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Processes and Methods for Creating Questions and Protocols for an International Study of Ideas about Development and Family Life

By

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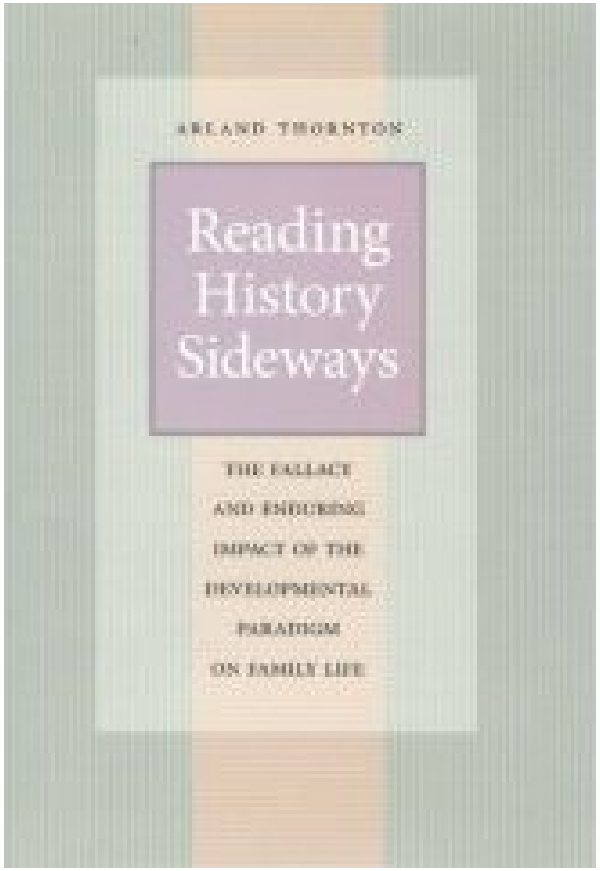
Focus of the Paper

1. Our creation and testing of measures of values and beliefs concerning societal development.
2. Completed data collection in 11 countries.
3. Describe process of Question Design.
4. Evaluation of Questions.

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



The University of Chicago Press, 2005.

The Developmental Model

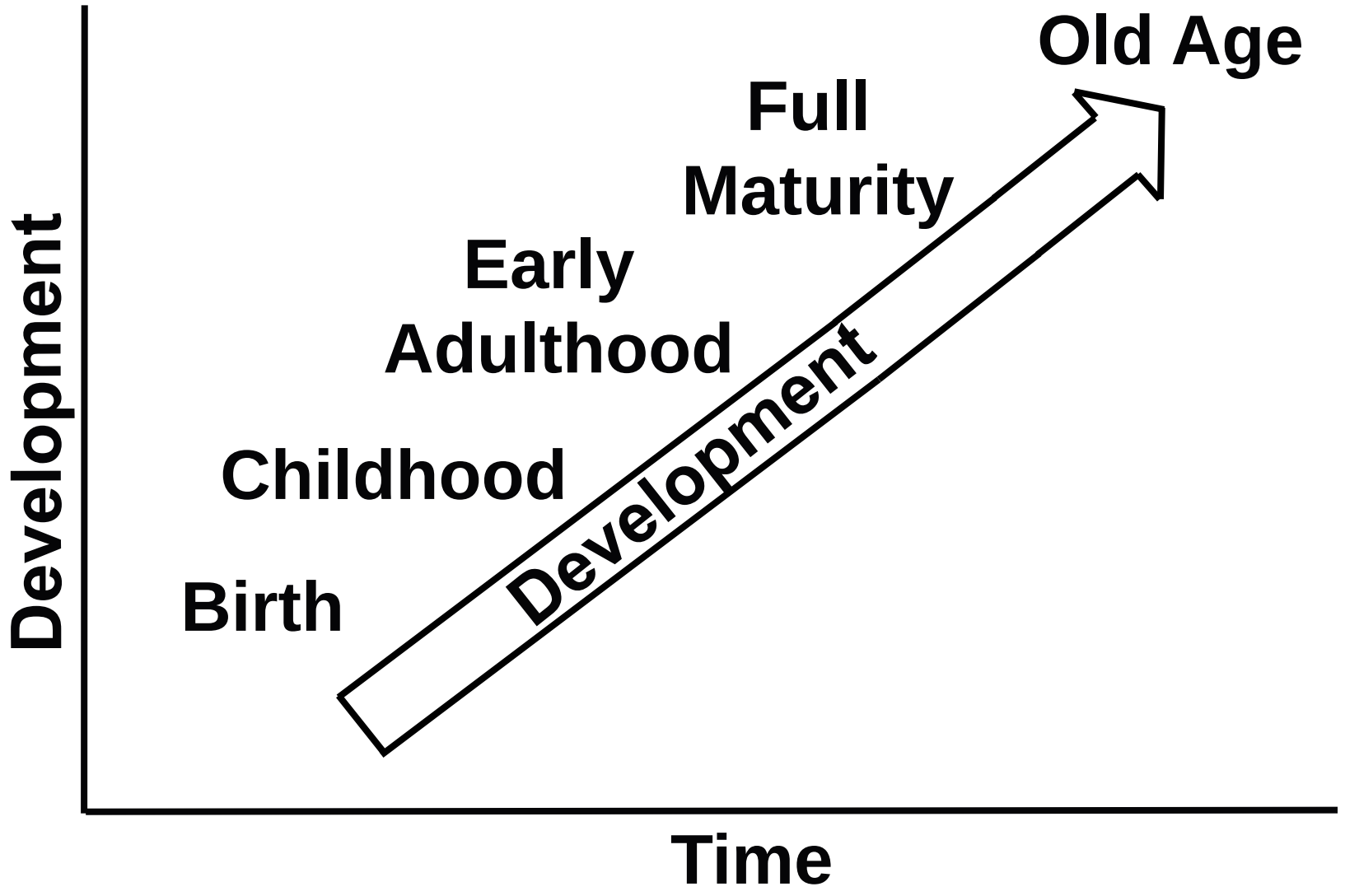
1. **The developmental paradigm is a model of change.**

The Developmental Model

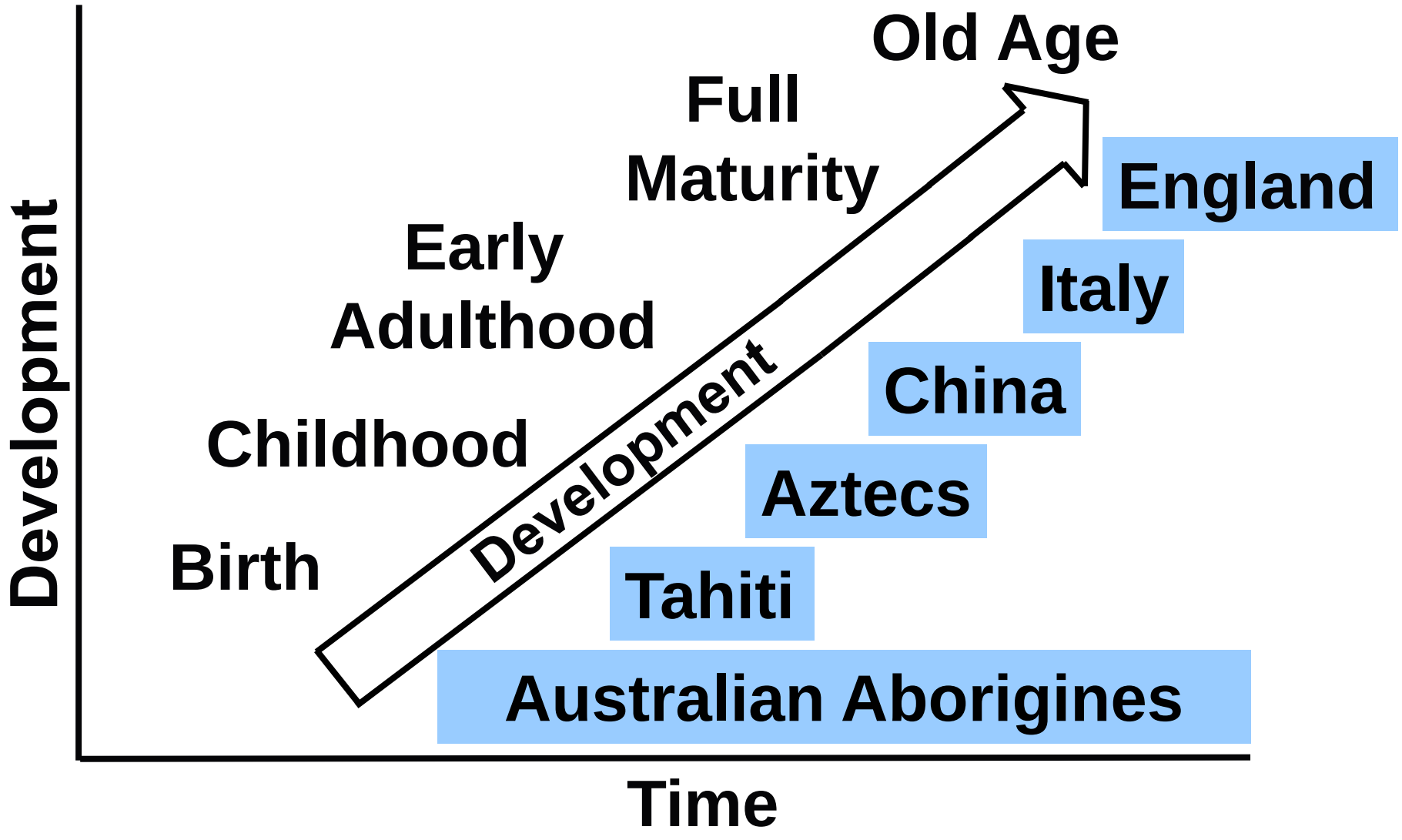
1. **The developmental paradigm is a model of change.**

2. **Change is pictured as natural, uniform, necessary, and directional.**

Societal Development



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

Do Ordinary People Have the same framework?

1. Do they have a concept of development?
2. Is this concept like the UN's?
3. Do they know about different counries?
4. Can we measure knowledge of a developmental heirarchy?

