

**International Fertility Change: New Data
and Insights from the Developmental
Idealism Framework**

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Focus of the Paper

- 1. Fertility Change**
- 2. Worldwide Scope**
- 3. New framework and data to help understand fertility declines**

Goals of this Paper

- 1. Present new explanatory factors based on developmental beliefs and worldviews.**
- 2. Present new data from six countries concerning beliefs about development and fertility.**
- 3. Argue that such factors are very often, but not always important.**
- 4. Do not suggest that such beliefs and worldviews are the only causal factors.**

Talk Has Three Parts

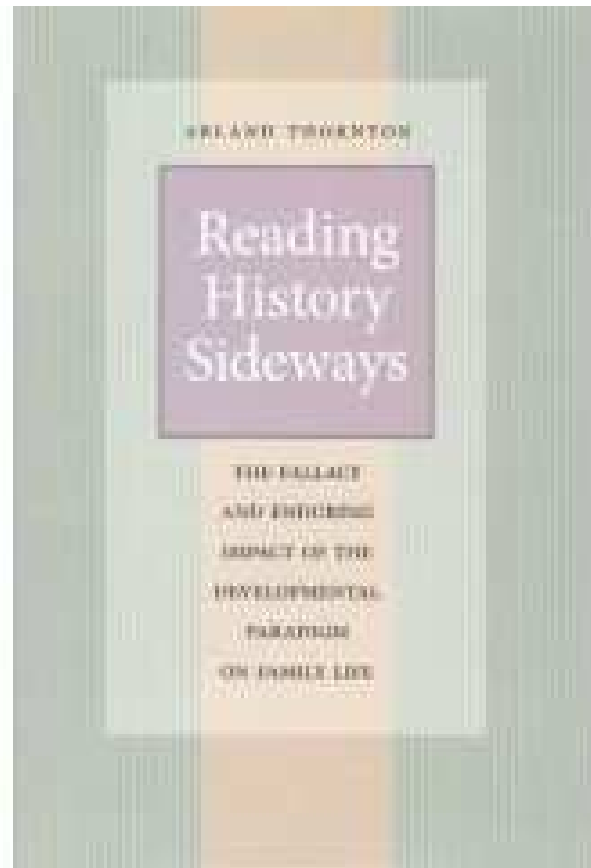
- 1: The developmental paradigm, developmental idealism, and their spread around the world.**
- 2: The international family planning program and its role in spreading developmental idealism.**
- 3: New evidence about people today believing ideas of developmental idealism as they relate to fertility.**

Talk Has Three Parts

1:

The developmental paradigm, developmental idealism, and their spread around the world.

Reading History Sideways: The Fallacy and Enduring Impact of the Developmental Paradigm on Family Life



The University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Developmental Paradigm

- 1. I am NOT presenting the developmental paradigm to advocate it as a research or policy tool.**
- 2 I present it here ONLY to show how it became widespread and influential among ordinary people around the world.**

