 1996) and environmental sustainability (Sachs 2010) among others. Furthermore many of them claim that there should be an enhanced focus on a local level and the clarification of the global vs. local (e.g. D.L. Sheth 1997 and Esteva and Prakash 1998). In my thesis, I would like to reflect on the positive outcomes of these post-development theories (the variety of the aspects and the questions they introduce), but criticize their stance about the absence of the developmental approach. According to the findings, modernism is still an important “mission”, thus it is important to formulate a direct reaction to it.

2.5. Development: speaking from where?

Since I was concentrating mostly on the global scale in the theories, I could recognize that many of them use a specific binary opposition or ranking. And even though some have a deconstructing, critical character, they focus on geographical oppositions. This is why I found it fruitful to collect some of the main oppositions and reveal where these theorists speak from. By “speaking from” I mean a slightly reinterpreted version of Mignolo’s “border thinking” (2000). Mignolo introduced this term as an epistemic response to the European modernity project. According to him a subaltern from the periphery should redefine and reconceptualize all the modernist definitions coming from Europe (such as democracy), and formulate a “decolonial transmodern response of the subaltern to Eurocentric modernity” (Grosfoguel 2008). Mignolo thus tries to argue for a critique outside western thinking. “Speaking from” for me is rather a phrase, by which I refer to the authors’ locus of thinking from where they create their individual perceptions.

The first geographic region appearing in these theories is Europe, as a whole or fragments of it. The early founding fathers’ works are characterized by Eurocentrism, but many of the critical theories focus also predominantly on this geographic area. Furthermore, some thinkers wrote about the “in between” position of Central Europe, such as Szűcs, who divided Europe into three sections, and introduced Central Eastern Europe as a separate category in between the inorganic East and the organic West (Szűcs 1981). Or we can mention Hroch, who is writing about a Central European paradox: “inhabitants of Central Europe had acquired literacy and other basics of general education before they were influenced by the ideas of liberalism and democracy” (Hroch 2000: 30).

The second category comes from the Latin-American perspective. Since most of the critical development theories originate from this part of the world, they play an important role

in criticizing and challenging opposition of the East and the West (e.g. Cardoso 2001, Portes 1997, Escobar 1995 or even Mignolo 2000).

By broadening the scale to the eastern regions, the Orient-Occident opposition appears as well. Said in his Foucauldian work about the orientalist thinking sheds light very accurately on the process, how the mystic orient is constructed and imagined (Said 1979). On the other hand, he is not mentioning what is in between the West and the “oriental” world, rather argues in favor of fluid borders.

These theories are not covering all the regions, of course, but they give a representation of the variety of the geographical areas these theorists are speaking from. Since I believe that theories can influence social actions, different institutions and also perceptions (sometimes through the institutions which apply the theories), it is particularly interesting to analyze what kind of oppositions or geographical standpoints appear in the examined materials, and how did a process of melting the Eurocentric, colonizing and civilizatory approaches look like in the research period.

2.6. In between oppositions, on the scale

While most of the theories emphasize the dual aspect of development (East-West, Europe - the rest, etc.), there are some which grasp this concept as an imagined slope in which the regions and countries are not necessarily opposed to each other, but constitute some kind of hierarchy. Through redefining the system-analysis scale, Attila Melegh argues that the East-West slope can be imagined as a Eurocentric cognitive scheme, in which the “non-Western part of Europe is understood as a transitional category between the ‘real’ ‘East’ and ‘West’ ” (Melegh 2006: 32), while the slope divides the continent into better (more worthy) and worse (less worthy) parts. Meanwhile the scale can be imagined and redefined in many ways.

The categorization of Central Eastern Europe is a good example for a construction process for many theorists. For example as Todorova points out in her book addressing the scale-like aspect of the region, while *Mitteleuropa* was a concept stemming from Germany (thus an ally of the west), Central Europe was a cold-war era concept of the eastern European countries, by which they tried to confirm their distance from the Soviet Union (a unit excluding Germany, but not involving any region from the east). Meanwhile the Balkans was omitted and imagined as the borderline of two major systems (the Americanized west and the Russian east) (Todorova 2009).

Bakić-Hayden on the other hand developed her fractal-like theory from Said's conception of orientalism (Said 1979). Nesting orientalism "is a pattern of reproduction of the original dichotomy upon which Orientalism is premised. In this pattern, Asia is more "East" or "other" than eastern Europe; within eastern Europe itself this gradation is reproduced with the Balkans perceived as most "eastern"; within the Balkans there are similarly constructed hierarchies" (Bakić -Hayden 1995: 918). This also implies some kind of slope, where the west is always better than the east. Furthermore, the nesting divisions can be created in many levels. Europe can be opposed to Asia, Central Europe to Western Europe or Christianity to Islam and so on. So for example in my case when an article is about a cultural context, it may create different categories than an analysis about the financial crisis.

A scale aspect is also relevant in Böröcz's article about Europe as the definition of goodness. He argues that goodness from a central European perspective is a moral quality specific for the western (northern, north-western, or west-central) part of the continent; a myth which serves as a basis for comparison (Böröcz 2006: 129-134.). Ironically, while Wolff described Eastern Europe as a historically constructed "barbaric" opposite of the western part of the continent (Wolff 1994), as a result of a dialectical process, East has been applied the

same argument and is usually praising the West and defines it as an example to follow without highlighting the positive eastern characteristics.

I find these theories the most helpful for two reasons. On the one hand, I am interested in how development is constructed and what is the underlying metanarrative. On the other hand, speaking or thinking from Central Europe is a special situation creating a specific mindset, especially in Hungary. As Márk Éber realized, there are many major Hungarian theories, which emphasize the country's Janus-faced, "ferry-country"² character (Éber 2011). It is sometimes approaching the "West", other times the "East". However, these theories usually do not involve the same duality. I assume that the same can be applied also to the public discourse; that their development concept resembles a scale, which is imagined and not well-defined. Furthermore, while I am mostly leaning on the concepts of the world-system analysis, and criticize the (dominant) modernist approach from this perspective, I will also try to shed light on the cultural-materialist divisions, and the stages in between the oppositions.

2.7. Similar projects and their results

Before presenting the results of my analysis, I would like to highlight some of the already existing findings of a similar nature.

In one comprehensive analysis about the perception of development of ordinary non-elite people in thirteen countries from around the world Thornton and his colleagues prove that developmental hierarchies exist in the minds of most people, which are similar across geographical and social settings (Thornton et al. 2012). In this hierarchical scale some countries are consistently ranked as developed (Japan, USA) or less developed (Cambodia, Yemen). The research team also demonstrated that the developmental hierarchies resemble the GDP and the HDI scales the most, which according to them shows the influential power of

² Ferry-country is a loan translation of a Hungarian expression "kompország" coined by a national poet Endre Ady.

the West. In another research concentrating on Bulgaria, Melegh and his colleagues shows that Bulgarians also have a specific perception of development (Melegh et al. 2012). In a scale constructed by them the western countries are positioned on the top followed by eastern European, Balkan, Central Asian and African countries, and the gradient constructed by the respondents showed a high correlation with the GDP and the HDI data here as well. The exceptional countries were mostly those which played an important role in Bulgaria's history, namely the Russian Federation and Turkey, which received higher points from the respondents than their GDP or HDI ratings would have called for. In addition, their results show that Bulgarians tend to underrate Southeast European countries on the scale, which is in line with Todorova's thoughts on the "frustration in the Balkans".

Similarly to these cases I analyzed a scale aspect of the hierarchies constructed by ordinary Hungarians, but unlike the former researches, I also involved a set of qualitative data in order to grasp the metanarrative of the media products and its potential influential power.

3. Hierarchies in the perception of development in Hungary

3.1. Quantitative Methodology

In the quantitative part of my thesis I am going to test two of the above mentioned hypotheses, namely whether a) Hungarians have a hierarchical understanding of development and whether b) the hierarchy constructed by them resembles the most widely used developmental scales (such as GDP and HDI). Besides these two assumptions I would like to further elaborate on the developmental elements based on which the respondents' scale is constructed and to show some rating patterns.

In order to do this, I am going to analyze a database collected in the framework of a project called *Developmental Idealism* initiated by the Population Studies Center at the University of Michigan. It is an international, long-term research undertaken internationally. In cooperation with Corvinus University of Budapest, there was a data collection session also in Hungary from May 28 until June 31, 2010 under the management of Ildikó Husz and Zoltán Szántó. With the approval of Attila Melegh this database could serve as a significant part of my research. Since it contains core questions about the perceptions of development on a macro scale, the data collected in the framework of this project helped me to answer some of my questions.