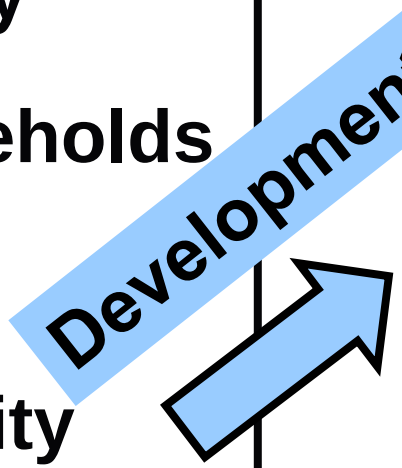
Modern or Developed Society

- Industrialized
- Urbanized
- High Levels of Formal Education and Knowledge
- High Levels of Consumption
- Democratic Government
- Religious Pluralism and Secularism

The Great Family Transition

Traditional

- Family Organized
- Family Solidarity
- Extended Households
- Young Marriage
- Parental Authority
- Arranged Marriage
- Gender Hierarchy



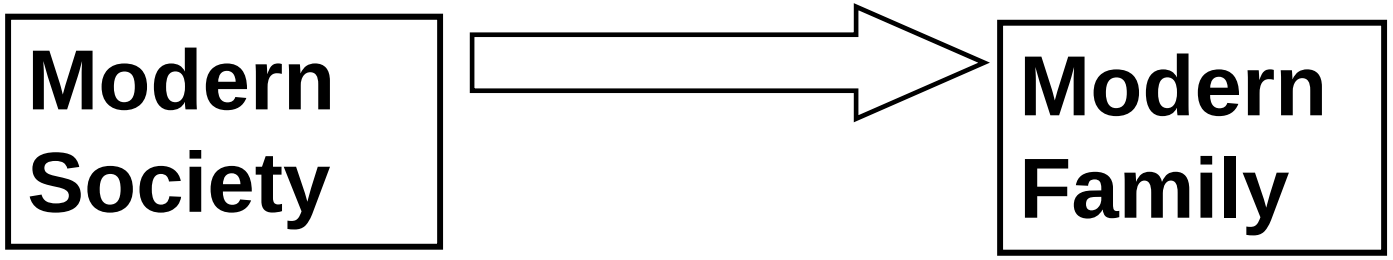
Modern

- Less Family Organized
- Individualism
- Nuclear Households
- Older Marriage
- Youthful Autonomy
- Marital Courtship
- Gender Egalitarianism

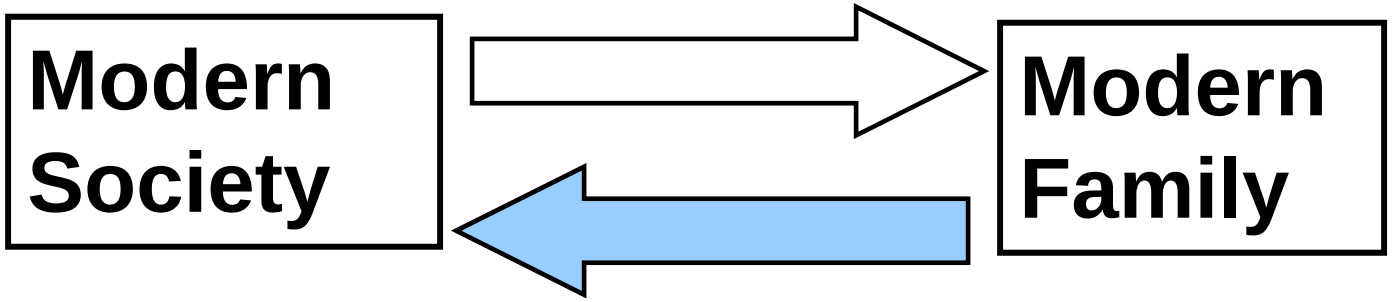
Do Ordinary People Have the same Ideas about Modern and Traditional?

1. In the family arena?
2. In the societal arena?

Explaining the Family Transition



Explaining the Family Transition



Do Ordinary People Have the same theories relating family and society?

1. Do they believe modern societies produce modern families?
2. Do they believe modern families produce modern societies?

Elements of Developmental Idealism

Elements of Developmental Idealism

1. Modern society is good and includes:

- Industrialized

- Urbanized

- Highly Educated

- Highly Knowledgeable

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.

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. **Our issue is whether we can measure people's beliefs and values concerning these things.**

Do People Believe……

1. That the elements of a modern society are good?.

2 That the elements of a modern family are good?

3. That a modern family is a cause and effect of a modern society?

Our Initial Approach

1. **Was very modest.**
2. **Had very little money**
3. **Team was very small**
4. **Decided to start in one country--Nepal**

Initial Data Collection in Nepal

- Informal Interviews
- In-Depth Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Pilot Survey

Further Preliminary Work in Argentina and Egypt

- Focus Groups
- Questionnaires

Further Preliminary Work in the United States

- Cognitive Interviewing

- Pilot Survey

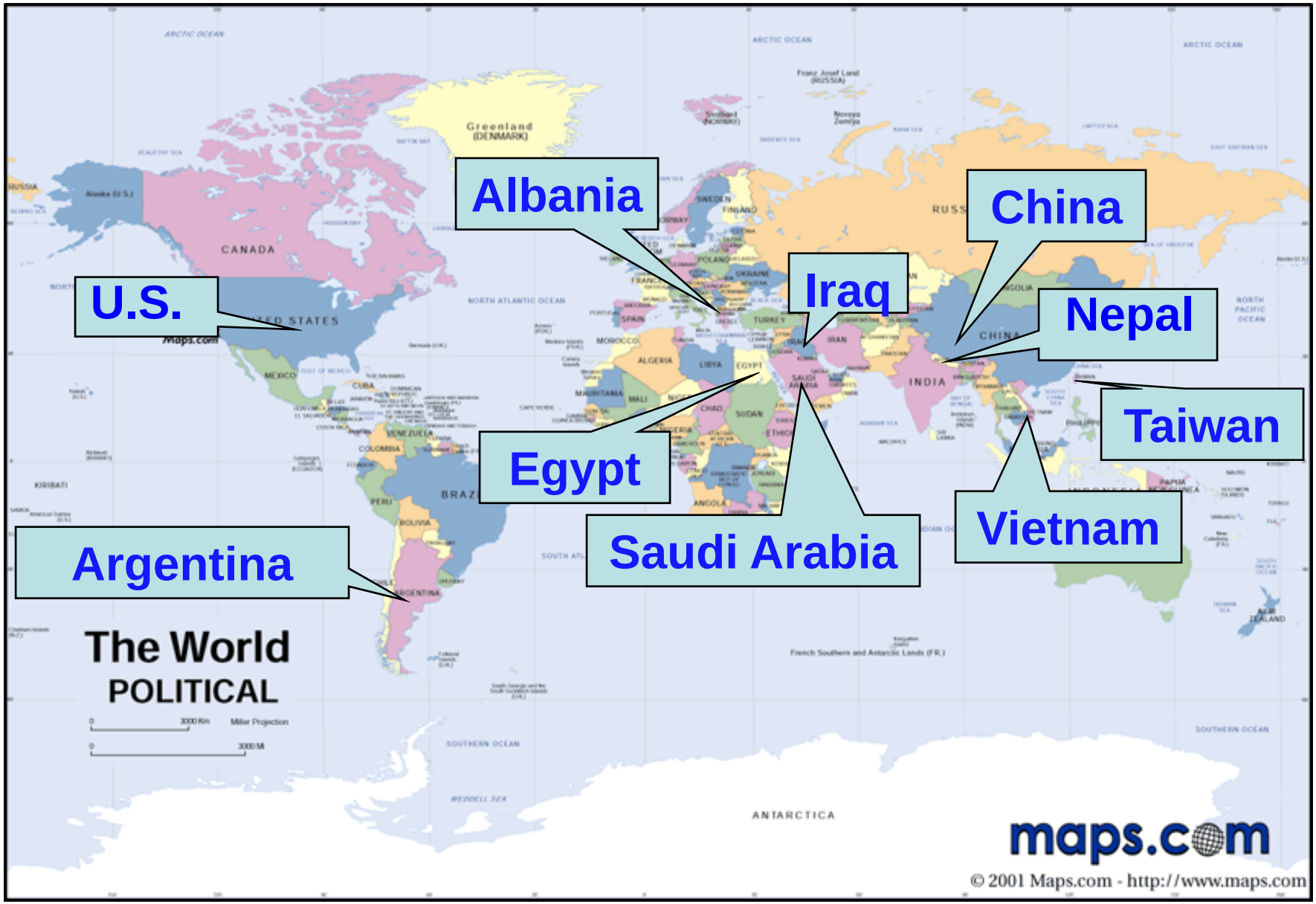
Research Team Expanded to Include

1. Expertise in many diverse countries: Albania, Argentina, Belgium, China, Egypt, Iran, Nepal, Taiwan, United States, and Vietnam.

2 Expertise in many different disciplines: anthropology, demography, political science, psychology, and sociology.

3. Expertise in multiple methods: ethnography, experiments, and surveys.

Research Sites



Current Simultaneous Design

- Design Comparable Questions for Use in Many Countries
- Comparable Surveys Conducted in Five Countries
  - Argentina
  - China
  - Egypt
  - Iran
  - United States

Some Results

1. People understand and use the concept of development.

2. People understand the international developmental heirarchy.

3. People Understand the developmental heirarchy similarly to the United Nations

4. People know what family traits go with development.

5. People have theories about the causal connections between family and societal change.

	U.N. HDI
U.S.	9.4
England	9.3
Japan	9.3
Argentina	8.5
Brazil	7.8
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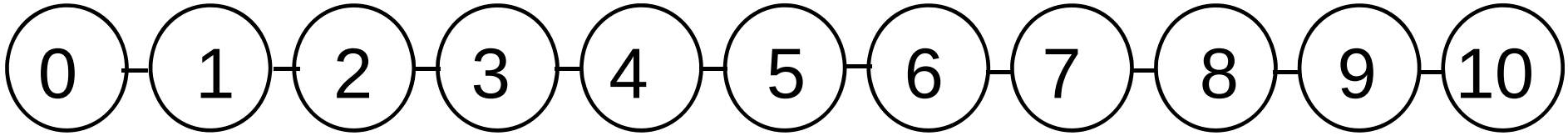
Nepal	5.0
Nigeria	4.6
Somalia	2.9