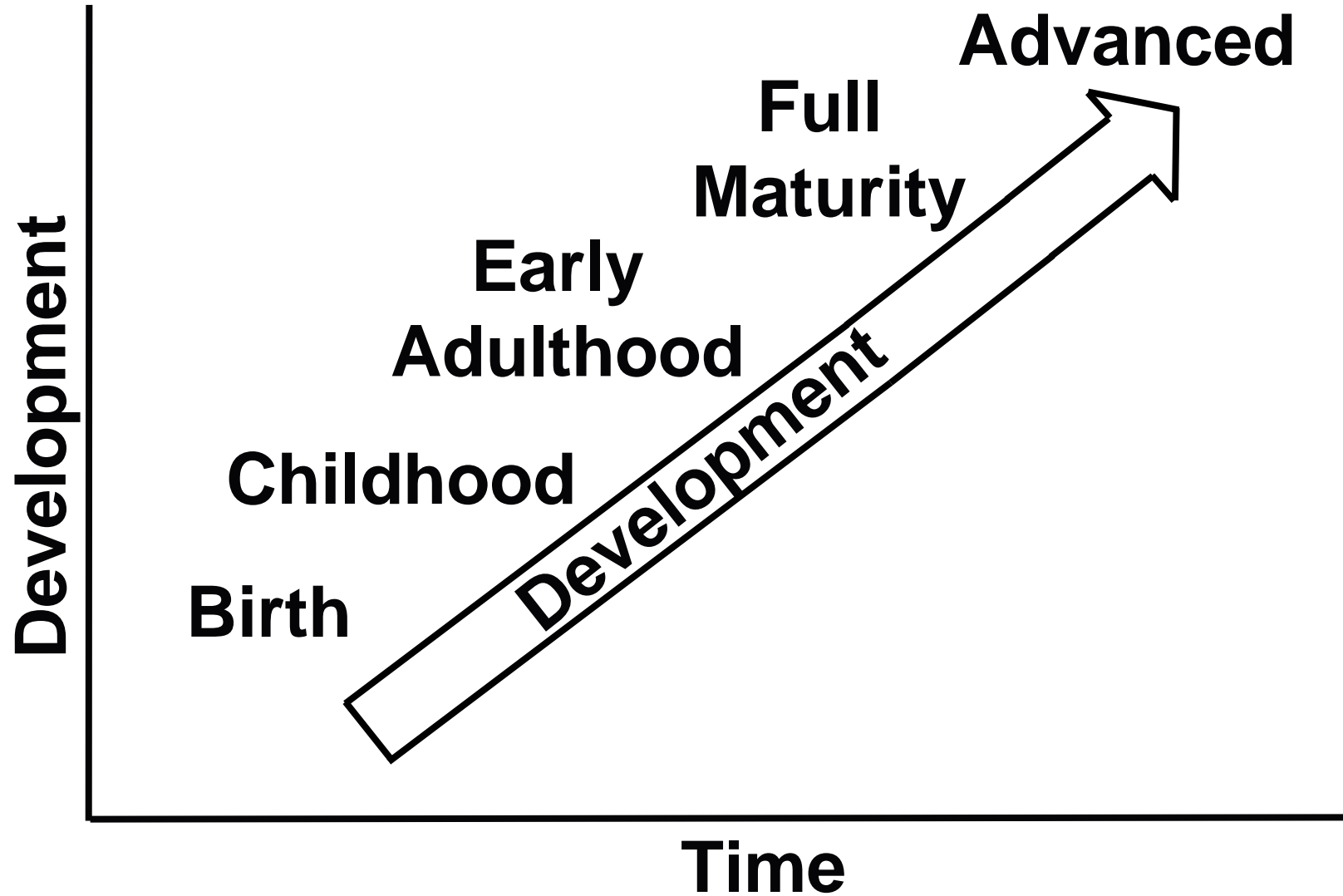
The Conceptual Framework

- 1. The developmental paradigm is a model of change.**

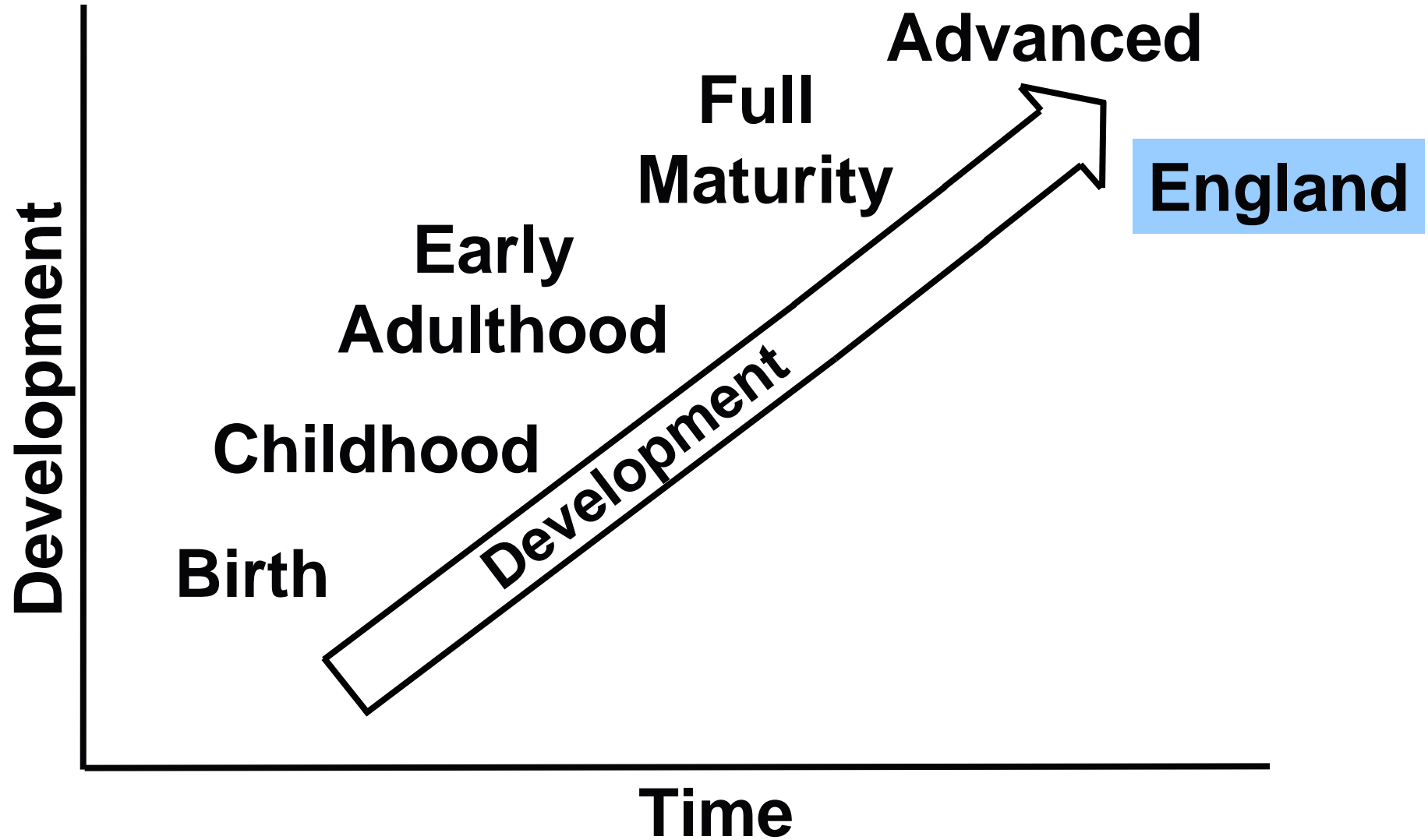
The Conceptual Framework

- 1. The developmental paradigm is a model of change.**
- 2. Change is pictured as natural, uniform, necessary, and directional.**