1400 people over 18 years of age were questioned in May and June, 2010. In the questionnaire, there was no precise definition of what development means, because the aim was to explore what Hungarian people think about this phenomenon and not approach them with a possible answer. There were two major blocks of question to survey this notion. One of them was an 11-point scale on which each respondent had to rank thirteen countries from 1 to 10 (1-most undeveloped, 10- most developed), namely Bulgaria, Central African Republic,

China, Denmark, Ethiopia, Germany, Hungary, India, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Ukraine and the USA³. To test the first hypothesis, a country ranking was created from the mean values, which was later compared to four other international scales (GDP, HDI, Democracy Index and Gender Inequality Index) in order to analyze the second assumption.

The second major question block was about ten possible criteria for evaluating development: level of democracy, religiousness, gender equality, culture, education, use of science and technology, free choice about one's own life, economic well-being, national identity and fertility; meanwhile an open category called other was also a possible to choice. Respondents were asked to select those three elements from this list, which according to them promote to the development of the above mentioned countries the most. By comparing the mean answers to these questions with an independent sample t-test, it was possible to analyze the statistical differences between the developmental elements.

Measuring someone's perception about a concept which is hard to define is without any doubt a challenging task. When using a scale with eleven options and a short list of developmental elements, a researcher has to limit her analytical possibilities. At the same time, using an 11-point scale instead of a categorical question also has its benefits: it reduces the measurement errors thus enhances the reliability and prevents the categorical effects (Scherpenzeel 1999). Both of these features can be positively emphasized in my case, mostly because I will try to avoid categorization in the quantitative part of my thesis and concentrate on the constructed aspect in the qualitative section.

³ Although the choice of these countries tries to be representative, the majority of them are from Europe, while there are no countries from South-America and the Middle-East, and only the dominant Asian countries are involved. In a further research this decision should be revised in order to receive more precise results.

3.2. Hungarian perceptions vs. international rankings

In order to analyze the macro-scale perceptions of ordinary Hungarians, I combined the above mentioned two question blocks from the survey with some of the major internationally used metrics, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Human Development Index (HDI), Gender Inequality Index (GII) and Democracy Index (DI).

Figure 1. International developmental indicators

	Who measures?	What are the elements?
GDP	World Bank	"GDP per capita is gross domestic product divided by midyear population. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources." (World Bank 2013)
HDI	United Nations	Components (3 dimensions, 4 indicators): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health (Life expectancy at birth) • Education (Mean years of schooling, Expected years of schooling) • Living standards (GNI) (UNDP Report 2010)
GII	United Nations	Components (3 dimensions, 5 indicators): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproductive health (Maternal mortality, Adolescence fertility) • Empowerment (Parliamentary representation, Educational attainment secondary level and above) • Labor market (Labor force participation) (UNDP Report 2010)
DI	Economist Intelligence Unit	"60 indicators grouped in five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. Each category has a rating on a 0 to 10 scale, and the overall index of democracy is the simple average of the five category indexes" (Democracy Index 2010)

The DI is measured by a company belonging to the Economist Group headquartered in London, the HDI and the GII data (which was introduced in 2010) come from the United Nations, and the GDP data from the World Bank. All of them are very influential institutions and distributors of the western ideals of which development is a crucial component. The three institutions carefully plan the methodology of these indicators and show us the position of our countries in their lists.

Although GDP per capita is probably the most widely used economic development indicator, it is much criticized. It measures only the formal and modernized sector of

production and according to van den Bergh, it scarcely points out the relevant aspects of economic progress (van den Bergh 2007). He argues in favor of abolishing the GDP for several reasons. One of them is the fact that it has wrongly become a synonym for social welfare, and as a self-fulfilling prophecy disseminated through education and mass media, this indicator, with a modified meaning influences real economic performance. As I will argue in the later chapter, “[t]he GDP concept [...] active in the domain of perceptions, theories and beliefs” (van den Bergh 2007:13) has indeed an influential effect on ordinary peoples’ developmental ideas, and the media serves as a relevant source for these thoughts.

Partly accepting some of the GDP critiques the creators of the HDI realized that “it is now almost universally accepted that a country’s success or an individual’s well-being cannot be evaluated by money alone” (UNDP Report 2010: iv). This is exactly why a more sophisticated indicator was developed in 1990. Even though HDI includes some other important dimensions (such as education and health), the income is still a major part of the HDI, so it is admittedly “guaranteeing a positive association” (UNDP Report 2010: 46). And this will be presented also below.

Introducing the GII was a crucial step in recognizing the importance of the gender gap and the role it plays also in the economic development. Some theorists are less critical towards it (e.g. Ferrant 2010) and welcome the indicator rather positively, but some highlight its drawbacks, for example that the GII does not include the unpaid work which is done predominantly by women or that it “is an index of gender inequality rather than of gender-sensitive development” (Klasen and Schüler, 2011).

The DI index is probably the most subjective and problematic one. According to its methodology the reliability of this indicator is rather weak, because some of the criteria are hard to define, and the experts classify each country subjectively (Democracy Index 2010, 32).

In spite of the fact that these indicators are problematic because of their methodological shortcomings and that they are permeated with western logic from a postcolonial perspective, they still serve as major reference points for many decision makers and development policy planners worldwide. A dialectical relationship between the numbers and the actions is thus a major aspect of the development mission. A similar case was proved by Axel Dreher and his colleagues, who analyzed the logic of the IMF forecasts (Dreher et al 2008). They found that the IMF forecasts are biased, because indebted countries receive systematically worse inflation forecasts, so the decisions are not purely economic, but also political. Although the indicators introduced above are not forecasts, but actual numbers describing a situation in a given year, a similar effect can also be ascribed to them. Bearing this in mind one of my core questions can be asked again: Are the scales based on these four indicators similar to ordinary peoples' perception of development in Hungary?

Based on the data collected from the official reports and the database the rankings of the 13 countries included in my research are the following:

Figure 2. Rankings of different international indicators, 2010

Database (0-10)		DI (1-10)		GDP/capita, PPP constant 2005\$		HDI (0-1)		GII (1-0)	
USA	8.99	Denmark	9.52	USA	42079	USA	0.90	Denmark	0.21
Germany	8.38	Germany	8.38	Germany	33565	Germany	0.89	Germany	0.24
Denmark	7.29	USA	8.18	Denmark	32379	Denmark	0.87	Slovakia	0.35
China	6.32	Slovakia	7.35	Slovakia	20121	Slovakia	0.82	Hungary	0.38
Russia	5.24	India	7.28	Hungary	16958	Hungary	0.81	Bulgaria	0.40
Slovakia	5.15	Hungary	7.21	Russia	14159	Romania	0.77	USA	0.40
Hungary	4.54	Bulgaria	6.84	Bulgaria	11506	Bulgaria	0.74	China	0.41
Bulgaria	4.24	Romania	6.60	Romania	10715	Russia	0.72	Russia	0.44
Romania	4.17	Ukraine	6.30	China	6819	Ukraine	0.71	Ukraine	0.46
India	3.75	Russia	4.26	Ukraine	6029	China	0.66	Romania	0.48
Ukraine	3.70	Ethiopia	3.68	India	3073	India	0.52	India	0.75
CAR	3.02	China	3.14	Ethiopia	932	Ethiopia	0.33	CAR	-
Ethiopia	1.87	CAR	1.82	CAR	706	CAR	0.32	Ethiopia	-

Sources: EIU, World Bank, United Nations.