Development Scale Used in Questionnaires



Less Developed

Moderately Developed

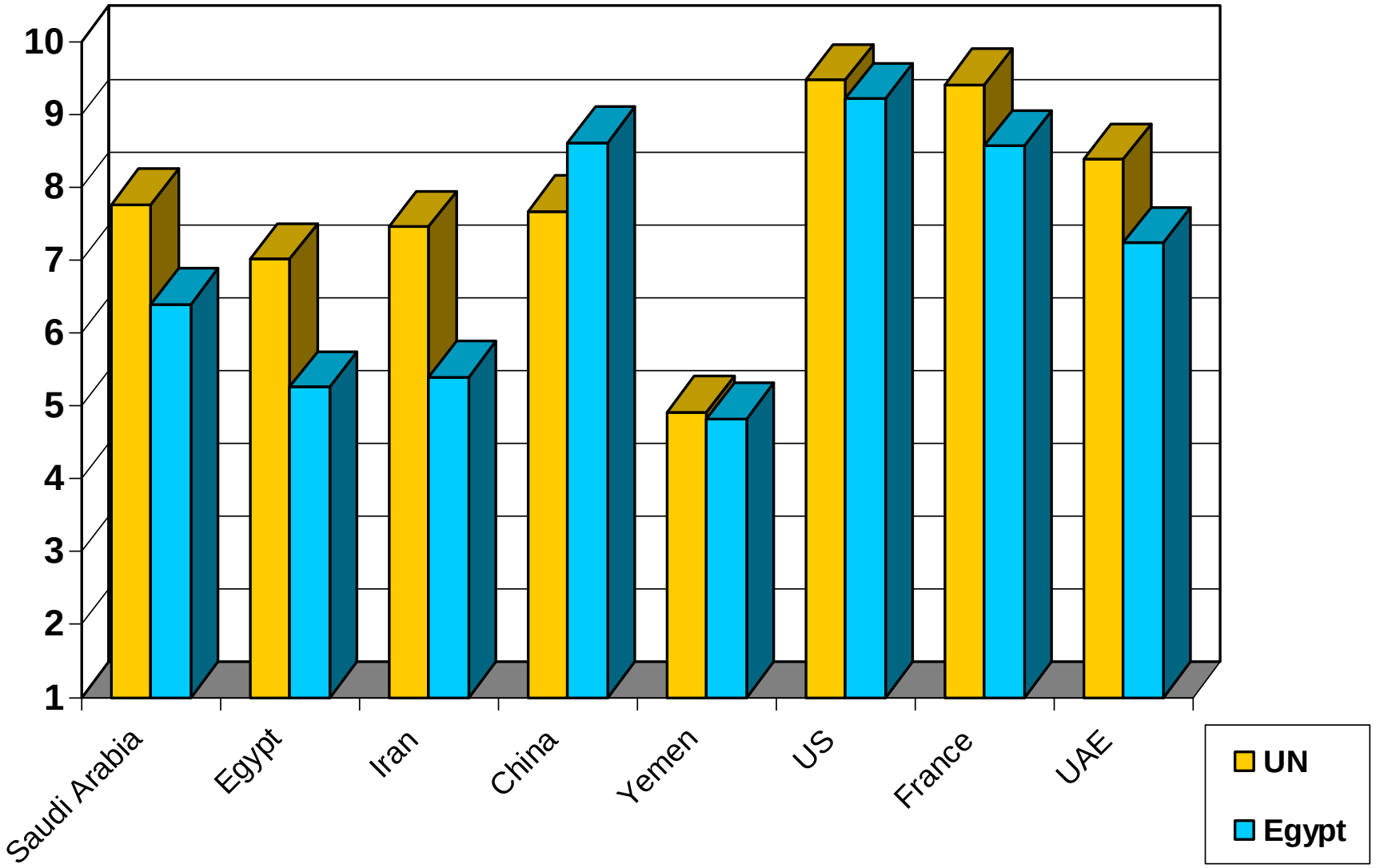
More Developed

	U.N.	Nepal	Argentina
U.S.	9.4	8.4	9.1
England	9.3	7.5	8.4
Japan	9.3	7.5	9.0
Argentina	8.5		6.0
Brazil	7.8	6.4	6.3
China	7.2	7.3	7.8
Bolivia	6.7		4.8
India	5.9	5.9	4.5
Nepal	5.0	3.8	
Nigeria	4.6		4.5
Somalia	2.9	5.8	

Bivariate Correlations Between Development Scores Reported by the United Nations and the Aggregate Scores of Nepali and Argentinean Respondents

	Nepal Respondents	Argentina Respondents
All countries	0.77	0.86
All countries except Somalia	0.90	

Comparing United Nations Development Ratings with Egyptian Youth Survey Mean Development Ratings



The Great Family Transition

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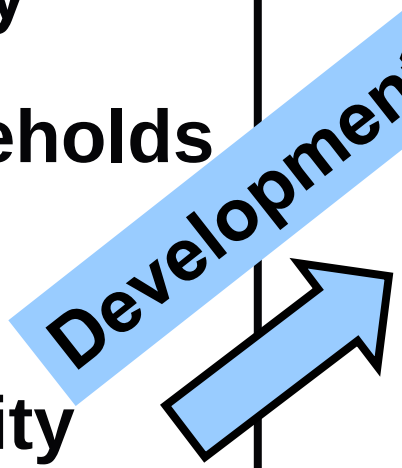

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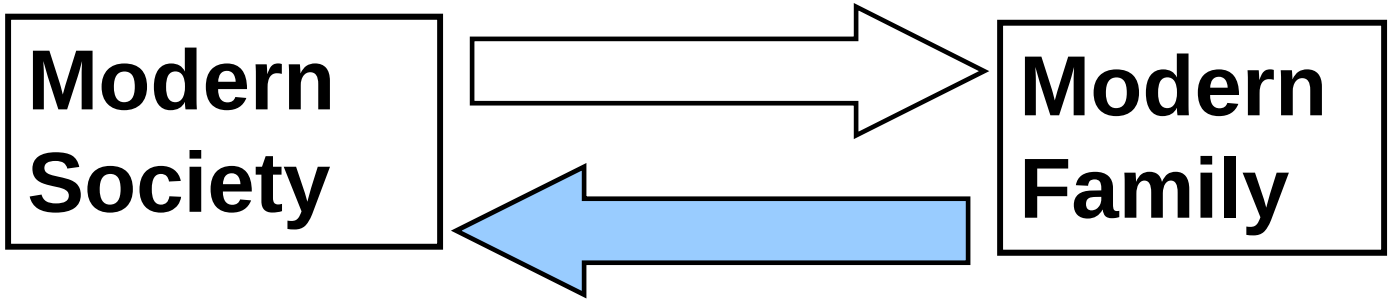
Nepali Perceptions of Where Certain Family Attributes Are More Common

Attribute	Traditional	Developed
Older age at marriage	19%	81%
Respect for women	19%	80%
Contraceptive use	8%	92%
Nuclear households	33%	65%
Arranged marriage	68%	31%

American Perceptions of Where Certain Attributes Are More Common

	% Saying More Common in:	
	Not Developed	**Developed**
Married Children Living with Parents	69.0	23.8
Females Marrying Before Age 18	88.9	11.7
Family Unity	59.5	28.6
Control over Adult Children	65.1	29.4
Men with More Than One Wife	87.3	6.4
Arranged Marriages	92.1	5.6
Couple with Many Children	81.0	14.3
Infant Mortality	92.9	4.0
People Working on Farms	76.2	17.5
Personal Freedom	7.9	87.3
Equality between Men & Women	3.2	93.6
Women Never Marry	12.7	82.5
Marriages Breaking Up	0.8	94.4
Respect for Women	7.9	87.3
Babies Born to Unmarried Mothers	23.8	69.8
Non-marital Cohabitation	5.6	86.5
Romantic Love between Husband &Wife	15.1	68.2
People in Cities	8.7	83.3
High Standard of Living	1.6	96.0
Many People Receiving Education in Schools	2.4	95.2

Explaining the Family Transition



Question Wording:

“Now, let us talk about whether the following things would be more common or less common if Nepal became more developed. People marrying at older ages? If Nepal became more developed, would people marrying at older ages be more common or less common?”

Evaluation of the Effects of Development on Family Life in Nepal

	Characteristic Would Become:	
	More Common	Less Common
Older age at marriage	73%	27%
Respect for women	89%	10%
Choosing own spouse	80%	19%
Contraceptive use	81%	19%

What happens to family attributes as countries undergo economic development

(Perceptions of Young Egyptians)

Attribute	Happens	Does not happen
Women's status declines	12.6	87.4
People choose own spouse	56.2	43.8
Marriage at older ages	72.5	27.5
Couples have fewer children	83.7	16.3

Question Wording:

“Some people talk about making Nepal richer. For each of the following things, please tell me whether you think it would help make Nepal richer or help make Nepal poorer. If more people married at an older age? Would that help make Nepal richer or help make Nepal poorer?”

Nepali Respondent's Evaluation of Whether Changes in Family Life in Nepal Would Make Nepal Richer or Poorer

	Would Make Nepal:	
	Richer	Poorer
Older age at marriage	90%	9%
Respect for women	89%	11%
Choosing own spouse	72%	21%
Contraceptive use	91%	9%

Would certain family changes promote or slow down modernization in Vietnam?

(Perceptions of Vietnamese)*

Change	Promote Modernization	Slow down Modernization
More women leaders	68.0	10.0
More arranged marriages	26.9	52.4
Marry at older ages	69.6	10.9
Have more children	2.3	93.7

*Third category “stay the same” not shown

Additional Plans and Hopes for More:

- In-Depth Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Cognitive Interviewing
- Experiments in Surveys
- Web Survey Experiments
- Cross-Sectional Surveys
- Panel Studies
- Content Analysis

I Welcome

1. **Criticisms, suggestions, and questions.**
2. **Suggestions for new lines of research/investigation.**
3. **Interest in collaboration.**
4. **Other material at: http://developmentalidealism.org/**

Thank You

Arland

Developmental Paradigm

1. **I am NOT presenting the developmental paradigm to advocate it as a research or policy tool.**

2 **Instead, I reject it as a model for research and practice.**

3. **I present it here ONLY to show how it became widespread and influential.**

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Phenomenon We Want to Explain

1. Declines or delays in fertility.
2. Declines in abortion; increases in contraception.
3. Declines in marriage rates and increases in age at marriage.
4. Increases in unmarried cohabitation.
5. Increases in nonmarital childbearing.
6. Similar changes in beliefs, values, and attitudes.

Several Existing Explanations

1. Promarriage and pronatalist policies were abandoned or weakened.
2. Drop in standard of living.
3. New uncertainty.
4. Old institutions shattered and old norms weakened.
5. New attitudes and values.
6. Increased importance of education.

Developmental Idealism and Worldwide Family and Demographic Change

Arland Thornton

Talk Has Three Parts

1: **The Developmental Paradigm and Myths about a Great Family Transition in Northwest Europe**

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1: The Developmental Paradigm and Myths about a Great Family Transition in Northwest Europe

2: The ideas of developmental idealism, their spread around the world, and their influence on worldwide family change

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1: The Developmental Paradigm and Myths about a Great Family Transition in Northwest Europe

2: The ideas of developmental idealism, their spread around the world, and their influence on worldwide family change

3: New evidence about people today believing these ideas and acting on them

Part One

1: The Developmental Paradigm and Myths about a Great Family Transition in Northwest Europe