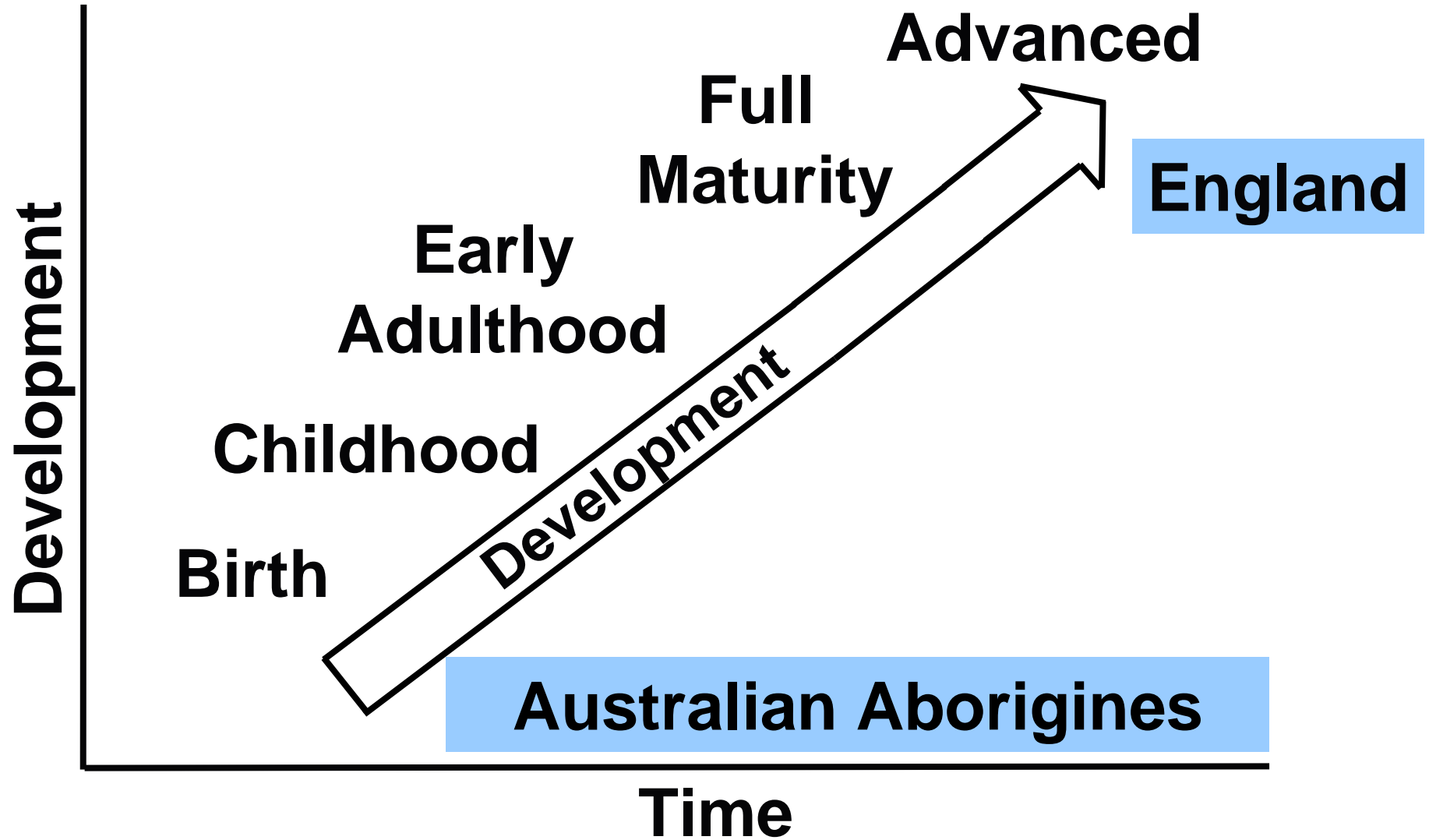
Societal Development



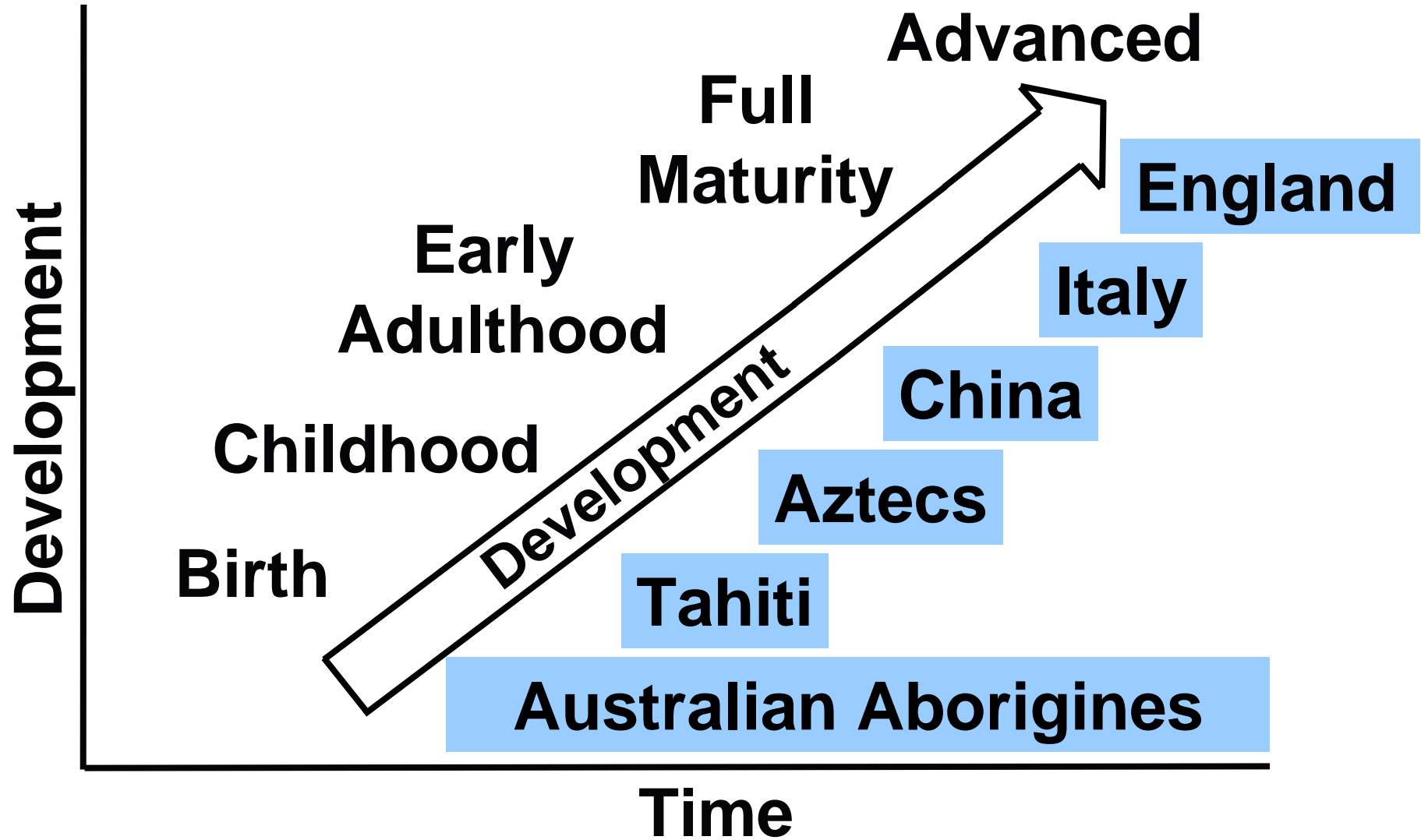