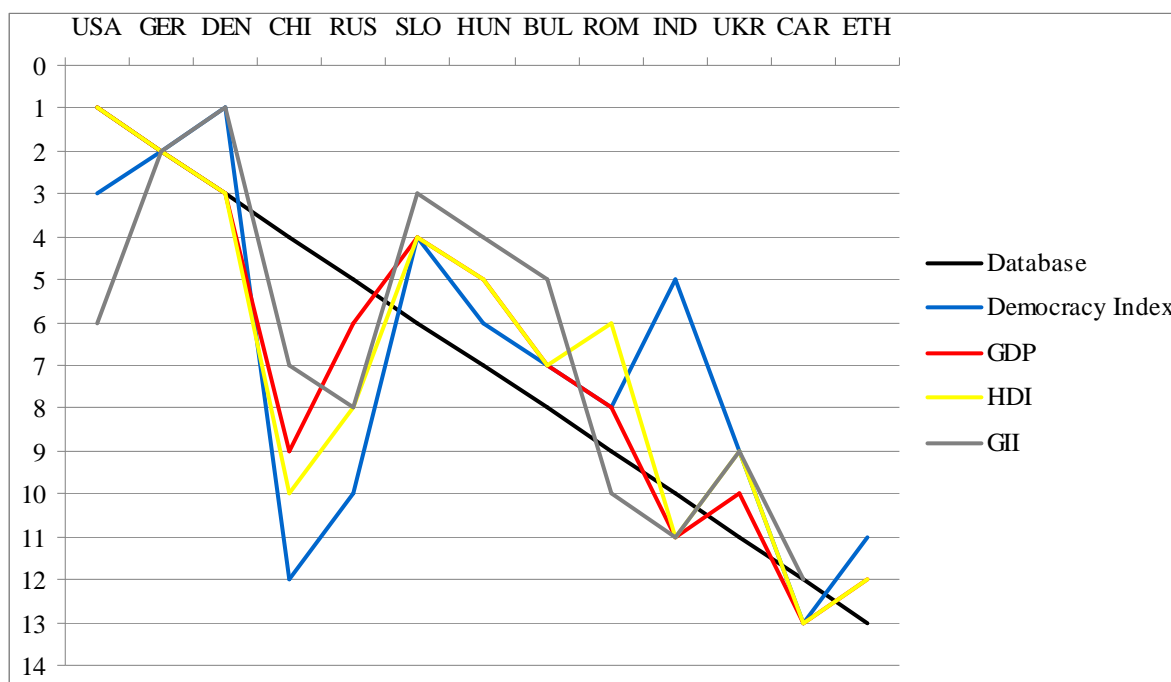
This can be converted into a chart containing the actual rankings compared to the database:

Figure 3. International rankings compared to the database, 2010

	Database	DI	GDP	HDI	GII
USA	1	3	1	1	6
Germany	2	2	2	2	2
Denmark	3	1	3	3	1
China	4	12	9	10	7
Russian Federation	5	10	6	8	8
Slovak republic	6	4	4	4	3
Hungary	7	6	5	5	4
Bulgaria	8	7	7	7	5
Romania	9	8	8	6	10
India	10	5	11	11	11
Ukraine	11	9	10	9	9
CAR	12	13	13	13	12
Ethiopia	13	11	12	12	-

Sources: EIU, World Bank, United Nations.

Figure 4. Graph: International rankings compared to the database, 2010



Sources: EIU, World Bank, United Nations.

According to the Hungarian respondents the most developed country out of the thirteen in the list is the USA followed by Germany and Denmark; all three western countries are at the top of the developmental scale. The fourth and fifth rankings go to China and the Russian Federation, while India as another major player is only in the tenth place. The Central European countries constitute one group starting with Slovakia; according to the respondents

Hungary is less developed than their northern neighbor (5.15 to 4.54). Furthermore Ukraine is a country not in the CEE group, and it is the only player preceding the two African countries. However, the difference is notable here, because compared to the Ukrainian score of 3.70 Central African Republic received only 3.02 in average. A similar, but slightly even bigger difference is between Germany and Denmark (1.09) and China and the Russian Federation (1.08).

Comparing each scale to the Hungarian data by computing standard deviations, we can find very interesting outcomes. The standard deviation of the GDP scale scores is only 1.23 which makes the economic indicator the closest to the Hungarian perceptions. The first three countries are exactly on the line, and most of the GDP data points lie near the mean values. The only significant difference between these two rankings is the positioning of China (4th according to the respondents and 9th based on the GDP data). The standard deviation of the GDP data is followed by the HDI (1.69), the GII (2.0) and the DI (2.46). It is not surprising that the standard deviation of the HDI is the second in the row, because if we compare only the GDP and the HDI ranking, the deviation is 1.38, thus the “positive association” between them is indeed visible. Even though HDI is a sophisticated index, it reflects the importance of the economic data. The other two indexes not involving explicitly the financial aspect differ more from the populations’ ranking. Since democracy and economic prosperity do not necessarily belong together, China has even a worse position on the DI line than Ethiopia, and India has a position in between Slovakia and Hungary. Although the first three countries remain the same also here, only in a reversed order, thus Denmark is the first, while the USA is only the third.

The USA has its relatively worst position on the GII scale: it is only the sixth preceded by countries like Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria, while China is performing better in this dimension than Romania or Ukraine. It seems that the respondents do not take into

consideration this dimension when ranking the countries. Since it is more counterintuitive, people tend to disregard it, so in the end the hegemonic measures seem to be more dominant.

Moreover, we can see that some countries take nearly the same position: the USA (except GII), Germany and Denmark are usually in the top three; Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania in the middle; Ukraine, Central African Republic and Ethiopia at the end. India is controversial because of the DI, while the Russian Federation and China receive different scale points nearly in all five scales. Russia appears to be a rather undemocratic but economically prospering country. It seems that ordinary Hungarians tend to take into consideration this latter aspect, but their average vote is still higher than the GDP score. China on the other hand is an undemocratic country with a rather low HDI, and it does not perform significantly well even on the GDP scale. Even in spite of this the respondents position China on the top, next to the western countries.

Based on the findings above and on the fact that the country ranking of the non-elite Hungarians shows a very high correlation with the GDP scale (0.91) and also with the HDI data (0.78), the first and partly also the second hypotheses prove to be true. This means that the respondents have a certain hierarchical perception about development, and the scale envisaged by them resembles the GDP scale the most. At this point it seems that their perception is influenced predominantly by the economic data. However, this assumption needs further elaboration.

3.3. Classifications

Before analyzing the inner dynamics of the scaling deeper, I would like to make a comparison between the country classification systems of the World Bank and the UN and the respondents' scale. Because of the high correlation with the GDP and the HDI scale, I was

interested in whether the international organizations' categories are similar to the country groups presented above, or if not, what appear to be the major differences.

The income groups of the World Bank in 2010 were measured by GNI per capita. In their classification high income meant \$12,275 or more, upper middle income was between \$12,275 and \$3,976, lower middle income until \$1,006 and low income countries had less GNI per capita than this value (World Bank, 2013b). On the other hand, the HDI classification is prepared in the following way: "A country is in the very high group if its HDI is in the top quartile, in the high group if its HDI is in percentiles 51–75, in the medium group if its HDI is in percentiles 26–50 and in the low group if its HDI is in the bottom quartile." (UNDP Report 2010: 26).

When we look at the country classification of the World Bank and the UN, we can see that in spite of their different methods, there are no major differences between them regarding the thirteen countries examined. Except the top three countries, Slovakia and Hungary also fell into the top group: these five have a high income and a very high level of human development. On the other hand, the two African countries constitute the low income, low human development group. The only difference can be spotted in the middle range, because Ukraine is classified as a country with high human development, but with a lower middle income.

Figure 5. UN and World Bank country classifications, 2010

UN GROUPS	COUNTRY	WORLD BANK GROUPS			
		Income Group	Region	Lending Category	Other
Very High	USA	High income: OECD	...	...
Very High	GER	High income: OECD	...	...	EMU
Very High	DEN	High income: OECD	...	...
Very High	SLO	High income: OECD	...	...	EMU
Very High	HUN	High income: OECD	...	...
High	BUL	Upper Middle Income	Europe & Central Asia	IBRD	
High	ROM	Upper Middle Income	Europe & Central Asia	IBRD	
High	RUS	Upper Middle Income	Europe & Central Asia	IBRD	
High	UKR	Lower Middle Income	Europe & Central Asia	IBRD	

Medium	CHI	Lower Middle Income	East Asia & Pacific	IBRD	
Medium	IND	Lower Middle Income	South Asia	Blend	
Low	CAR	Low Income	Sub-Saharan Africa	IDA	HIPC
Low	ETH	Low Income	Sub-Saharan Africa	IDA	HIPC

Sources: UN, World Bank.

