



The Global Prestige Hierarchy: A Culture Theory of Global Inequality



Monday, October 24, 2016

1:30 - 3:00 pm

W113 Seashore Hall

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Building on theories of prestige that recognize the institutional order as a proximate cause of status hierarchy, I propose a cultural account of global inequality and the rank ordering of nations into a global status hierarchy. In this framework, the global institutional order is structured by the world polity and the beliefs and values of world culture. Developmentalism is the unifying transnational cognitive framework, or worldview, that legitimizes and propagates a rigid global status hierarchy through the conferral of social honor to high status countries. I systematically evaluate four necessary conditions for such a theory, including a) consensus and b) stability of prestige judgements among world raters, c) agreement between subjective and objective indicators of national prestige, and d) long-run stability of objective status hierarchy. I conclude with formal, statistical tests of the theoretical model. Results provide strong, quantitative evidence for a taken-for-granted cultural model of development and hierarchy that is grounded in shared values among world citizens. This work both challenges and augments prior accounts of global inequality.

This talk is part of the **Inequality Seminar** which is a seminar and speaker series that provides a forum on campus for faculty and graduate students who are interested in inequality broadly defined. It is an opportunity for faculty and graduate students to present their research and to hear about other inequality-related work from researchers on the off-campus. These talks are free and open to the public. For more information about the Inequality Seminar, contact Professor Sarah Bruch at sarah-bruch@uiowa.edu.

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