The Conceptual Framework

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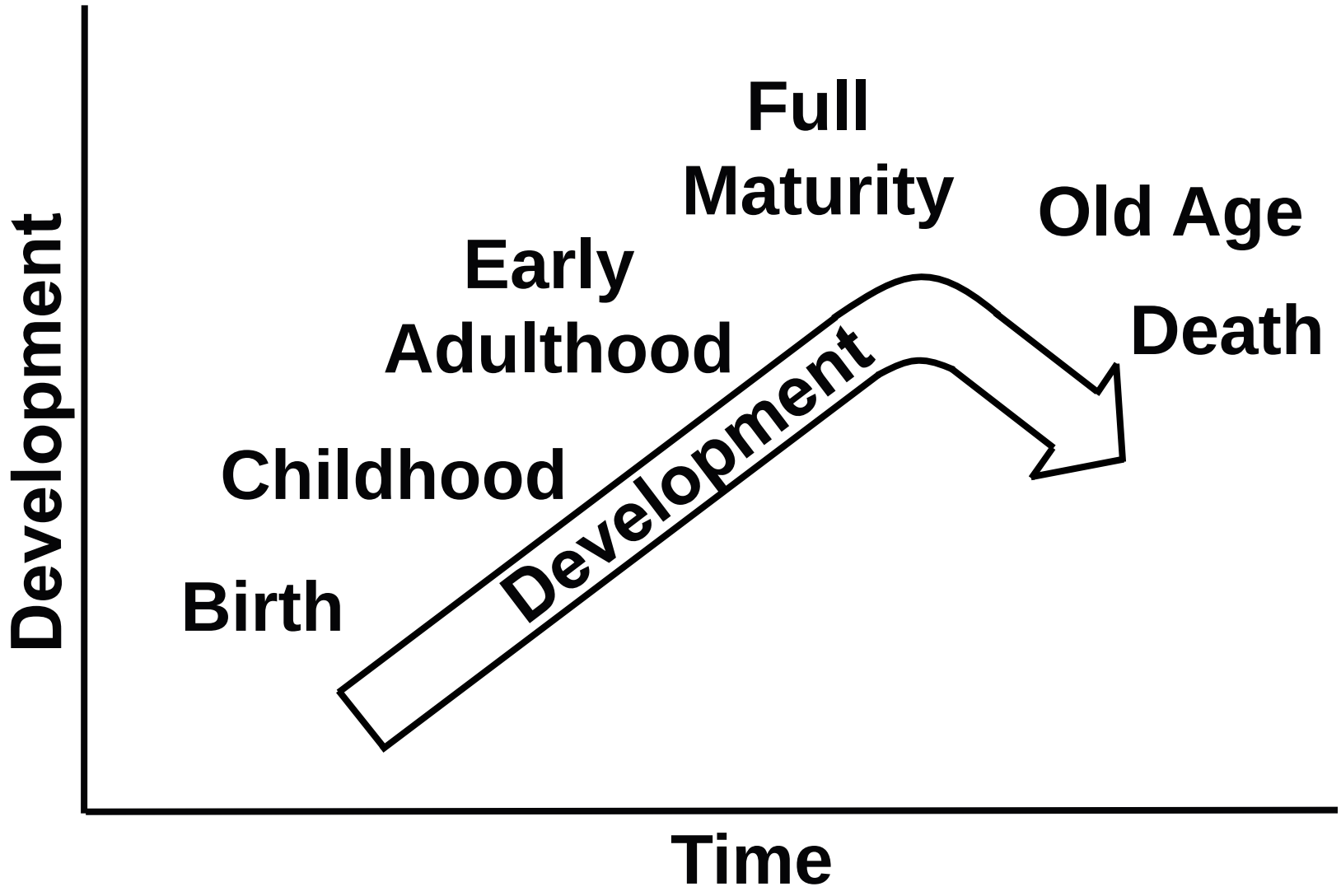
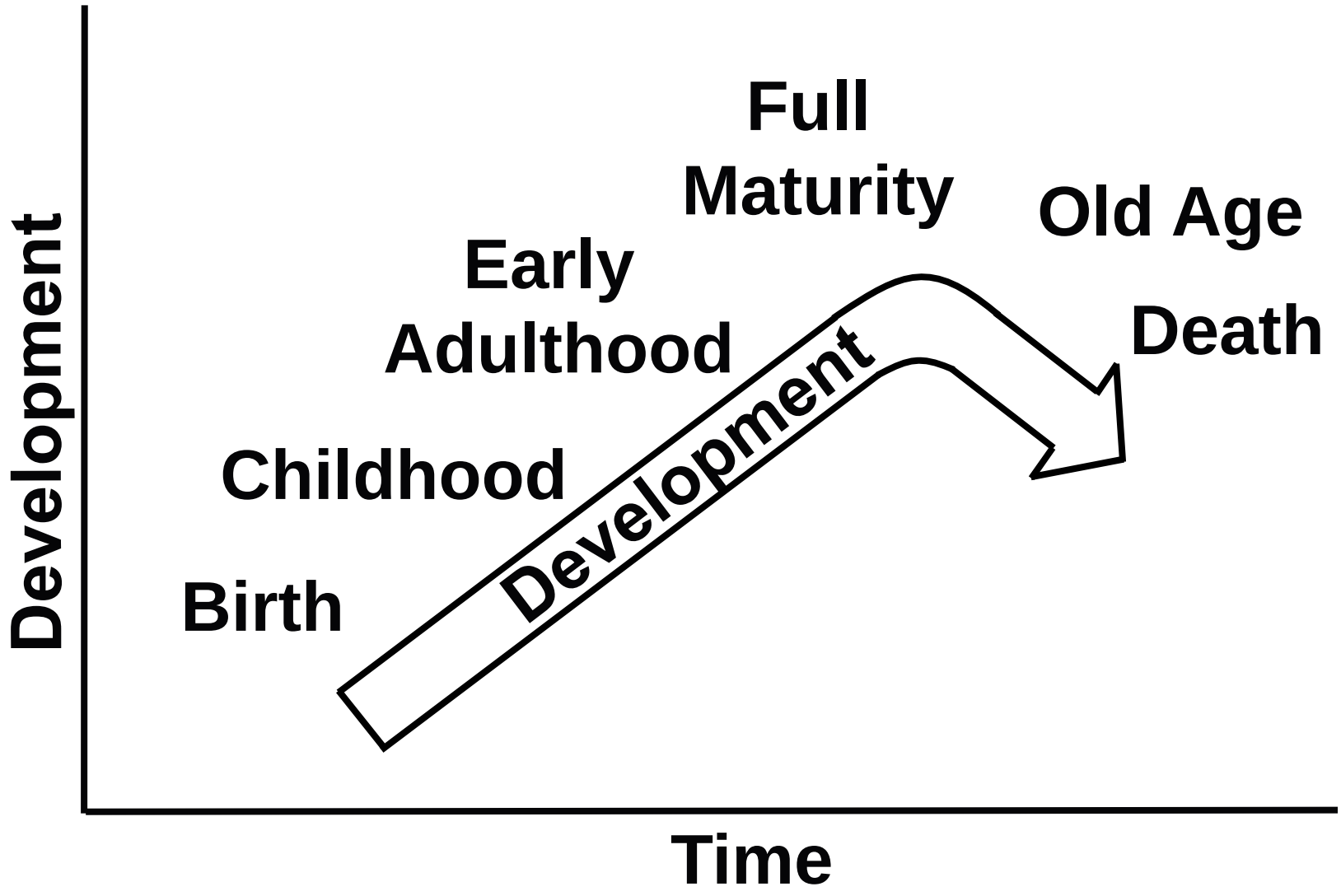
Individual Development



Societal Development



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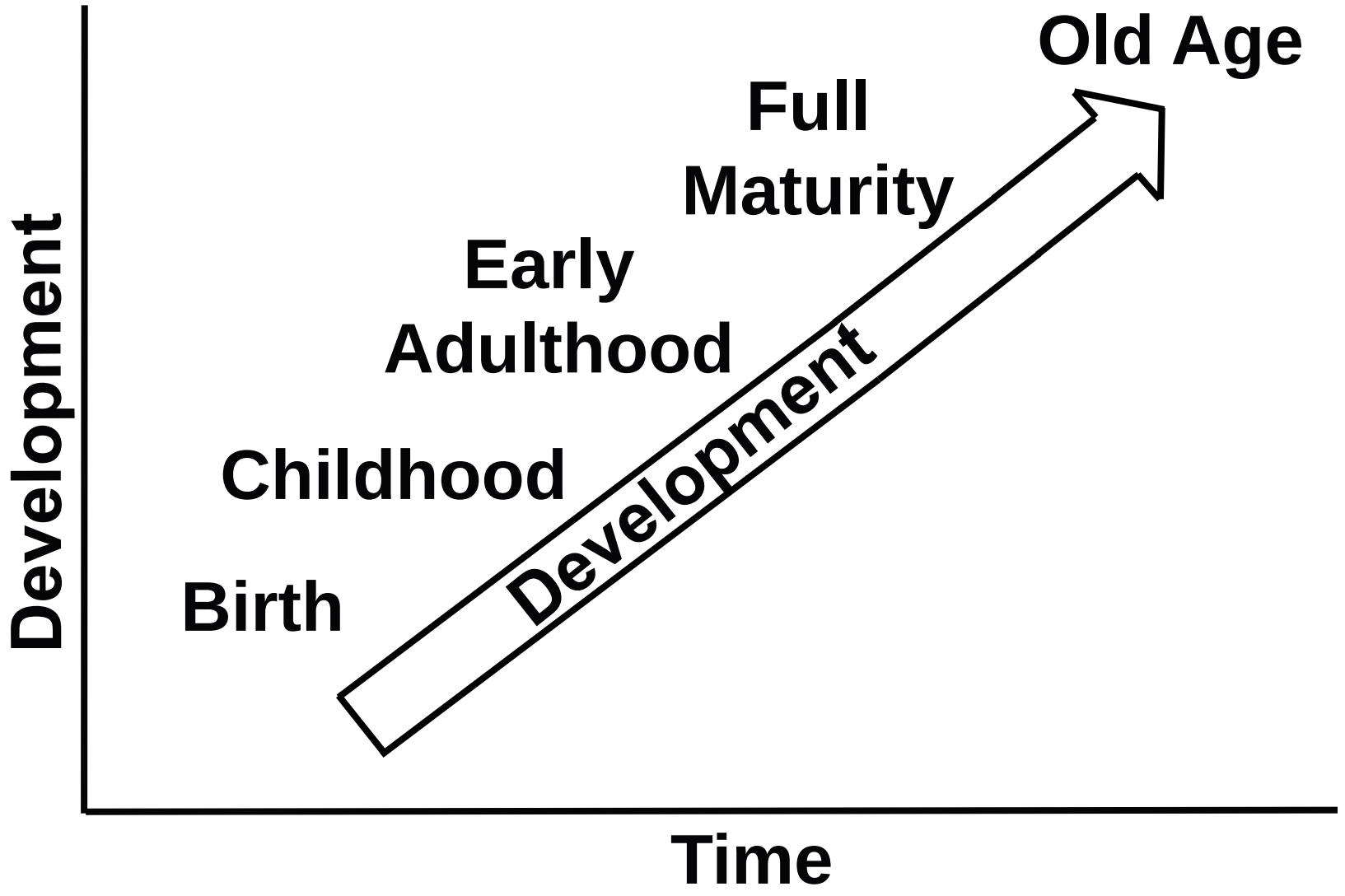

Reading History Sideways

The scholars of the enlightenment used the developmental paradigm to create a reading history sideways methodology for describing change.

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a. They had little historical data and large quantities of cross-sectional data.