Societal Development



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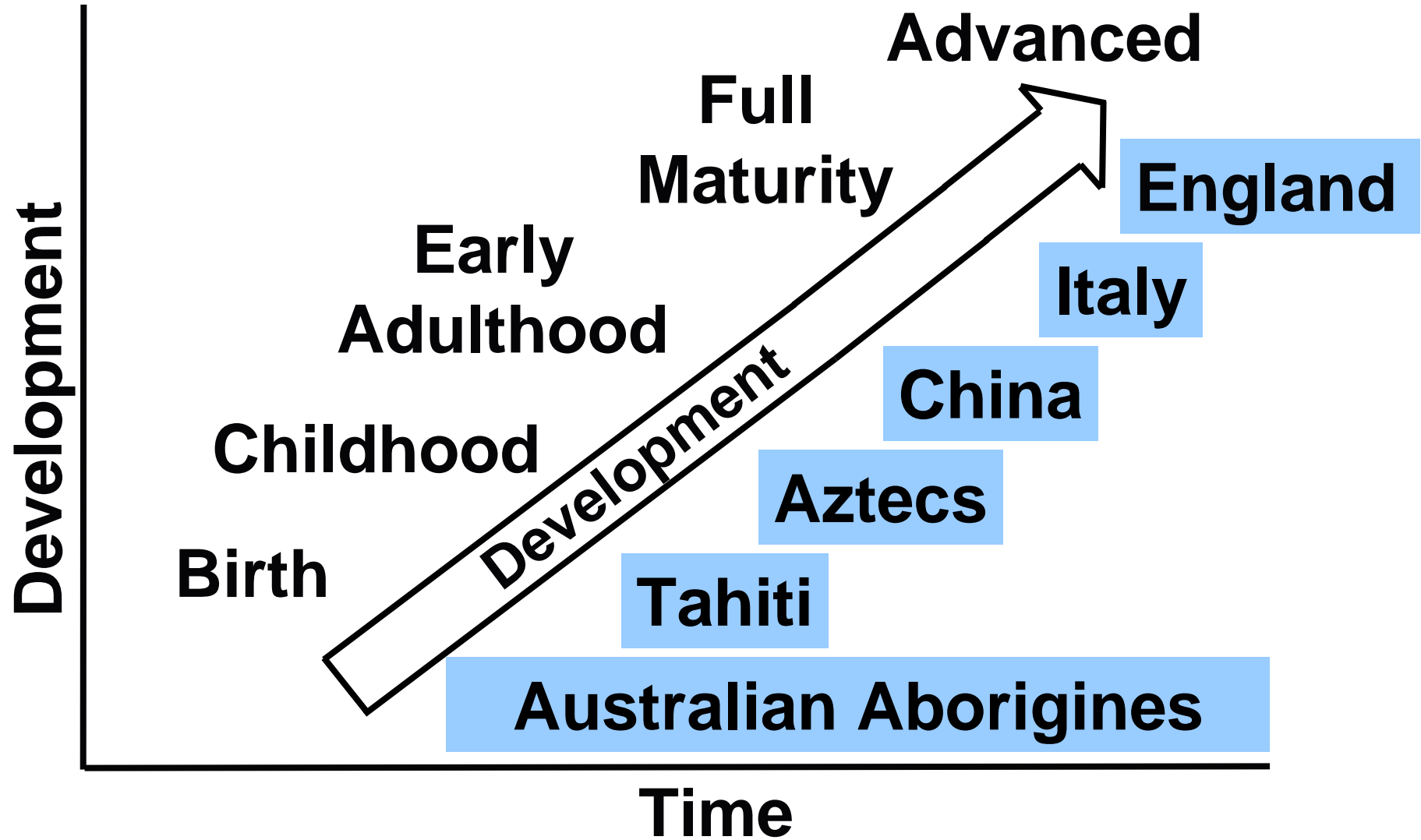