The World Bank's classification serves as the basis for money lending, the institution's main activity. Since their focus is on developing countries (according to them these are the ones with low and middle income), the high income economies fall out from their profile. They do not even find it important to provide the regional data for the high income economies: they are the basis of comparison. This also means that there are two visibly separated country types in addition to the income groups. These latter are mostly in line with the lending categories: low income countries are entitled to receive loans from the IDA, which focuses "exclusively on the world's poorest countries" (World Bank 2013b); middle income countries receive loans from the IBRD, which "aims to reduce poverty in middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries" (ibid.). Besides, India falls into a middle category, since "blend" means that they can receive loans from both institutions, because despite their low per capita income (IDA criteria), they are financially creditworthy (IBRD criteria).

When comparing these two scales with the Hungarian data, we can see that that most of the countries take the "right" position, even the countries with a specific profile, namely India and Ukraine. Only the positionings of China and Russia are notably different. Even though ordinary Hungarians rank these thirteen countries similarly to these major institutions, they think that these two countries are somewhat (Russia) or notably higher (China) on the hierarchy. Whether it is because of their size, geopolitical position or media presence will be more deeply analyzed in the next chapter.

3.4. Some numbers behind the scale

To have an initial impression of the numbers behind the scale, I decided to create a 3-category scale from the 11-point development scale presented above, with the values 0 to 3 recoded as “rather underdeveloped”, 4 to 6 as “average level” and 7 to 10 as “rather developed” (the two margins have the same size). This allowed me to analyze the basic perception of the respondents about these countries: what proportion of them gave each country rather high, average and rather low scores. The median and the mean are also presented below for further elaboration.

Figure 6. Country scores based on a 3-category scale

	Mean	Median	Rather Undeveloped %	Average level %	Rather developed %
USA	8.99	9	0.7	3.8	95.4
Germany	8.38	8	0.2	6.2	93.6
Denmark	7.29	7	2.9	25.7	71.4
China	6.32	6	13.2	38.2	48.6
Russia	5.24	5	17.7	57.3	25.0
Slovakia	5.15	5	13.0	70.4	16.5
Hungary	4.54	5	25.4	64.3	10.3
Bulgaria	4.24	4	31.8	61.2	7.0
Romania	4.17	4	33.7	60.1	6.2
India	3.75	4	49.2	40.7	10.0
Ukraine	3.70	4	47.3	48.7	4.0
CAR	3.02	3	67.5	27.1	5.4
Ethiopia	1.87	2	86.9	11.3	1.8

Source: Database.

The USA and Germany are consistently marked as developed (95.4% and 93.6%), and only 25.7% thinks that Denmark is on the average level compared to 71.4% who consider it rather developed. At the other end of the scale, 67.5% thinks that Central African Republic is undeveloped and 86.9% thought so about Ethiopia. When evaluating Romania, Bulgaria and their own country, in every case around 60% of the respondents think that these countries are on the middle level and 30% gave them low marks. While Hungary received slightly better evaluation than the other two, Romania received 33.7% of the negative marks. Slovakia on

the other hand is a strong player in the middle range (70.4%) and even 16.5% of the respondents positioned this country on the top. However, the remaining countries, Ukraine, India, the Russian Federation and China are rather controversial again. If we look at the chart at this point, we can see that these countries, especially the Russian Federation and China were the ones not consistently positioned on the scales.

Can we assume that the respondents were in possession of some controversial facts about these countries and this is why the results are different? Do they consider the level of democracy or the economic performance as the major element when they decide, or do they prefer some other factors? The next section tries to answer these questions.

3.5. Developmental elements behind the scale

As mentioned above, the respondents had to choose those three developmental elements from a list of ten, based on which they gave the scores for all thirteen countries. While this question block is not open ended and the list is far from complete, it covers many possible areas of development and enables to analyze certain aspects of the respondents' mindset. In fact, these closed ended questions led to standardized answers and a more effective interpretation. Although it would have been very fruitful to use more qualitative techniques to understand the respondents' selections, unfortunately this option is not possible any more: a lot of time that has elapsed since the survey was made in 2010. However, even without understanding the respondents' answers deeper, we can get a very appealing insight into their perception based solely on the answers recorded in the database.

Figure 7. Ranking of developmental elements by importance

Developmental elements				
	Has chosen	Percentage	Has not chosen	Percentage
Higher economic well-being	1217	86.9	183	13.1
Level of democracy	617	44.1	783	55.9
Use of science and technology	587	41.9	813	58.1
Level of education	383	27.4	1017	72.6

Level of culture	344	24.6	1056	75.4
Autonomy over own life	310	22.1	1090	77.9
Fertility	182	13.0	1218	87.0
National identity	173	12.4	1227	87.6
Gender equity	96	6.9	1304	93.1
Level of religiosity	75	5.4	1325	94.6
Other	31	2.2	1369	97.8

Source: Database.

Ordinary Hungarians think that the economy (economic well-being) is by far the most important developmental element. 86.9% of the respondents classified this factor into the possible three. The second most frequently chosen element is the level of democracy, but there is nearly 43 percentage point difference between these two, which is also the case with the third element, the use of science and technology. The predominant importance of economic well-being is in line with the above findings. Since the correlation between the GDP ranking and the Hungarian perceptions is notably high (0.91), it seems that the respondents had a certain knowledge about the economic situation of these countries in 2010. The sources of this information can be very diverse, but as I assumed, one of them is the mass media. And indeed, this connection will be proven, and further extended in the next chapter.

The following three elements, better level of education, higher level of culture, and greater autonomy over our own life are also decisive elements, these three received 27.4%, 24.6% and 22.1% respectively. On the other hand fertility, national identity, gender equity and religiosity do not seem to be predominant developmental indicators for most countries according to the respondents, although tested in the mass media, national identity proved to be also an important factor regarding the neighboring countries. To sum it up, this summarizing table shows us an informative outline of the developmental factors, but the analysis has to be moved to a next level.

When trying to establish which development elements had a significant impact on the perception of the respondents about the countries, the fact that respondents could select three different items at the same time had to be considered when designing the research methods.

To untangle the simultaneous effects from each other, I decided to use an independent t-test to observe the effects of each variable on the perception of each country individually. The results below showcase the difference between the average perception level of those who did choose one element and those who didn't, per each country and item, with the statistically significant differences marked in bold.

Figure 8. Independent T-Test of developmental elements

	Democ- racy	Reli- gion	Gender equality	Culture	Edu- cation	Science	Freedom of choice	Econo- my	National identity	Fertility	Other
GER	0.032	-0.258	0.009	-0.028	-0.101	0.097	0.036	0.004	-0.251	-0.067	0.068
CAR	0.045	0.339	0.371	0.138	0.038	-0.043	0.068	-0.019	-0.039	-0.347	-0.020
IND	0.005	0.044	-0.172	0.101	0.102	0.003	0.032	0.010	-0.140	-0.330	0.213
UKR	-0.039	0.230	<u>-0.315</u>	-0.102	-0.029	<u>0.087</u>	0.089	-0.012	-0.058	-0.139	0.229
DEN	-0.058	-0.524	-0.040	-0.101	-0.098	0.143	-0.028	0.025	-0.332	0.158	-0.136
ROM	-0.004	0.052	-0.148	-0.031	-0.108	0.102	0.031	0.014	-0.044	-0.001	0.106
USA	0.118	-0.558	-0.166	-0.160	-0.041	0.051	0.153	0.027	-0.249	-0.091	0.251
ETH	0.105	0.245	<u>0.342</u>	0.010	0.070	-0.013	0.034	-0.039	-0.049	-0.237	-0.408
CHI	0.072	-0.394	-0.476	0.171	0.077	0.061	-0.253	0.004	-0.058	-0.371	0.232
SLO	0.020	-0.107	-0.018	0.067	0.041	0.046	-0.046	-0.009	-0.144	-0.116	0.367
BUL	0.017	-0.148	0.041	-0.045	-0.075	0.148	-0.106	-0.006	-0.013	-0.210	0.241
RUS	0.041	0.050	-0.096	0.081	-0.102	0.217	-0.186	0.004	<u>-0.258</u>	-0.149	0.130

Source: Database.

Those people who choose economy as an important factor when scaling the countries significantly underrated the level of development in Ethiopia and upgraded the level of development in the USA compared to those who did not choose this element. Even though nearly 90% of the sample regarded economic well-being as an important factor, it seems that those not choosing it might have contributed to the best and worst positioning of these two countries. Furthermore, those who choose democracy as an important element gave significantly higher points to the USA and also to Ethiopia than those who did not select it. When we compare this with freedom of choice, an element connected to the level of democracy, the scoring of the USA shows an upgrading tendency in the latter case as well. However, the most important point here is that while the USA received higher points, the Russian Federation and China got significantly lower points from those who choose this factor. Thus while the latter two countries received relatively high scores and good ranking

from the respondents, the controversial profile of these countries can be captured for example here.