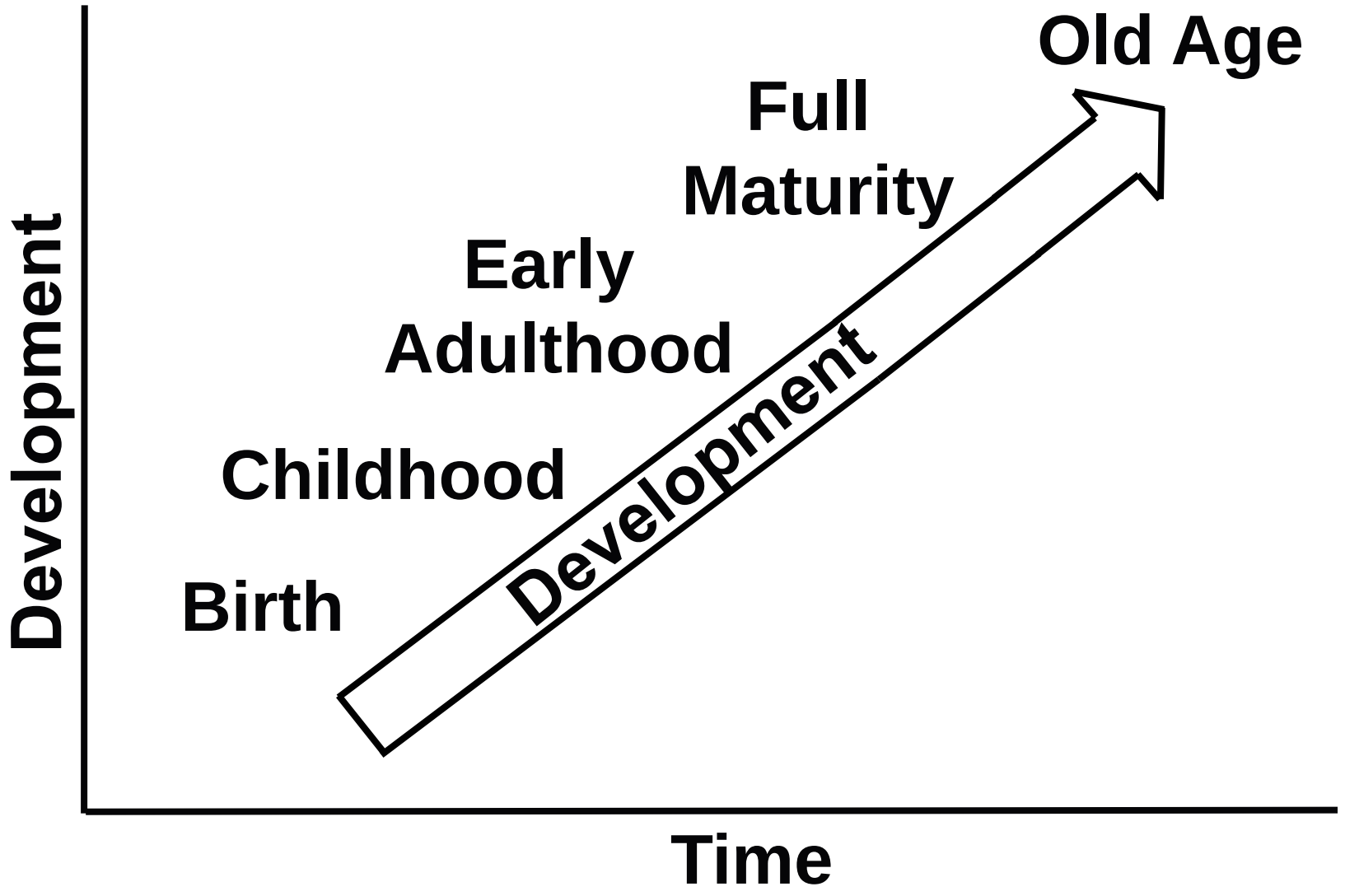
Reading History Sideways

The scholars of the enlightenment used the developmental paradigm to create a reading history sideways methodology for describing change.

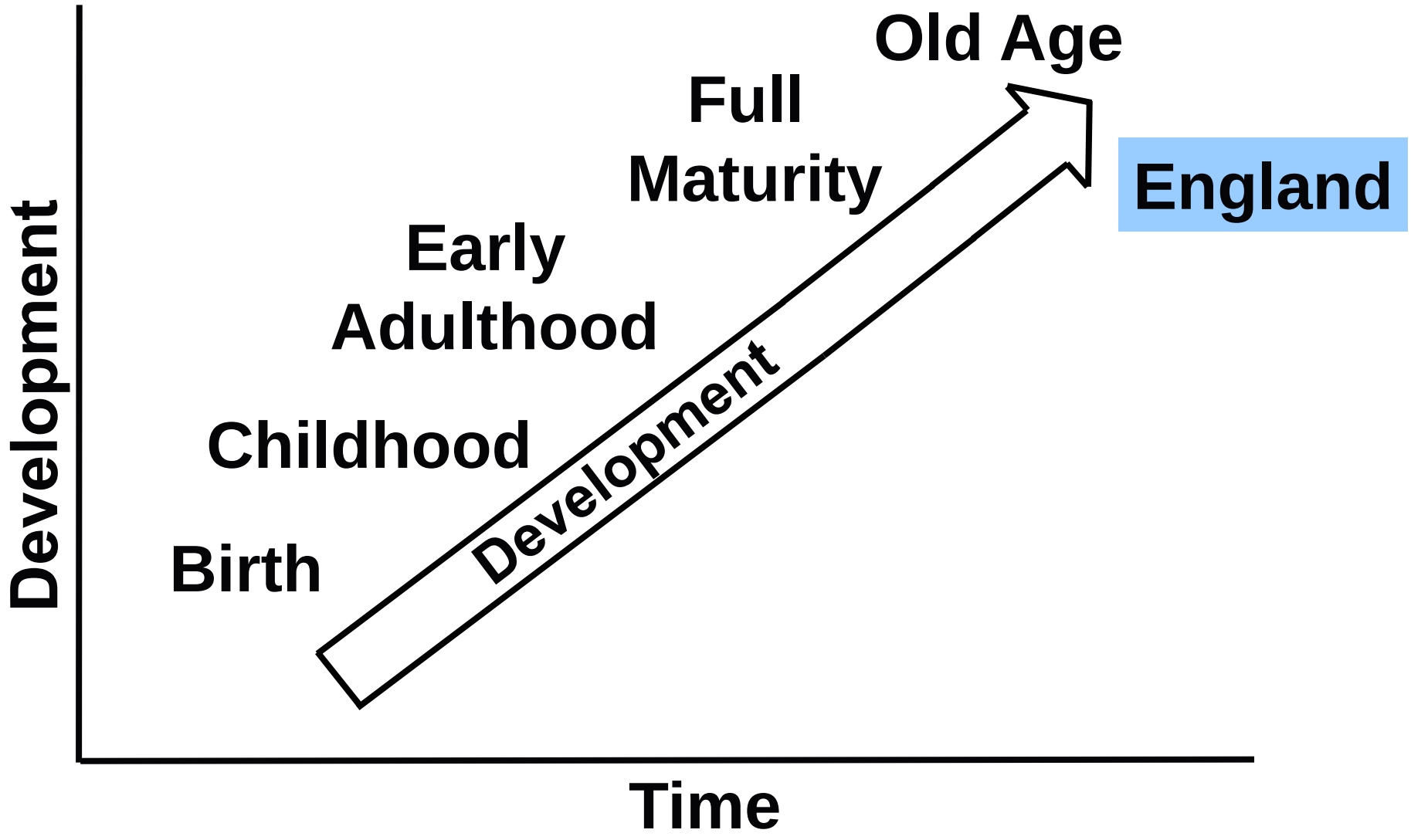
a. They had little historical data and large quantities of cross-sectional data.

b. They substituted variations across space for variations across time.