Societal Development

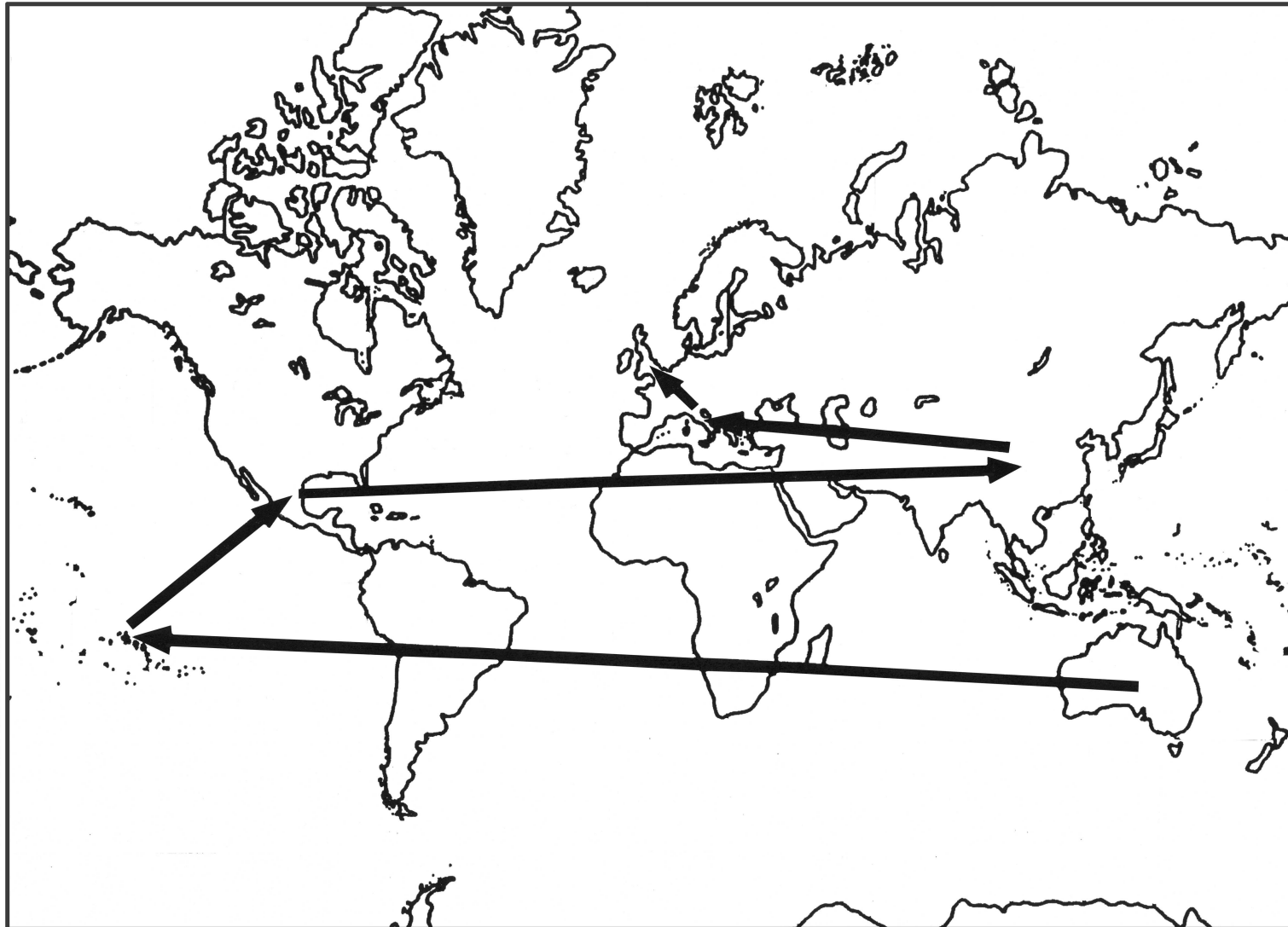


	U.N. HDI
U.S.	9.4
England	9.3
Japan	9.3
Argentina	8.5
Brazil	7.8
China	7.2
Bolivia	6.7
India	5.9
Nepal	5.0
Nigeria	4.6
Somalia	2.9