The most interesting finding is probably the fact that those who choose science and technology as well as democracy as significant developmental factors contributed to the better scores of the USA, Ethiopia, Germany, Denmark, Bulgaria and the Russian Federation. On the other hand those who choose more conservative elements, such as fertility, national identity and religiosity provided fewer points to Denmark, the USA, Germany, Central African Republic, India, China and Bulgaria than those who did not choose them. This means that this table outlines two respondent groups, one of which is a more 'liberal' one with a positive voting attitude and a 'conservative' group giving fewer points to many of the developed countries and geopolitical players based on their own most important criteria. Although this division should not be taken for granted without a further analysis, I would like to see whether the articles examined in this period reflect a similar division or not. Do conservative papers focus more on national identity and fertility than the liberal ones? Except this aspect, I would like to keep focusing on the scale-like nature of the developmental perceptions and the possible influential elements behind it.

3.6. Conclusions I

As already highlighted above, based on the survey collected in 2010, ordinary Hungarians tend to think about development as a hierarchical order, since they ranked the countries predominantly in a similar way (except the outliers). In addition to this, the scale constructed from their mean answers resemble the GDP and the HDI hierarchy the most and the other two indexes emphasizing the importance of democracy or gender equality less, which implies a presence of a dominant modernist materialist discourse and the influential power of the western institutions. This is also in line with the finding that economy, the

quantitative approach, seemed to be the most dominant developmental elements for the respondents. Furthermore, while some of the countries are consistently rated as “developed” or “rather undeveloped”, some of the countries elicit mixed reactions. China seems to be the most controversial country on the list, but the respondents’ answers are not unified even about the Russian Federation, a historically important country. Furthermore, while the possible developmental elements partly reflect these outcomes, some interesting patterns also showed up as described above regarding the ideological approaches.

Comparing these findings with the Bulgarian case introduced in the previous chapter, we can see some notable similarities: the high correlation with the GDP and HDI data and Russia plays an exceptional role also in my case. However, Bulgarians rated their country lower than the Hungarians. And although Hungarians underrate their own country as well, the difference is not too high.

My main intention in the following chapter is to understand more thoroughly the mechanisms behind this scaling and to concentrate on the developmental elements appearing in the mass media, but also to examine if there is a hierarchy constructed by these sources.

4. Perceptions of development in the media

4.1. Qualitative methodology

Although in my third hypothesis I assumed that a hierarchical scale similar to the above described findings can be also found in the Hungarian media, a predominantly quantitative concept is hard to test in a qualitative environment. For this challenging purpose I chose to apply the content analysis method. Since many of the categories were already set in the form of countries and developmental elements, instead of a top-down deductive approach I applied an inductive and closed category development, which is based on the developmental elements appearing in the quantitative section. The identification of basic themes, patterns and codes was followed by a systematic extraction of the information from the texts, which further enabled a comparative analysis. Although these codes covered many aspects of the developmental aspects in the news, the geopolitical power, the political situation of the given country were missing, this I extended the list with these ones.

As the first step, the range of media products had to be defined. Since people can get informed about the daily news from a variety of sources, an involvement of all these sources (TV, radio, printed press and news portal) seemed to be important. Based on this assumption, two of the most widely distributed newspapers, the liberal *Népszabadság* and the conservative *Magyar Nemzet* were included in the sample (Médiatükör 2009). Since both of them have an extensive web archive, I used predominantly these sources for the sake of an easier research process. In addition to this, I included *Index.hu*, one of the most popular news portals in Hungary (Webaudit), *Kossuth Rádió*, the most popular national radio channel (Ipsos), and the online database of a major evening news program of TV2 called *Tények* (TV2).

Since it was hard to define a specific time range for my study, I took a sample and analyzed the news from three weeks preceding the survey date of May and June 2010. The sample weeks are the following: September 21-27, 2009; March 8-14, 2010 and May 10-16, 2010. From the intersection of three weeks and five sources I collected all the articles which were in connection with the twelve countries (except Hungary) involved in the database.

4.2. About the five sources

Kossuth Rádió evening news (Krónika) is 30 minutes long during weekdays and only about 20 minutes long in the weekends, of which the foreign news comprise around 5% of the airtime. Apart from these 6-7 minutes the countries were mentioned also in relation to Hungary; and thus involved in the domestic news section. Overall, less than hundred pieces of news included the countries involved in this research. While Bulgaria, Denmark and the African countries were not mentioned, Slovakia and Germany appeared frequently, but the most widely reported countries were the USA and the Russian Federation (17 and 16 times). The last two countries were indicated as strong geopolitical powers, often appearing in the same news even if not contrasted with each other, thus creating a discourse resembling the cold war era. Here are two titles from the same day as an example: “The Commander of US Forces in Afghanistan secretly Visits Europe” (KOS1) and “Sports, Business and Politics. In Russia, There is Often a Direct Link between These Seemingly Unrelated Sectors” (ibid.). The USA is not only mentioned consistently earlier than Russia in most of the cases, but is also shown in a more positive context, thus appear as more developed.

The 12 countries included in my research were present in the *TV2* news less frequently than in the radio, but the USA was predominantly overrepresented. It was mentioned 19 times, while the next country was Germany with only 9 appearances. Furthermore, most of this news was aired in an entertaining, but telegraphic style, or they were indeed tabloid news.

For example they aired a teaser about the German elections including only a smaller accident, when Gerhard Schröder fell off his chair in a campaign event (TV1). Those who watched only the TV2 evening news in this period were informed mainly about the USA and less so about the other countries.

Similar preliminary comments can also be made about the three written sources. *Index* is famous for its more casual style of writing, which was dominant in its sub-blogs (such as *TotalCar* or *Cinematrix*) but not so much in the economics or foreign news columns. *Magyar Nemzet* and *Népszabadság* are more formal sources; the news published by them reflects their ideological differences. However, in many cases the way these two (or rather three) sources write about a country is not fundamentally different. The main disagreements usually arise when a country is more strongly connected to Hungary (e.g. Slovakia or Germany).

4.3. Dominant topics in the media

First of all, let me introduce the most important findings, which will be further elaborated on. In order to understand the nuances of the analysis, the table below represents the dominant elements occurring in the Hungarian media and their relations to the countries⁴.

Figure 9. Dominant developmental elements represented in the media by countries

Country	Economy	Geopolitical power	Dependency	Culture	Gender	Democracy	National identity	Tech/sci
GER	+	+	-	rather +	rather +	rather +		+
USA	rather +	+	-	+	+/-	rather +	+/-	+
CHI	+	+	-		rather -	-		rather +
RUS	rather +	+	-			-		
DEN	rather +	-	-	rather -			rather -	
IND	+/-	+/-	+/-	rather +	+/-			
SLO	rather +	-	+				-	-
BUL	+/-	-	+					
ROM	rather -	-	+				+/-	
UKR	rather -	-	+	-		-	rather -	

Source: Media research.

⁴ Except Ethiopia and the Central African Republic. There were only few or no news about these countries.

Figure 9 shows, that there is a clear distinction between the core countries and the dependent ones with less geopolitical power. Based on the news, Germany, USA, China and Russia belong to the first group, while the rest to the second. Economy is represented as the strength of Germany, while the USA is very dominant also in the cultural and scientific level, which implies a civilizatory approach. China's economic potential is prominent, while its democratic level and gender equality is rather poor. Russia is also a geopolitical power, but with a less lucrative economy and a democratic deficit. Denmark is mentioned only few times, but from an economic perspective it belongs to the above described group. India is a major emerging market, but there are many references to the unequal distribution of wealth, and the presence of poverty.

From the second group Slovakia has the best economic performance according to the news, while its ethnic policy is severely criticized. Bulgaria is described as a more controversial country affected by the western crisis management criteria and the Greek financial turmoil. Compared to them, the economic performance in Romania and Ukraine appear to be more problematic.

As it is visible from Figure 9, creating a clear hierarchical ranking based on the media presence is not possible. However, the two poles seem to be the same, and the summary of the major topics and their character suggests a similar scale presented in the third chapter.

4.4. Western countries, USA, Germany, Denmark

4.4.1. USA

Hungarian eggs are not as strong as the American ones.
(NOL2)

In line with the hierarchical rankings above, the USA is the most frequently mentioned country among the thirteen examined: 27.3% of the materials refer to it. This in itself implies

that this country plays an important role. And indeed, after a systematic analysis a dominant, core position can be identified from several points of view.