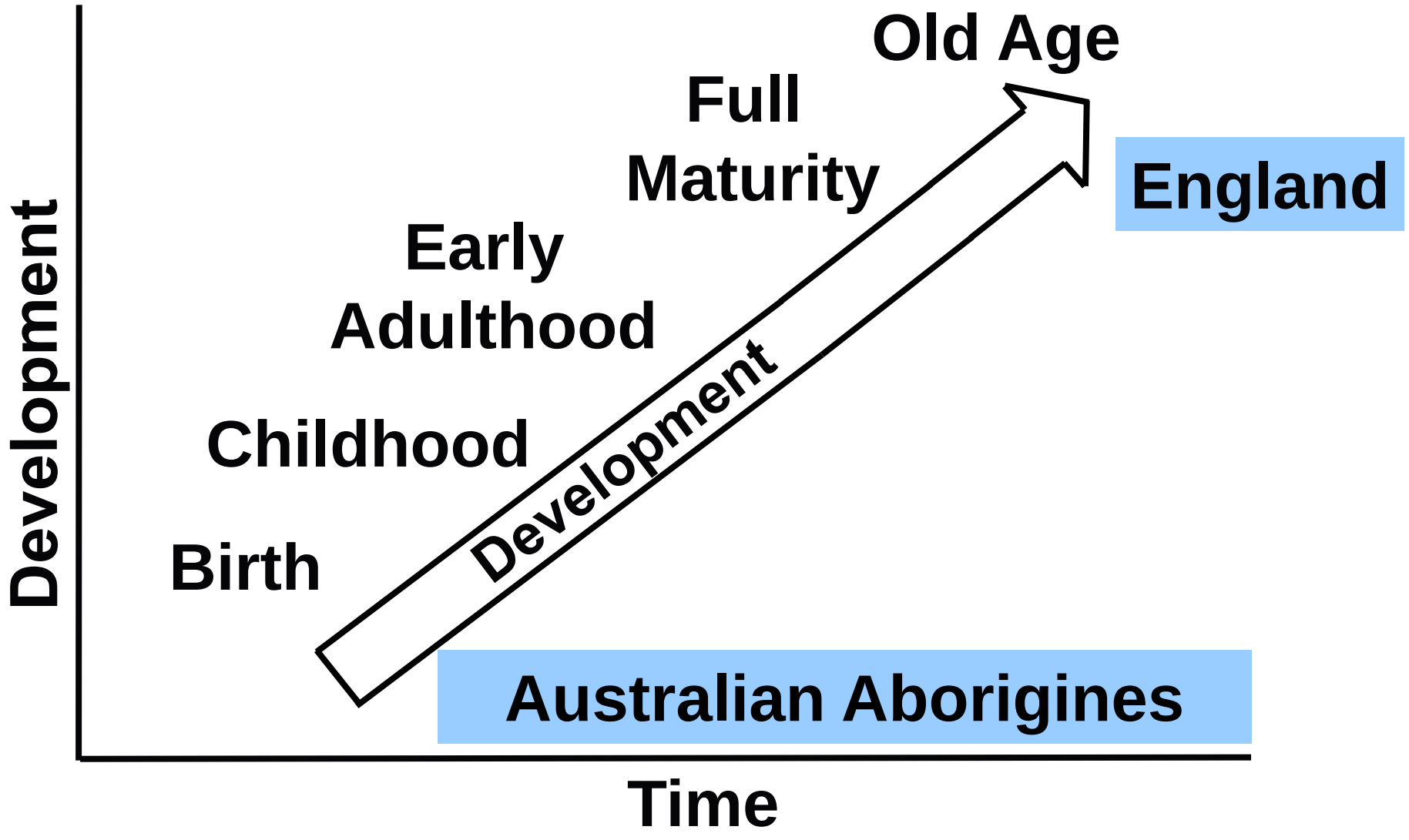
Societal Development



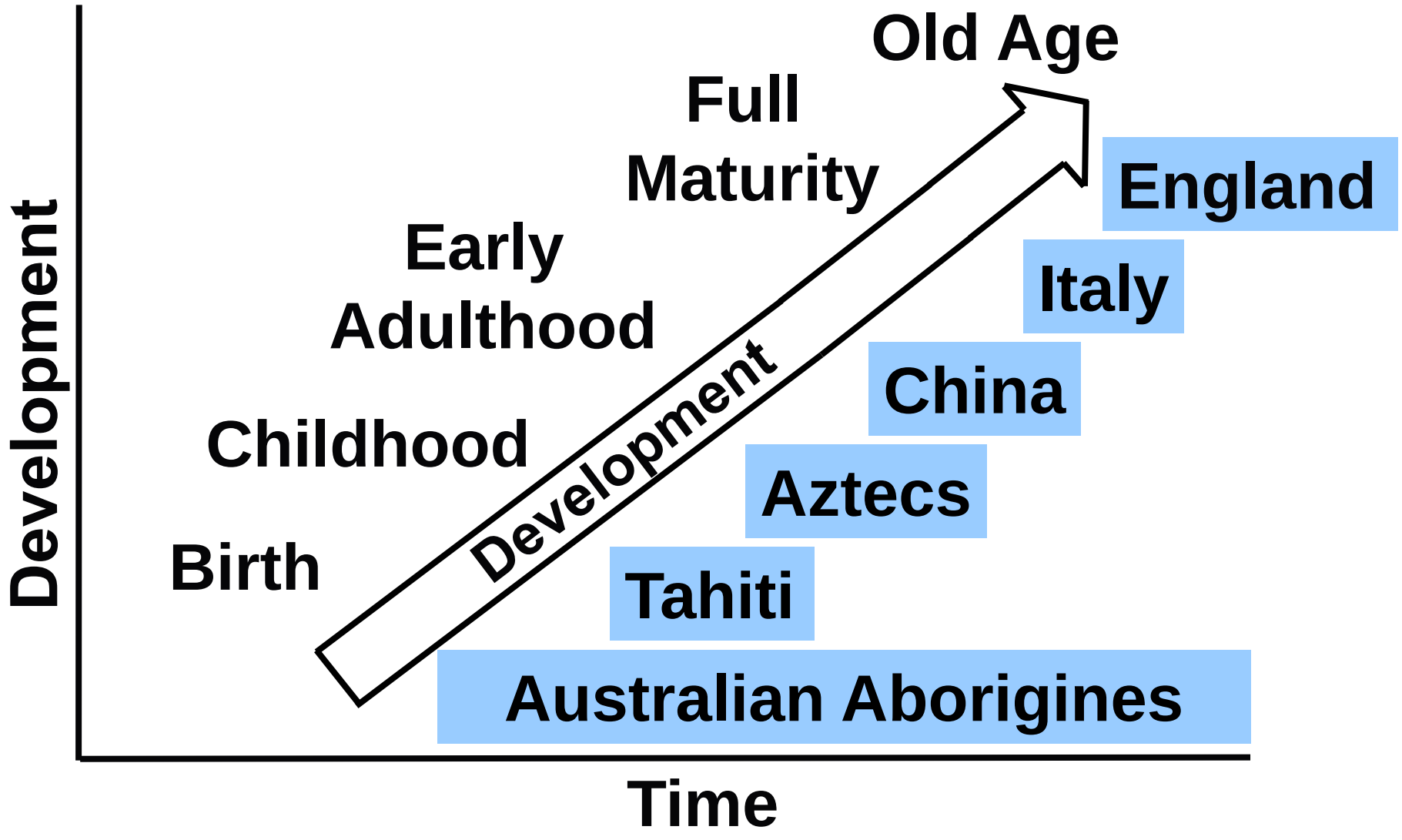
Societal Development



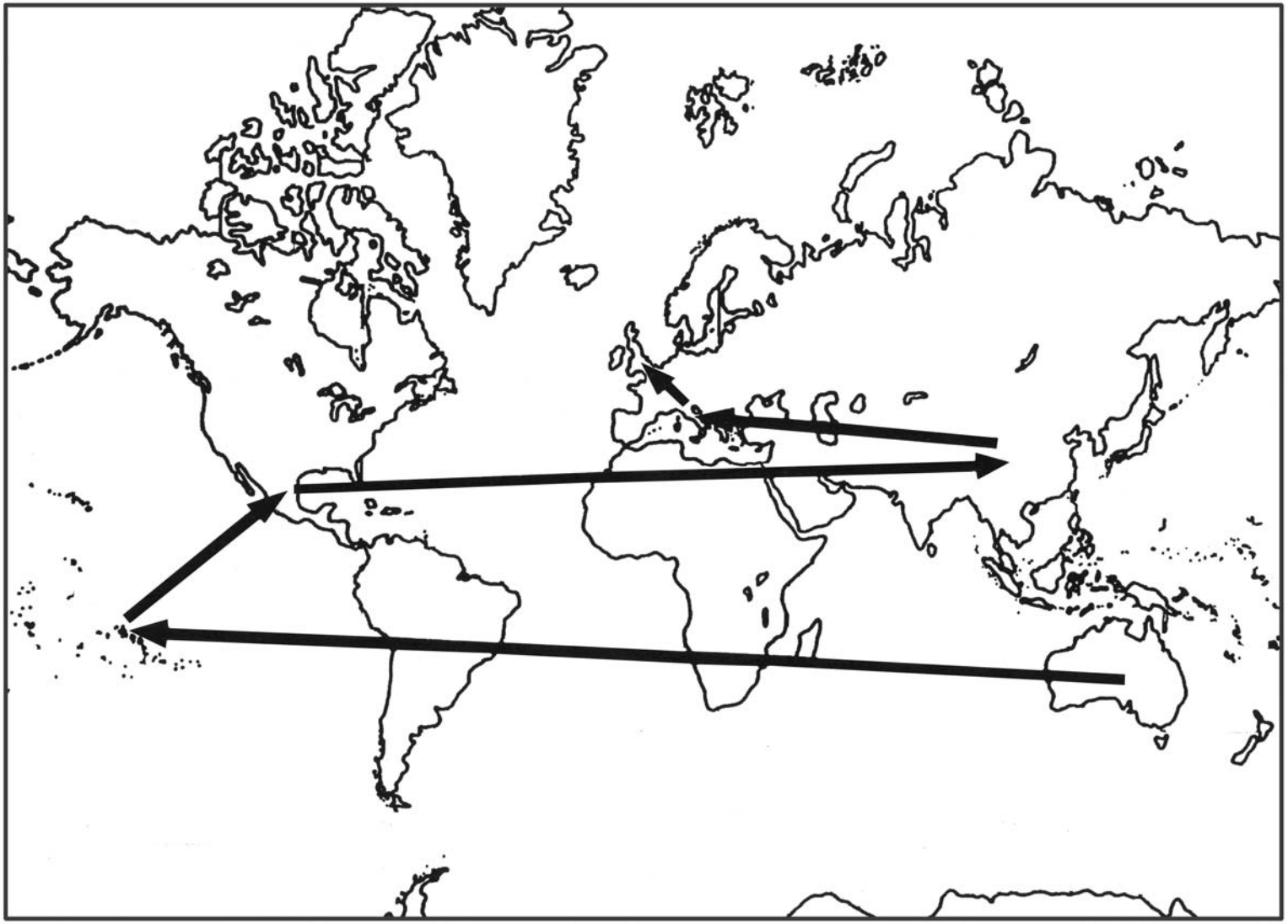
Societal Development



Societal Development



Reading History Sideways on a Trip Around the World

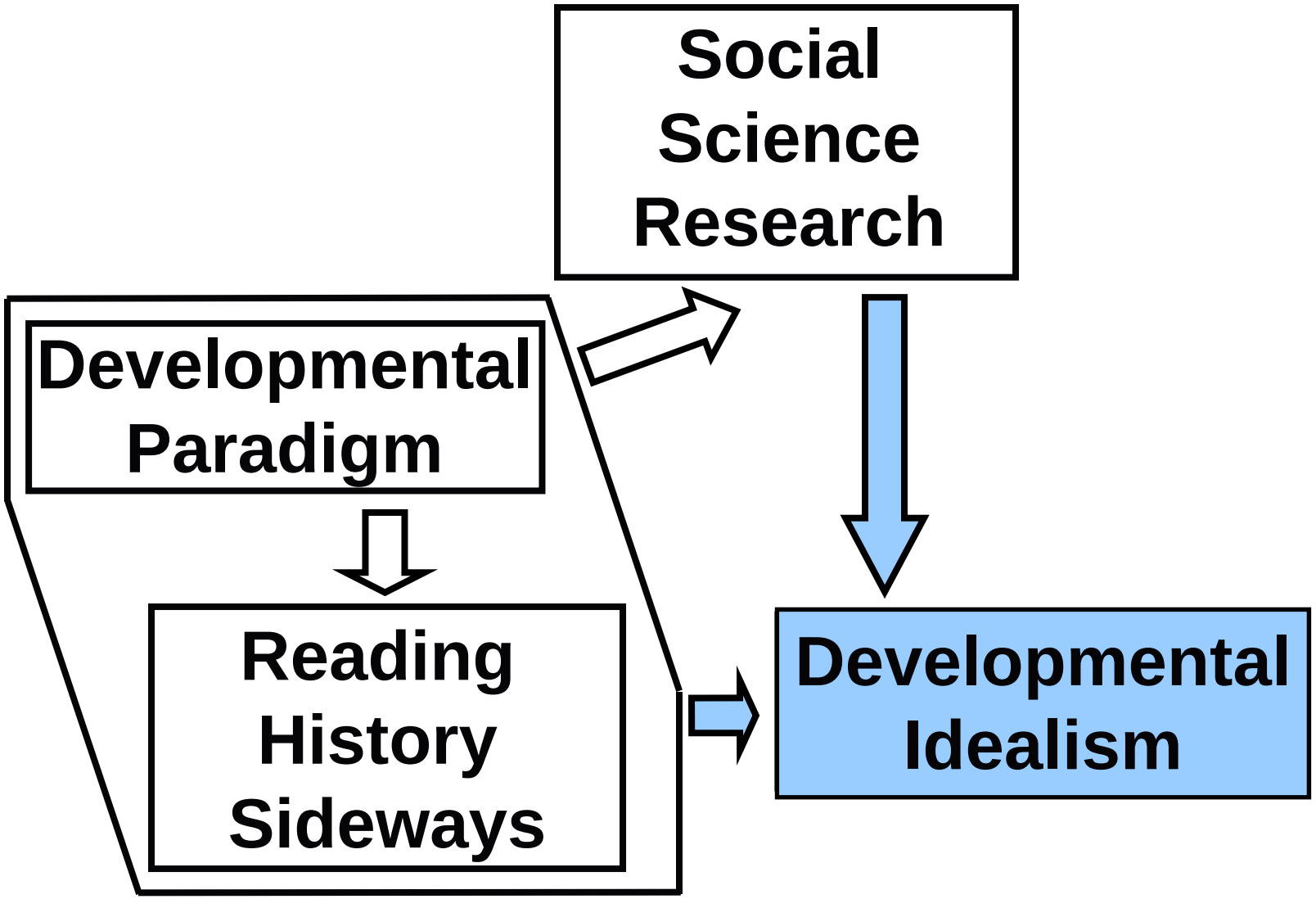


But Findings Were Wrong

1. Most of the so-called great family transition in northwest Europe had never happened
2. Historical evidence suggested that much of the so-called great family transition was simply a myth