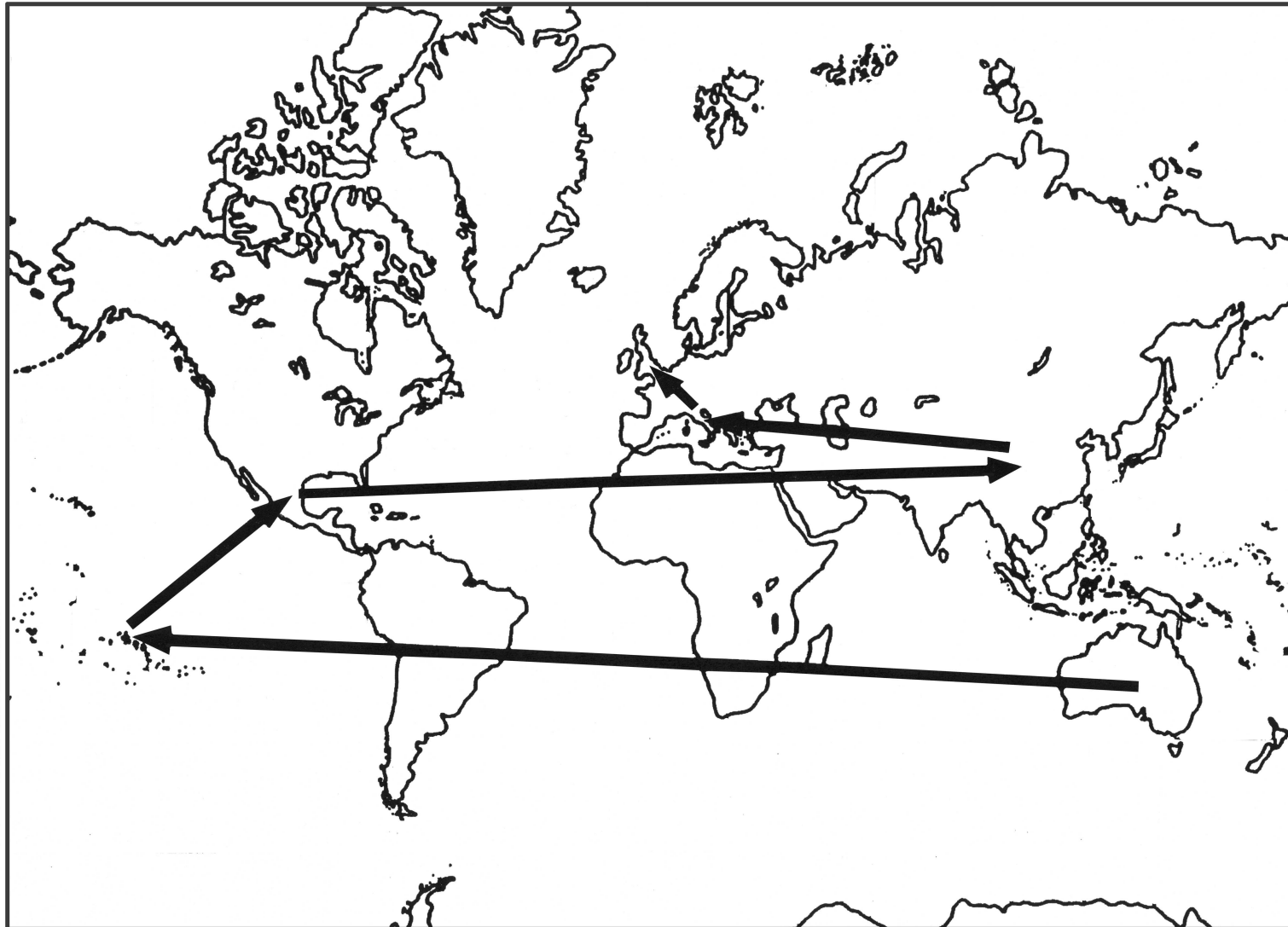
Societal Development



Reading History Sideways on a Trip Around the World



Reading FUTURE Sideways on a Trip Around the World



Traditional and Modern Family Attributes

Traditional

Natural Fertility

High Fertility

Extended Households

Young Marriage

Parental Authority

Arranged Marriage

Gender Hierarchy

Modern

Controlled Fertility

Low Fertility

Nuclear Households

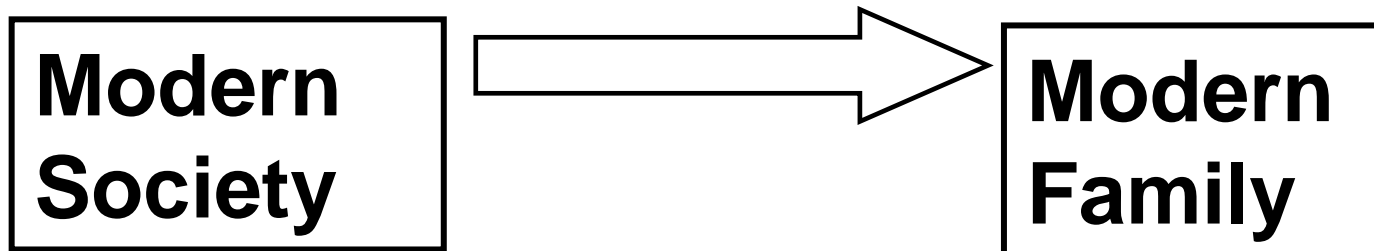
Older Marriage

Youthful Autonomy

Marital Courtship

Gender Egalitarianism

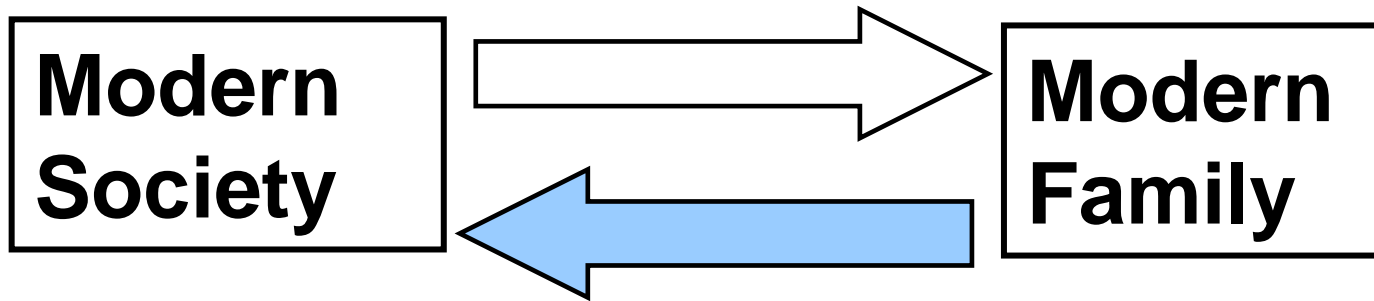
Explaining the Transition from Traditional to Modern



Modern Society

- Industrialization**
- Urbanization**
- Increased Education and Knowledge**
- Increased Consumption and Mobility Aspirations**
- Democratization**
- Religious Pluralism and Secularism**

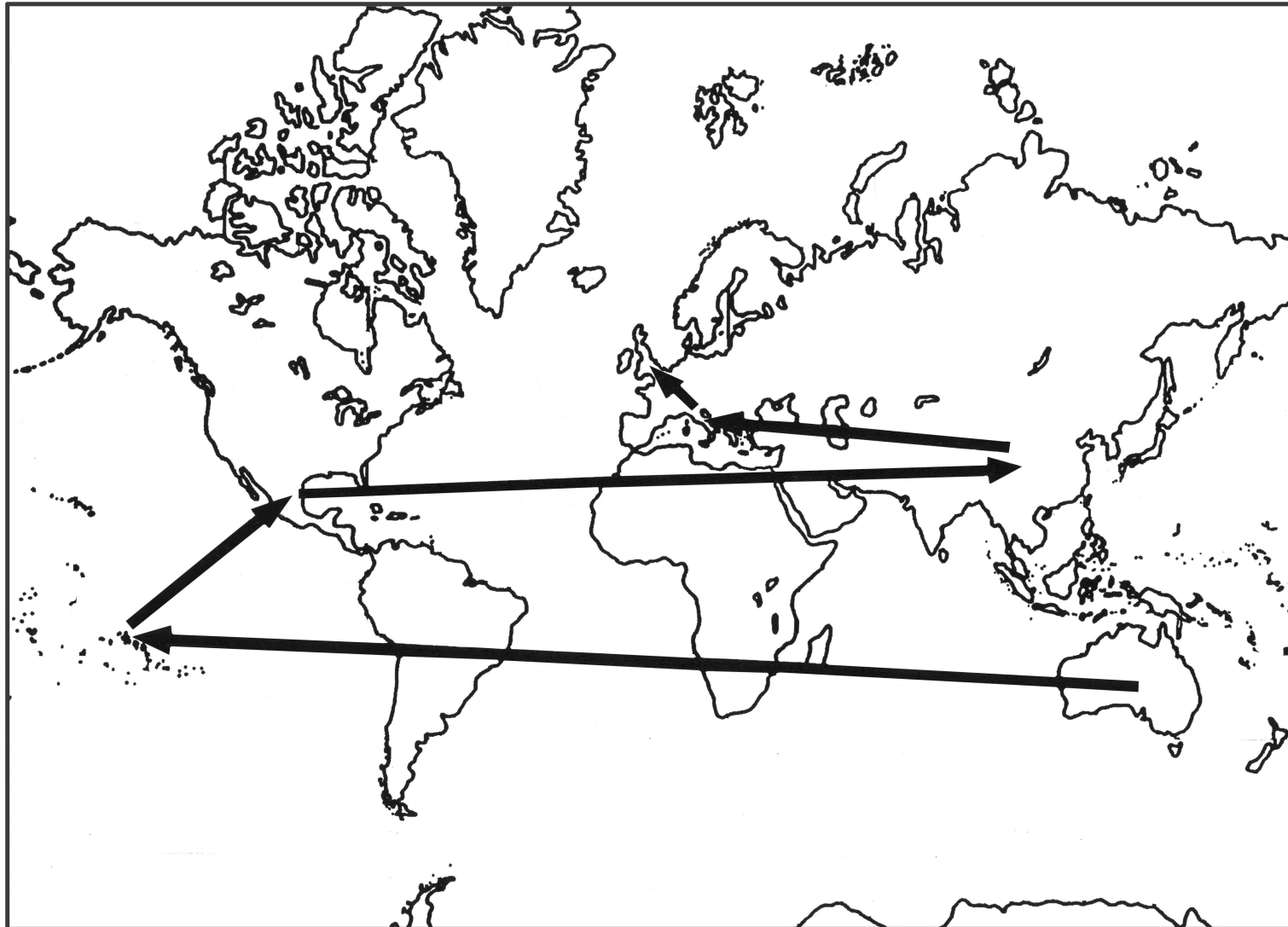
Explaining the Transition from Traditional to Modern