First of all, the USA is a strong geopolitical player in all the media products. Its presence in the Middle Eastern and Asian countries is pervasive in the news; negative or controversial relations with North Korea, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran, positive or supportive relations with Israel appear in nearly all the written sources. In addition to this, *Népszabadság* published some translated articles from the *New York Times* about these ‘peacekeeping’ issues (NOL3). Since there were no other such practices in the case of other countries (except for briefly quoting some German newspapers), the USA also appears as a source of information.

It is important to include also the US relations with the country. There are some formal interventions described in the media, such as the Freedom House’s ranking of the freedom of press (NOL4), but there are many references also to the American political or cultural dominance in the country. For example some of the legislations are transposed from the US (IND1), or a movie (Boiler Room) serves as a basis for a region-wide stock exchange fraud. A company called Capital Partners applied some techniques learned from the film, and also forced their colleagues to watch it regularly (TV2).

While the geopolitical presence of the USA is apparently strong in the articles in many ways, the economic dominance is not so obvious in the time of the financial crisis. Although there is some news with titles including growth or prosperity, many of them reflect the economic problems, so the overall picture is highly controversial in all the sources. In addition, the interconnected economic relations with China appear to be similarly dubious. On the one hand, “The third Ford factory is being built in China” (MNO1) in order to take advantage of the expanding Chinese market, on the other hand “China is about to open a car

factory in the US” (MNO2) and produce a reverse effect of the American dream, as the title of the article implies.

The dominance of the country can be grasped by involving other themes, such as science/technology and culture. In the articles about the former phrase “American scientists” often occurs, be it in a report on obesity, AIDS, behavioral studies, biology or space exploration. Space was a dominant topic in many articles because in September, 2009 traces of water were found on the Moon by NASA and its Indian and European partners, but this latter fact is only included in the articles, while the *TV2* evening news mention only the American presence (TV3). *Magyar Nemzet* underlined this dominance by quoting the last man on the Moon, Eugene Cernan: “The US has a responsibility to maintain its leading position in science, technology and morality” (MNO3). This leads to the fact that the technology news is dominant as well, including the manufacturing of cars and phones, and the major position of some information technology companies such as Google or Microsoft (NOL5).

Index published many articles about the American films appearing in the market at that time, while the major film festivals (such as the Oscars) were frequent topics in every media product. Furthermore, except for celebrity news, US cultural traits can be found in connection with music and the usage of technology (e.g. iPhone addiction). The quote from Gergely Vajda, a Hungarian composer and conductor living in Portland describes well the narrative of these cultural articles when he talks about the cultural diversity of his hometown: “It certainly wouldn’t hurt us Hungarians if we knew much more about America than they do about us”(NOL6).

The gender relations of the country are not so dominant in the news. While some of them describe a more tolerant atmosphere (Kathryn Bigelow’s Oscar or the enabling of same-sex marriages in Washington State), others are rather objectifying, describing such events as the 3D issue of *Playboy* (NOL7) or the unhappiness of those women who pursue a masculine

career (NOL8). Meanwhile there were no sources referring to fertility or religious issues and only few were about education.

The last dominant topic was the description of crime. Such news coverage appeared predominantly in the *TV2* news, but also in the articles. According to these sources there are lots of bank robberies, racial clashes and personal threats in the USA, more than in the other countries analyzed below.

In conclusion, the United State is described as a geopolitically powerful, core country, while its economic primacy is threatened because of the financial crisis and the emergence of other powerful countries as China. The dominance is however very clear in terms of science/technology and culture, reflecting a more civilizatory approach towards this country. Since these two elements play an important role in the perception of Hungarians, it is possible that such news might have influenced their choice.

4.4.2. Germany

I came to be a rich German uncle for a while
(IND2)

Two of the twelve countries included in my research can be classified as core ones according to their appearances in the Hungarian media. As mentioned above, one of them is the USA and the other is a second most frequently mentioned (16.5%) major decision maker in the European Union: Germany. When comparing the two, we can see that their media coverage is rather different.

First of all, unlike the USA, Germany appears to be an economically more stable and prospering country during the observed period. Many articles highlight the fact that the economic decline has stopped and there is even a “Historical export growth in Germany” (IND3). The powerful position of the country and its ‘Iron Lady’, Angela Merkel (MNO4), who remained “one of the most influential persons around the world” after the elections (IND4) play an important, decisive role not only regarding the Greek financial problems, but

also concerning major EU actions, such as the fiscal compact. Furthermore, there are also references to the country's 'lighthouse' (Sachs) role for example in an article mentioning that the European Central Bank was established after a German model (IND5).

In addition, the German car industry is flourishing: Audi has factories in Belgium, Hungary, India and China, and the Volkswagen, Mercedes and BMW brands appear not only in the thematic *TotalCar* blog of *Index*, but also in other sources. The intersection of technology and business is a dominant topic also in an article about the plan of SAP, a major German multinational software corporation, in which they are pictured intending to acquire an American software developer company (IND6).

In the first chapter I outlined a world-system approach, and clearly some *Magyar Nemzet* articles are applying its concepts. István Kőrösi, a docent of Péter Pázmány Catholic University, is mixing the modernization approach with the world-system vocabulary. He says that "the wrong direction of the modernization path "had a decisive effect on the Central European region, which made impossible to catch up with Germany and the core countries" (MNO5). While he makes a differentiation between Germany and the other central powers vis-à-vis the Visegrád Group, another article clearly describes a division, or rather a split between the "northern countries in a more stable situation, Austria, Germany and to a certain extent France and the Benelux countries" (MNO6), which constitute an inner circle, and the periphery according to Tamás Torba, an economic expert. The core countries of the EU he describes are mentioned mostly separately, while the periphery is only one unit without a further distinction in the whole article.

Why were these articles published by the conservative *Magyar Nemzet* and not *Népszabadság*, the newspaper more connected to the political left? One of the possible answers is that the world-system concepts were transmitted over time and its meaning have changed, thus *Népszabadság* is using a liberal vocabulary, while *Magyar Nemzet* is

combining a conservative and a leftist vocabulary. This statement is partly proved by the fact that this latter source is more critical towards the USA and Germany from a modified world-system perspective. For example they published an article in which they mention that Germany is the major and most important trading partner of the country, but the dependency is described as a burden: waste packages sent from Baden-Württemberg to various parts of the country have not yet disappeared (MNO7).

One more topic about which they also disagree is the pedophilia scandal of the Catholic Church which largely affected the German territories: *Magyar Nemzet* mentions it only rarely, while it was a frequent topic in *Népszabadság*. The division between these two newspapers is not clear, but their narrative is predominantly different, showing the clear cut ideological patterns.

The dependent relationship can also be nicely observed in one of the *Kossuth Rádió* news: the German Federal Employment Agency started recruiting German-speaking cooks, waiters, waitresses and hotel managers in cooperation with the Hungarian National Employment Service. Even though there is lack of these professionals even in Hungary, the German market is luring them because of the “three or four times higher salaries and the organized working conditions” (KOS2), while in Hungary in most of the cases these employees are not even registered.

From the perspective of the Hungarian media products, Germany is a strong geopolitical power within the EU, but also outside of it. It is economically prospering, more open in terms of gender relations, and has a strong technical and scientific background. However, since Germany has an explicit role in Hungary’s life (unlike the USA), its evaluation is also controversial, evoking more emotional reactions from the media. The interconnectedness is frequently translated as dependency of various sorts (economic or cultural), and this relation dominates the majority of the news. Furthermore, “goodness” as a

moral category did not appear explicitly in relation to Germany. It seems that this “myth” can be applied rather in case of whole Europe, and not its countries, because the national stereotypes and perceptions seem to overcome the notion of “goodness”.

4.4.3. Denmark

In Denmark a woman was excluded from the Army for wearing a hijab (MNO8)

Although Denmark is the third in the hierarchical scale, it is mentioned only 22 times (1.3%), with the television and radio coverage absent in the sample altogether. But even though only a few articles were written about the country, a certain profile can be outlined.