Part Two

2: **The ideas of developmental idealism, their spread around the world, and their influence on worldwide family change**


Social
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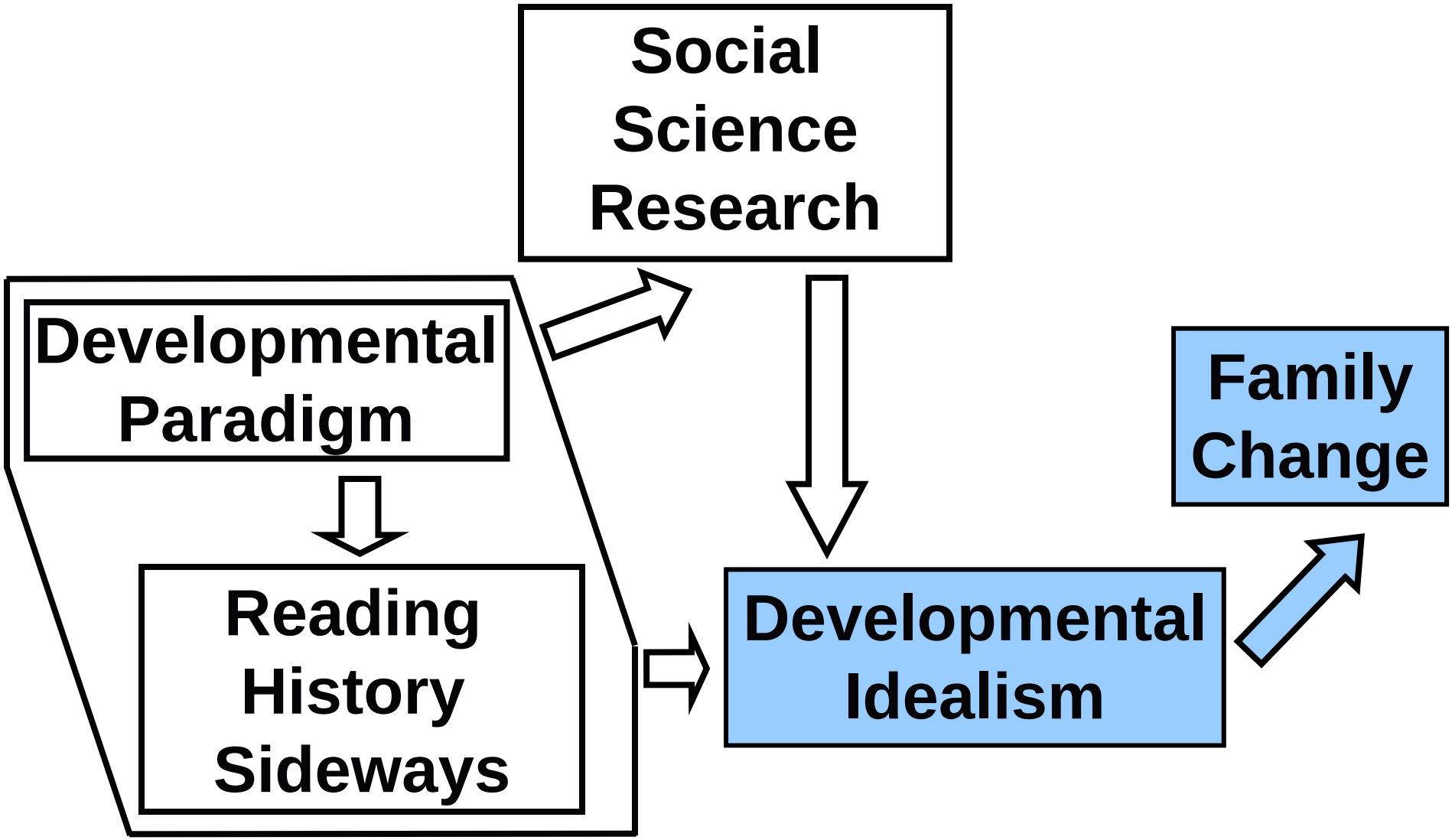
Idealism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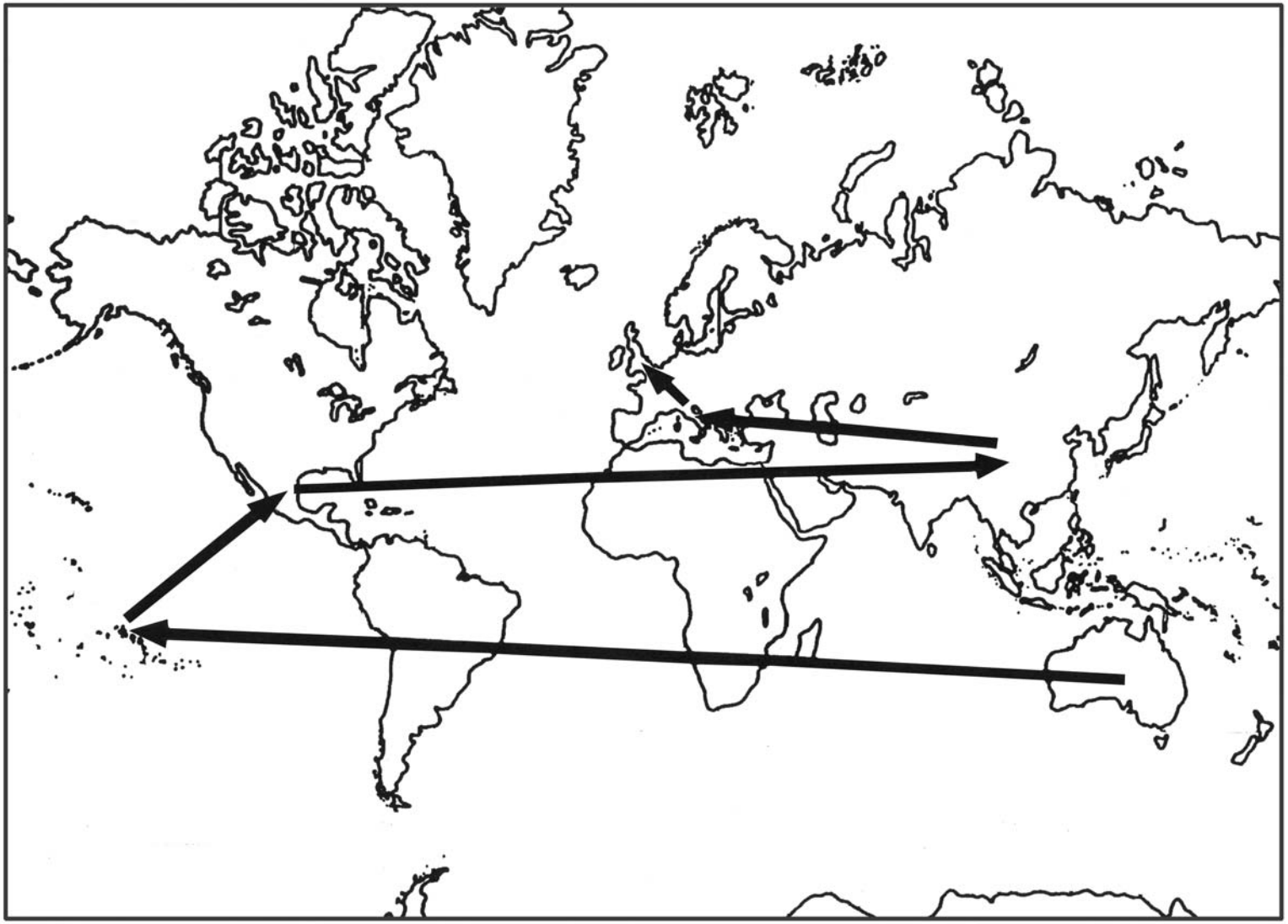
Change

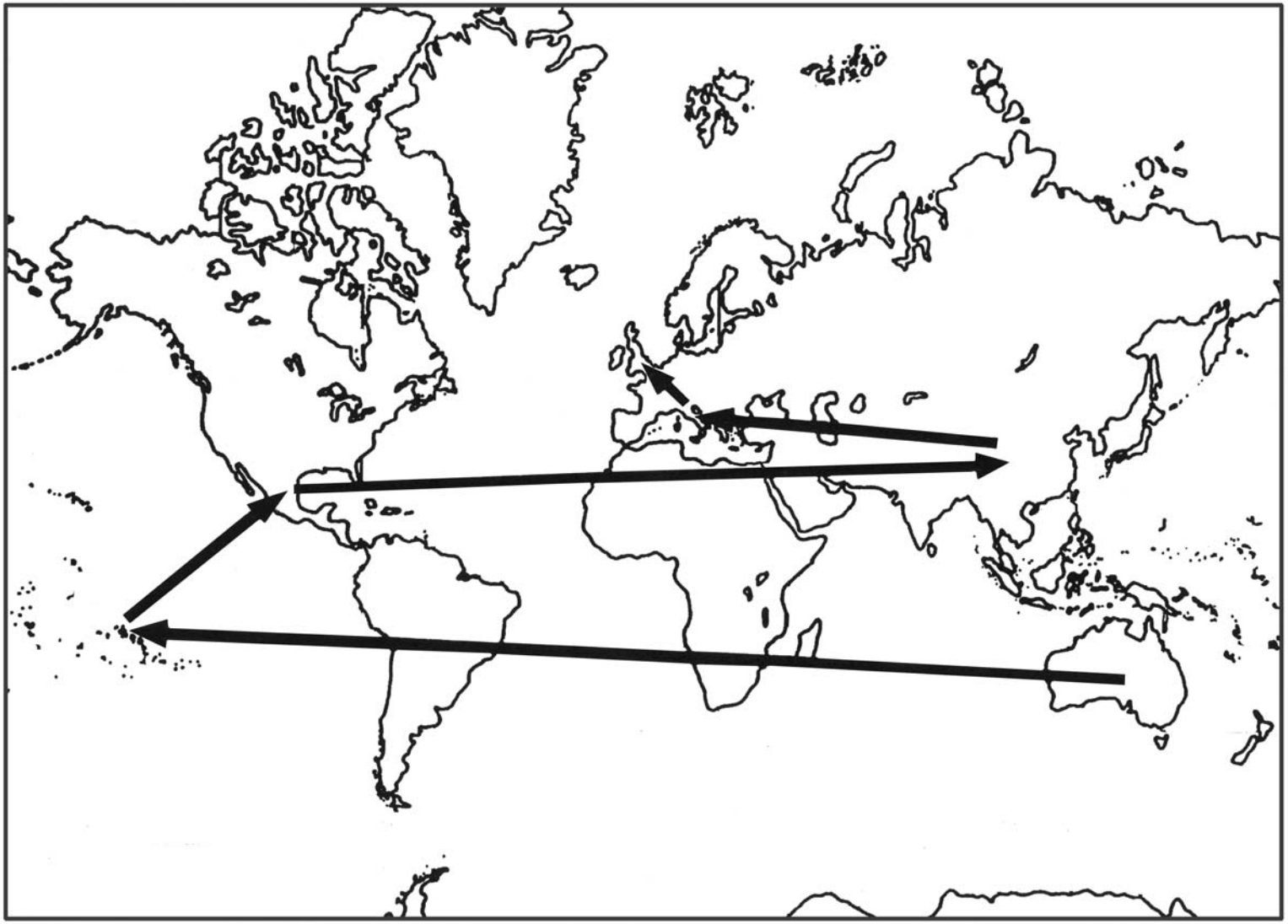
Elements of Developmental Idealism

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.