Implications of This for Ordinary People in Everyday Life

- 1. It suggests a dynamic and changing world, with directionality.**

Reading FUTURE Sideways on a Trip Around the World



Implications of This for Ordinary People in Everyday Life

- 1. It suggests a dynamic and changing world, with directionality.**
- 2 It provides a model for progress that I call developmental idealism.**

Elements of Developmental Idealism

1. Modern society is good, attainable, and includes:

- Industrialized**
- Urbanized**
- Highly Educated**
- Highly Knowledgeable**
- High level of consumption**

Elements of Developmental Idealism

1. Modern society is good.

2. Modern family is good and includes:

- Individualism
- Nuclear Households
- Old Age at Marriage
- Youthful Autonomy
- Courtship in Marriage
- Gender Egalitarianism
- Family Planning
- Low Fertility

Elements of Developmental Idealism

1. Modern society is good.

2. Modern family is good.

3. Modern family is a cause and effect of a modern society.

Elements of Developmental Idealism

- 1. Modern society is good.**
- 2. Modern family is good.**
- 3. Modern family is a cause and effect of a modern society.**
- 4. Individuals have the right to be free and equal and have their relationships based on consent.**

Spread of Developmental Idealism

- Writings of scholars**
- Mass education**
- Mass media**
- Christianity**
- Colonization**
- Democratic movements**
- United Nations**
- Non-government organizations**
- U.S. foreign policy**
- Civil rights**
- Women's rights**
- Family planning**

Points About Developmental Idealism

- 1. Point is Not whether the elements are true or false, good or bad.**
- 2. Point is whether they are accepted, rejected, or modified.**
- 3. Point is whether they motivate new behavior.**
- 4. We argue that their acceptance can lead to fertility decline.**

Talk Has Three Parts

2:

The international family planning program and its role in spreading developmental idealism.

International Family Planning Movement Motivated by Ideas that:

- 1. Low fertility is good.**
- 2. Planned fertility is good.**
- 3. Planned and low fertility will help
bring development.**

International Family Planning Movement Helped Spread Ideas that:

- 1. Low fertility is good.**
- 2. Planned fertility is good.**
- 3. Planned and low fertility will help
bring development.**
- 4. Development will help bring planned
and low fertility.**

These Ideas also Spread by

- United Nations**
- Non-government organizations**
- U.S. foreign policy**
- Development programs**
- Mass education**
- Mass media**

Talk Has Three Parts

3:

New evidence about people today believing ideas of developmental idealism as they relate to fertility.

Comparative Data Collection

- Design Comparable Questions for Use in Many Countries
- Surveys Conducted in Six Countries Between 2006 and 2009
 - Argentina
 - China
 - Egypt
 - Iran
 - Nepal
 - United States



Table 1. Country Characteristics

Country	GDP p/capita (US\$)	TFR	Life Expec.	Adult Literacy	Gross School Enroll.
Argentina	6.644	2.3	75	98	89
China	2.432	1.7	73	93	69
Egypt	1.729	2.9	70	66	76
Iran	4.028	1.8	71	82	73
Egypt	1.729	2.9	70	66	76
Nepal	367	2.9	67	56	61
USA	45.592	2.1	79	99	92

Comparative Data Collection

- Design Comparable Questions for Use in Many Countries
- Surveys Conducted in Six Countries Between 2006 and 2009
 - Argentina: national urban sample,
 - China: Gansu Province
 - Egypt: One northern and one southern province
 - Iran: Women in city of Yazd
 - Nepal: valley in South Central Nepal
 - United States: national telephone sample

The purpose of the data collection was to answer the following general research question:

Do ordinary people in Argentina, China, Egypt, Iran, Nepal, and the United States believe the ideas associated with development and developmental idealism?

Six subquestions:

Do ordinary people believe that development and low fertility are related?

Do ordinary people believe that development causes low fertility?

Do ordinary people believe that fertility decline will help bring development?

Do ordinary people believe that one child is better than three children?

Do ordinary people believe that fertility will decline in the future?

Do ordinary people believe that a future fertility decline is a good thing?

So focus is on:

People's views of development and fertility and their causal interconnections.

Not on actual causal connections.