Denmark is described as a net contributor to the EU budget in 2009, thus it pays more than it withdraws (NOL9). Furthermore, their concern about the climate change and ethnic issues is a recurring topic. However, this latter one is problematic in many ways. On one hand, *Magyar Nemzet* is sharing the concerns of a Danish politician, the leader of Federal Union of European Nationalities, according to whom “minority issues are on the agenda only when the chance for a peaceful problem solving is already gone” (MNO9). Since the Hungarian double citizenship issue was one of the major topics in the local politics during the observed period, *Magyar Nemzet* is using these remarks as a demonstration for that cause.

On the other hand, a more dominant ethnic context was the problem of migration. While the previously analyzed countries can be situated in a world-system analysis framework, Denmark fits more likely into an orientalist debate based on the news. The famous Muhammad cartoons controversy appears in an article about the relationship between minorities and humor. A Hungarian analyst characterized the aftermath of the case in the following way: “the cleavages between social and cultural issues have deepened, and the conflict has become a good example for the clash of civilizations” (NOL10).

The immigrant issue also appeared in connection with the Romanians. *Népszabadság* published an article without a critical remark on the association of Romanians and crime in Danish minds. Quoting a police officer saying that “Basically it is about our cultural differences, since Romanians believe in different values than we do” can also be taken to mean that Romania is shown as an inferior country opposed to the western regions (NOL11). A vision of an east-west slope is clearly present in these few news about Denmark.

Firstly, Denmark has no relevant economic or other relations with Hungary, which might have caused the few appearances. Secondly, while from an economic perspective Denmark could have been positioned high on a hierarchical slope, its minority policies and beliefs about people from the east (beginning with Eastern Europe) covered in the news result in a poorer rating. This is however in line with the findings in Figure 8. A group of people who choose more conservative elements, such as fertility, national identity and religiosity provided fewer points to Denmark, than those who did not choose these items.

4.5. Outliers – China, Russia

4.5.1. China

Distributed by: X.Y., Makó. Country of origin: China.
(MNO10)

Controversies increase in the case of the two outliers, China, and Russia, but the distinctions are different in nature. China appeared in the news rather often (10.5%) and is mainly described as an economically important, emerging, core country by all five sources. They call it an “Asian giant” or one of the six world powers (besides UK, France, Russia, USA and Germany). And indeed, when reading the articles, the economic dominance is apparent. China’s car industry is booming, even preceding the Germans, and the infrastructural development is not only fast, but also extensive (airplane, highways, metro lines).

China's geopolitical power is described in numerous ways. For example the USA is deeply connected to China, because it receives the biggest amount of external finances from this country. However, unlike in case of the USA and Germany, China does not appear as a typical core country, because its profile is rather controversial. News coverage about some "suspicious" honey (MNO11) or "medicines made from protected animals and plants, such as tiger bones" (NOL12) reaching the Hungarian market might reduce the trust of the reader. The most critical remarks are, however, about the level of democracy and the ignorance of the human rights. This is further strengthened by the description of various kinds of disasters in the country, such as a battery factory causing the death of many children (IND7).

China's economic development is widely covered in all media products. However, it seems that while economy is the most frequently chosen developmental element among the respondents, they took also the more negative news into consideration. This also means that the news coverage might have influences the respondents' decisions.

4.5.2. Russia

We Russians sometimes believe that we are Europeans. But we are not, and neither are the Canadians and the citizens of the United States. We belong to a different civilization, so there is no need to be surprised by the fact that we seek for our own way of democracy (MNO12)

The Russian Federation appeared in the news less often (10.5%), but it is also described as a geopolitically important country having connections in many parts of the world. The power relations dominated the news, for example when describing the influential role of Russia in the Ukrainian politics, but the economic data appearing during the observed period reflect a less stable situation.

The critical remarks are twofold. First, *Magyar Nemzet* is frequently referring back to the previous political regime when mentioning the country. For example: "Gone are the days, when the soccer matches against the Russians (Soviets) received a political overtone in Hungary. However, it is not accidental that we have not played a friendly match with the

USSR's successor, Russia. It is because we are not so good friends after all..." (MNO13) Even though these remarks are negative in nature, they also reflect the dependent aspect of the relationship.

Second, the low level of democracy in the Russian Federation is the most negative aspect in the overall narrative. Many cases of corruption appear in the mass media, which are compounded by the news coverage of oligarchs buying sport teams in Europe and the USA, or sitting in the jail. Furthermore, the specific democracy definition appears explicitly twice: from a Russian speaker (see the epigraph above), and from the former OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklós Haraszti (a Hungarian). According to him "Russia attempts to introduce two types of democracy", but he believes that "this differentiation between the two will not become an abyss" (NOL13).

Overall, the news in which Russia is mentioned with a negative connotation exceeds the ones about the country's economic power. Or – as it appears in several cases – the description of the geopolitical strength and the critical remarks about the level of democracy coexist well in a single article. Furthermore, while the articles examined do not necessarily confirm Russia's fifth position on a hierarchical scale, it is true, that the country was one of the big *and* powerful countries on the list. It is probable that the size and the historical relations influenced the respondent's answers, and not only the media.

4.6. Neighboring countries, Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine

According to the statistics of the customs authority people are visiting
Ukraine and Romania to refuel their cars, but do not go to Slovakia
or Austria, because there the prices are nearly the same
(TV4)

In case of Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine the numbers of developmental elements present are reasonably reduced. While the economic situation and the level of democracy appear to be important factors when writing or broadcasting news about Slovakia (11.6%),

Romania (10.75%) and Ukraine (4.8%), the geopolitical power disappears and is replaced mostly by geopolitical cooperation (or relations). National identity also emerged as one of the key factors, although this is so partly because one of the first activities of the newly elected Fidesz government was the introduction of legal measures enabling a quicker and easier dual citizenship acquisition process. Since the Slovak parliamentary elections were due in June, 2010, it became a hot topic in these countries, thus the media coverage was really extensive about this issue during the observed period. However, in Romania this was not the case, because the government chose a similar policy of citizenship earlier, thus they could not criticize the measures from this perspective. Surprisingly, Ukraine is less frequently mentioned, and not even in this context. While there were several other differences, I will analyze this latter country separately in this section.

4.6.1. Slovakia and Romania

Because of the above mentioned reason, the coverage of the national identity issues is somewhat different. While in connection with Romania mostly some other cultural-historical topics and the Romanian nationalist riots against a regional restructuring proposal of the Hungarian RMDSZ party are in the focus; nearly half of the news about Slovakia deal with the dual citizenship issue. And again, while *Magyar Nemzet* is more protective towards the Hungarian minority and defensive towards the Slovak reactions, *Népszabadság* published also some articles which quote a Slovak liberal newspaper highlighting the hypocritical reactions in both sides of the border.

Since Slovakia was positioned above Hungary while Romania even below Bulgaria, I was interested if such differences occur also in the news. And indeed, they did. Based on the news, Slovakia belongs rather to the semi-peripheral and Romania to the peripheral regions in Europe. Slovakia is described as a country with a changing, but mostly good economic performance: “Flying start in the Slovak economy” says one of the titles describing a 12%

increase in industrial production (NOL14). Furthermore, Slovakia is described as a strong country of the region, but with a high proportion of unemployed and an unsettled Roma issue (which is also part of the economic problem).

On the other hand Romania appears mostly as a problematic country: the EBRD is criticizing it, because the crisis management is not efficient enough (IND8) and the IMF is missing the proper amount of austerity measures (IND9). Thus in this case the dominant position of the major western financial institutions is explicitly represented. In addition, *Magyar Nemzet* is quoting Tom Gallagher, a British professor, who says that “Romania became a member of the EU, but the promised reforms have not been implemented.” (MNO14).

One more problematic aspect of Romania is emigration and its consequences. As already quoted above, it causes problems from the Danish perspective, but one of the articles describes a hostile and violent attitude towards the Romanian guest workers even in Hungary (IND10). The other side of the problem, the high unemployment rate, is also frequently mentioned in the sources.

Slovakia and Romania, two of the neighboring countries in the sample are frequently mentioned in relation to Hungary, mainly because of the Hungarian communities living in these countries, but also in relation to a wider regional context. While in terms of nationality issues Slovakia performed much worse according to the media, from an economic perspective the differences are significant. Romania is presented as a dependent eastern country, while Slovakia as a fresh member of the Eurozone with higher economic potentials. It is clear that in many ways Romania is presented as an inferior, while Slovakia as a somewhat superior country as compared to Hungary. Since the respondents were ranking mainly based on a country’s perceived economic performance, the influential role of the media products is very likely.

4.6.2. Ukraine

The coverage of the other eastern neighbor, Ukraine was fundamentally different. Unlike the two countries above, it was not described in relation to Hungary, but mostly situated in a Russian discourse, thus its constructed position in the scale is in between the west and Russia. The Janus-faced character of the country profile is caused by two reasons: Ukraine is not a member state of the EU, but ethnic and economic relations tie the country more to Russia. Thus the articles mentioning the national problems are always about the still not officially recognized Russian language and the gas pipe issues.

While news regarding the country's economic situation are more preferable than the Romanian ones, saying that "the tax classification of the country has improved" (MNO15), many news refer to the country's bad reputation. Ukraine is a country where people drink a lot (Russians appear in the same context) and cigarette smuggling is an ordinary thing. The description of corruption and nepotism create a profile which is more connected to Russia than Hungary.

However, one article mentions that "our country is said to be on the level of Ukraine and Serbia" (MNO16), while the other countries in the region perform better. This quote creates a certain connection, but in a derogatory manner: Ukraine is not the country we would like to be in a group with. And according to the respondents' ratings, they are not, indeed.

All in all, according to the articles Ukraine would have a higher position on a developmental scale than Romania, if we took into consideration only the economic news. On the other hand, the country profile is worse in terms of democracy, safety and culture. And even though the Russian connections are clearly mentioned in several cases, the geopolitical power attributed to Russia does not appear in the case of Ukraine. In addition, the differences between the sources started to disappear at this point.

4.7. Less frequently mentioned countries

Besides India (4.4%) and Bulgaria (3.3%) there were two other countries in my sample, that barely got any attention from the media. Ethiopia was only four times (0.23%), and solely in relation to its runners, while the Central African Republic is completely missing from the news coverage. In these cases the influential power of the media products is very much limited⁵. If not the lack of information caused the low ratings, than the knowledge about these countries might have come from another source (education, other TV programs, etc.).

4.7.1. Bulgaria

Romania and Bulgaria will face further economic problems,
if they do not handle the high level of corruption
(MNO17)

While Bulgaria was ranked higher on a developmental scale than the other countries in this group, the media coverage regarding this country is far from being extensive. It does not appear in the radio or television programs, only in the written press, and the profile created by the three sources is controversial also in this case. However, Bulgaria is often ranked as good as Hungary in certain news: according to Doing Business (World Bank Group) Slovakia and Bulgaria is preceding Hungary (IND11), certain digital distribution websites passed the EU test, while Hungarians did not (MNO18), and the level of employment is also higher in Bulgaria during the observed period (MNO19). In addition, unlike in the case of the neighboring countries, Bulgaria is mentioned because of its culture (exhibitions, dance) and also fertility. On the other hand corruption and the strong banking relations with Greece and an IMF warning refer to an unstable economy, so from this perspective the country ranking would be similar to that of the respondents’.

Traces of Balkanist discourse cannot be found in the sources, but it can be slightly applied only in one case: a longer article deals with a blind Bulgarian fortune teller, who

⁵ Perhaps a research about the stereotypical „Africa” in the news would shed more light to the perception of these countries in the media and their influence on their overall perception among the respondents.

foresaw Obama's 2008 victory. While in another source about the newly elected Bulgarian UNESCO president, Irina Bokova, a quote from the defeated Egyptian Farouk Hosny, Bulgaria is on the occidental side in an orientalist debate, thus it is hard to define one dominant narrative in the case of Bulgaria.

4.7.2. India

The Russians gradually understand that it is worth to cooperate with India in the field of high technology as well.
(KOS3)

India is the “third largest Asian economy” (IND12), but also a consumer market for the western car and mobile phone industry, so India appears as a relevant economic player, but also as a dependent country. While India plays an important role in the exploration of the Moon with its spacecraft (MNO20), Russia is going to build twelve nuclear power plants and sell weapons to the country (IND13, KOS3). Meanwhile, India is suffering from drought and the proportion of HIV positive people is very high, which facts would position the country lower on a hierarchical rank.

The gender relations described are also twofold. On one hand the government submits a proposal in favor of introducing a gender quota of 33% (KOS4), while a journey report published in *Magyar Nemzet* claims that women do not receive the same level of healthcare as men, thus child mortality is higher among women (MNO21).

However, many articles apply an orientalist discourse, referring to the Indian Yogi not eating for seventy years, but still alive (IND14), or the Indian chess master, Ananda, who “received the unjustified offense with the calmness and serenity of an Indian guru” (NOL15). On the other hand *Népszabadság* published one article in which the traces of anti-colonialism also appear by referring to the “civilized” (quotation marks in the original) manner of the Portuguese colonizers who exercised target shooting in some of the valuable Indian statues (NOL16). Despite this single article, the orientalist traits of India are more likely to appear in the mass media.

4.8. Conclusions II.

Before the analysis I assumed that a scale similar to the one created by the respondents can be perceived in the Hungarian mass media. However, based on the systematic analysis, it seems that a scale can not be easily generated from the qualitative data. Firstly, the ranking cannot be constructed upon one sole developmental aspect, and secondly, if I take into consideration all the developmental elements appearing in the media, I would have to make a hierarchical connection also between them. Despite this fact, it is possible to grasp the dominant developmental elements mentioned in the news, among which economy is the most pervasive followed by the geopolitical power of a country.

Development as a belief system is represented in the Hungarian media predominantly as economic power, thus very apparently the modernist approach is still significant. Although the qualitative aspects of the developmental process appeared as well, they were mostly of secondary relevance. Still, they served as the possible factors influencing the rating of such countries as China and Russia.

5. Final conclusions

Based on the above analysis, ordinary non-elite Hungarians perceive development as a hierarchical scale, since they rate most of the countries systematically in the same way. This hierarchy resembles the GDP scale the most, which finding is in line with the fact that the respondents regard higher economic well-being (the quantitative modernist approach) as the most important developmental factor, followed by democracy and the use of science and technology. When comparing these findings with the qualitative data, some probable connection can be found. First of all, the economic level of the examined countries and the influential “lighthouse” role of certain international western-based institutions dominated the news in every five source. Meanwhile the level of democracy, use of technology/science, the geopolitical power and culture appeared as further dominant topics.

In addition to this, it is very likely that in the case of the two outlier countries (China, Russia) the media products had some effects on the respondents’ decisions. China is described as an economically very strong, but democratically less “developed” country, so the high scores based predominantly on the economic factor might have been influenced by these sources. The Russian case is somewhat different. It appears as a geopolitical power, but also as a historically important country, and the frequent appearance might have influenced peoples’ decisions when giving higher scores to this country. According to the findings of the qualitative research this was probably the most important factor to those who consume more conservative media, such as *Kossuth Rádió* and *Magyar Nemzet*, thus an ideologically different representation is also apparent.

The proximity and the relation to the countries appeared to be important factors as well. While the news coverage about the neighboring countries was mostly about national and economic issues, the articles about the non-neighboring countries (e.g. Germany) described

the economic relations. Meanwhile the two African countries were not mentioned at all and the lack of any significant international relations might have been the reason for the controversial and limited news coverage about Denmark and India.

The directionality of the news is also dominant. The “where is this country headed”-like questions appear many times, and so do the economic scales and cultural comparisons, even referring to Huntington’s famous phrase in several cases. These aspects lead to the conclusion that the majority of the news applies a modernist *and* civilizatory approach with only little criticism. The orientalist discourse appears as well, but dominantly only in connection with India (from a cultural perspective), and Denmark (as a host country for many immigrants).

In the five media products the source of moral “goodness”, economic or cultural standards is definitely the West. The USA is the cultural protagonist of the articles, while a more relevant country from the perspective of Hungarians, Germany (as one of the main representatives of the EU) is the center of financial decision-making. The standards set by the institutions headquartered in these core countries are very dominant throughout the articles and not only in relation to Hungary, but the other non-western countries as well.

The hierarchy constructed by ordinary Hungarians reflects a certain perception of development, which is mainly influenced by the economic data of a given country. After an extensive analysis of the Hungarian mass media, the same element appears to be dominant, and the hierarchical structure constructed by Hungarians and the media is also very similar. Thus it seems that despite the exhaustive criticism of the concept, development as directional process and a mission to be accomplished seem to be relevant thoughts in the life of non-elite Hungarians. Even though this concept is clearly constructed, it exists in its effects, and is influenced by a media that is blending different developmental approaches, but ultimately highlighting Western dominance.

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