Survey question about association between development and family life:

“Now, please think about what life is like today in countries that are not developed and compare it to what life is like today in countries that are developed. Please tell us whether each of the following things, in general, is more common in countries that are not developed or more common in countries that are developed.”

Survey question about development causing family change:

“Now, please think about what life is like in a country where the standard of living is low, most people live in rural areas, and access to healthcare is poor. Suppose that country introduces a program to help make the country more developed. I will read a list of things this development program might change. For each one, please tell me whether it will increase in that country or decrease in that country once the development program has been successfully implemented”.

Table 3. Views of Developmental Idealism

% Giving Development Response	Arg.	China	Egypt	Iran	Nepal	US
A. Perceptions of fertility in developed and not developed countries						
Couples with many children are more common in <i>not developed</i> countries	88,3	89,7	94,5	95,1	74,7	78,1
B. Perceptions of the effects of development on fertility						
Development would <i>decrease</i> couples having many children	73,1 *	95,0	79,9	89,9	82,7	75,3

* Category "about the same/neither/same" was chosen by 10% or more of respondents.

Survey question about fertility reduction causing social change:

“Now, please think about what life is like today in a country where income is low, most people live in rural areas, access to healthcare is poor, and most couples give birth to at least six children. Suppose that country introduces a smaller-family-size program to encourage couples to give birth to no more than three children. I will read a list of things this smaller-family-size program might change. For each one, please tell me whether it will increase in that country or decrease in that country once the smaller-family-size program has been successfully implemented ”.

Table 3. Views of Developmental Idealism (cont.)

% Giving Development Response	Arg.	China	Egypt	Iran	Nepal	US
C. Perceptions of Effects of Lower Fertility						
Increase the standard of living	83,7	98,6	92,4	94,5	94,0	83,9
Increase TV at home	57,3 *	98,5	84,8	72,0	96,6	83,3
Decrease infant mortality	88,6	98,1	86,6	89,2	86,2	86,2
Increase education	82,8 *	96,4	93,0	94,5	98,3	91,0
Decrease consulting local healers	76,1 *	--	91,5	--	93,4	76,8
Increase parent-child love/underst.	57,4 *	86,3	85,6	82,9	--	78,8
Increase respect for elders	51,2 *	78,9	86,3	63,7 *	75,9	60,3 *

* Category "about the same/neither/same" was chosen by 10% or more of respondents.

Survey question evaluating values concerning certain family attributes:

“I would like you to think about the different kinds of social and family arrangements around the world today. I am going to ask you to compare a variety of social and family arrangements. Please tell me overall which one you think is better for most people around the world today ”.

Table 3. Views of Developmental Idealism (cont.)

% Giving Development Response	Arg.	China	Egypt	Iran	Nepal	US
D. Choice of One or Three Children						
One child better than three	31,6	79,0	16,3	36,0	60,9	43,0
E. Perceptions of Country's Fertility Trends						
Fertility will decrease the next twenty years	49,7 *	94,4	71,9	91,4	78,8	74,2

* Category "about the same/neither/same" was chosen by 10% or more of respondents.

Question about expectations of future family change:

“Now please think about the next twenty years in (STUDY SITE COUNTRY). Do you think (THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN A WOMAN GIVES BIRTH TO) will increase or decrease in (STUDY SITE COUNTRY) during the next twenty years ”.

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Question about evaluation of future decreases in fertility:

“If (THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN A WOMAN GIVES BIRTH TO) does decrease/increase overall, will that be a good thing, a bad thing, or won't it matter ”.

Question said decrease for those who expected a decrease.

Question said increase for those who expected an increase.



Table 4. Evaluations of Fertility Trends

% Distribution	Arg.	China	Egypt	Iran	Nepal	US
People who expect fertility decrease						
It will be a good thing	56,7	92,2	88,5	68,7	79,3	46,9
It will not matter	26,2	0,9	1,9	11,4	12,0	35,1
It will be a bad thing	16,3	6,8	9,6	19,9	8,7	17,4
People who expect fertility increase						
It will be a good thing	13,9		15,1		--	23,5
It will not matter	24,4		3,9		--	44,8
It will be a bad thing	61,5		81,0		--	31,7

-- Question not asked

General Conclusion

- 1. Reports of ordinary people in surveys suggest that ideas of developmental idealism as they relate to fertility are widely spread in the six countries examined here.**

More Specific Conclusions

- 1. Low fertility is widely seen as an attribute of development.**
- 2. Development is widely seen as a cause of low fertility.**
- 3. Low fertility is widely seen as a cause of development.**
- 4. Future fertility declines widely expected.**
- 5. Future fertility declines widely seen as good.**

Speculation

- 1. Such ideas are probably widely spread elsewhere as well.**
- 2. Need additional data to confirm this speculation.**

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- 4. And know that the ideas are socially desirable.**
- 5. This in itself would be powerful.**
- 6. But, likely that many also believe.**

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- 1. Know that current data cannot explain past behavior and trends.**

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- 1. Know that current data cannot explain past behavior and trends.**
- 2. Do not know when developmental idealism beliefs became widespread.**
- 3. Probably not widespread 200 years ago.**
- 4. Probably been spreading in recent periods.**
- 5. Such spread has probably influenced fertility declines in many places in recent decades.**

Explanations of How Ordinary People Learned Developmental Idealism

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- 4. Not mutually exclusive.**

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- 2. Other alternative: people observed fertility and economic trends in their countries.**
- 3. Other alternative: individuals figured it out on their own—from their own experiences.**
- 4. Not mutually exclusive.**
- 5. The direct and indirect dissemination of ideas about fertility and development is probably an important part of the story.**

Final Caveats

- 1. We make no claim that developmental idealism is the only cause of fertility decline.**
- 2. Developmental idealism is often resisted or modified as it competes with indigenous beliefs and worldviews.**
- 3. Developmental idealism operates differently in different places.**
- 4. Research on these ideas is very recent.**
- 5. We need additional research and data.**

Thank You

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