Reading History Sideways on a Trip Around the World



Reading FUTURE Sideways on a Trip Around the World



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

Northwest European Family Changes Since the 1700s

1. Increased non-marital sex, cohabitation, and childbearing
2. Increased divorce
3. Increased equality in gender roles
4. More independent living
5. Increased individualism
6. More autonomy of children

Family Changes in the Non-West

1. From extended to nuclear households
2. From arranged marriage to consent and courtship
3. From young age at marriage to an older age at marriage
4. From extensive gender hierarchy to more gender egalitarianism
5. From uncontrolled and high fertility to controlled and low fertility

Part Three

3: **New evidence about people today believing these ideas and acting on them**

Goals of New Research Program

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1. **Create tools to measure beliefs among ordinary people**

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2. Evaluate the extent that people believe these ideas
3. Examine individual and social forces influencing these beliefs
4. Examine the consequences of these beliefs for family and demographic life

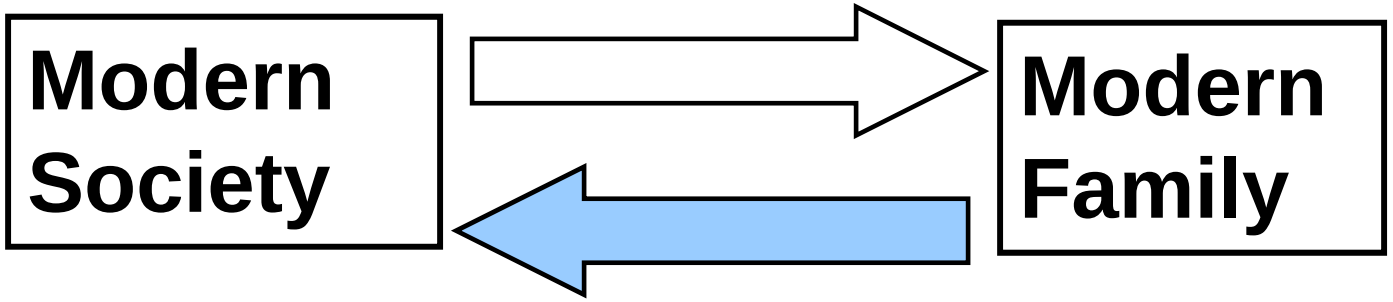
American Perceptions of Where Family Attributes Are More Common

	% Saying More Common in:	
	INDIA	**US**
Married Children Living with Parents	69.2	25.0
Females Marrying Before Age 18	80.8	11.7
Family Unity	66.7	25.0
Control over Adult Children	80.8	10.8
Men with More Than One Wife	72.5	15.8
Arranged Marriages	93.3	0.8
Couple with Many Children	66.7	23.3
Infant Mortality	91.7	2.5
People Working on Farms	58.3	34.2
Personal Freedom	1.7	91.7
Equality between Men & Women	2.5	90.0
Women Never Marry	7.5	85.0
Marriages Breaking Up	0	94.2
Respect for Women	15.0	75.8
Babies Born to Unmarried Mothers	5.0	86.7
Non-marital Cohabitation	3.3	90.0
Romantic Love between Husband &Wife	10.0	74.2
People in Cities	25.0	64.2
High Standard of Living	1.7	93.3
Many People Receiving Education in Schools	7.5	83.3

American Perceptions of Where Family Attributes Are More Common

	% Saying More Common in:	
	Not Developed	**Developed**
Married Children Living with Parents	69.0	23.8
Females Marrying Before Age 18	88.9	11.7
Family Unity	59.5	28.6
Control over Adult Children	65.1	29.4
Men with More Than One Wife	87.3	6.4
Arranged Marriages	92.1	5.6
Couple with Many Children	81.0	14.3
Infant Mortality	92.9	4.0
People Working on Farms	76.2	17.5
Personal Freedom	7.9	87.3
Equality between Men & Women	3.2	93.6
Women Never Marry	12.7	82.5
Marriages Breaking Up	0.8	94.4
Respect for Women	7.9	87.3
Babies Born to Unmarried Mothers	23.8	69.8
Non-marital Cohabitation	5.6	86.5
Romantic Love between Husband &Wife	15.1	68.2
People in Cities	8.7	83.3
High Standard of Living	1.6	96.0
Many People Receiving Education in Schools	2.4	95.2

Explaining the Family Transition



Question Wording:

“Now, let us talk about whether the following things would be more common or less common if Nepal became more developed. People marrying at older ages? If Nepal became more developed, would people marrying at older ages be more common or less common?”

Evaluation of the Effects of Development on Family Life in Nepal

	Characteristic Would Become:	
	More Common	Less Common
Older age at marriage	73%	27%
Respect for women	89%	10%
Choosing own spouse	80%	19%
Contraceptive use	81%	19%

What happens to family attributes as countries undergo economic development

(Perceptions of Young Egyptians)

Attribute	Happens	Does not happen
Women's status declines	12.6	87.4
People choose own spouse	56.2	43.8
Marriage at older ages	72.5	27.5
Couples have fewer children	83.7	16.3

Percent agreeing these attributes will become more common as countries undergo economic development

(Perceptions of Rural and Urban Chinese Citizens)

Attribute	Rural	Urban
Older age at marriage	85.8	88.8
Women's status will decline	12.7	8.4
Have fewer children	73.6	71.3

Question Wording:

“Some people talk about making Nepal richer. For each of the following things, please tell me whether you think it would help make Nepal richer or help make Nepal poorer. If more people married at an older age? Would that help make Nepal richer or help make Nepal poorer?”

Nepali Respondent's Evaluation of Whether Changes in Family Life in Nepal Would Make Nepal Richer or Poorer

	Would Make Nepal:	
	Richer	Poorer
Older age at marriage	90%	9%
Respect for women	89%	11%
Choosing own spouse	72%	21%
Contraceptive use	91%	9%

Percent agreeing that people in underdeveloped countries should do these things to achieve economic development

(Perceptions of Rural and Urban Chinese Citizens)

Attribute	Rural	Urban
Marry at older ages	81.2	72.2
Increase women's status	84.9	88.4
Have more children	12.8	10.0

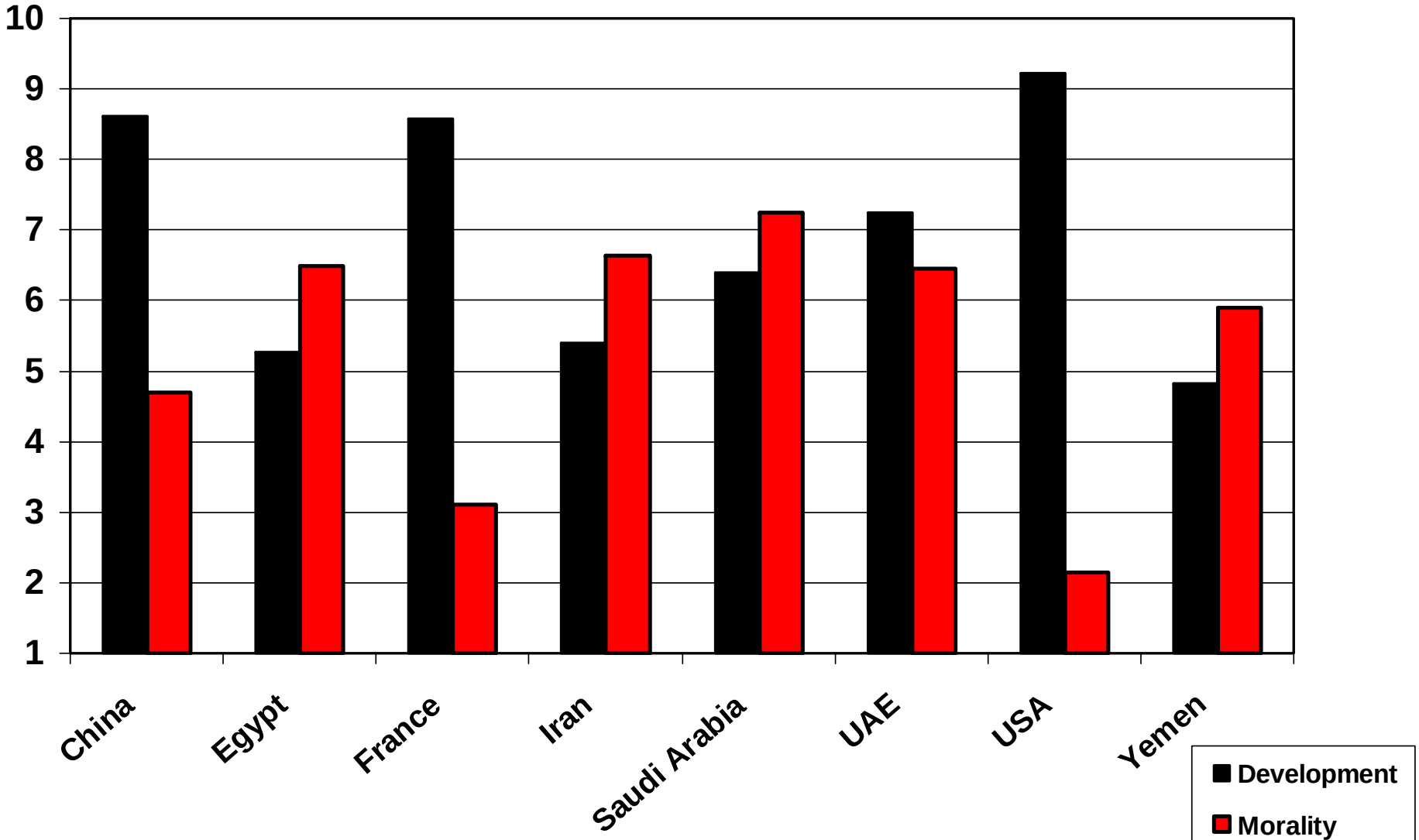
Would certain family changes promote or slow down modernization in Vietnam?

(Perceptions of Vietnamese)*

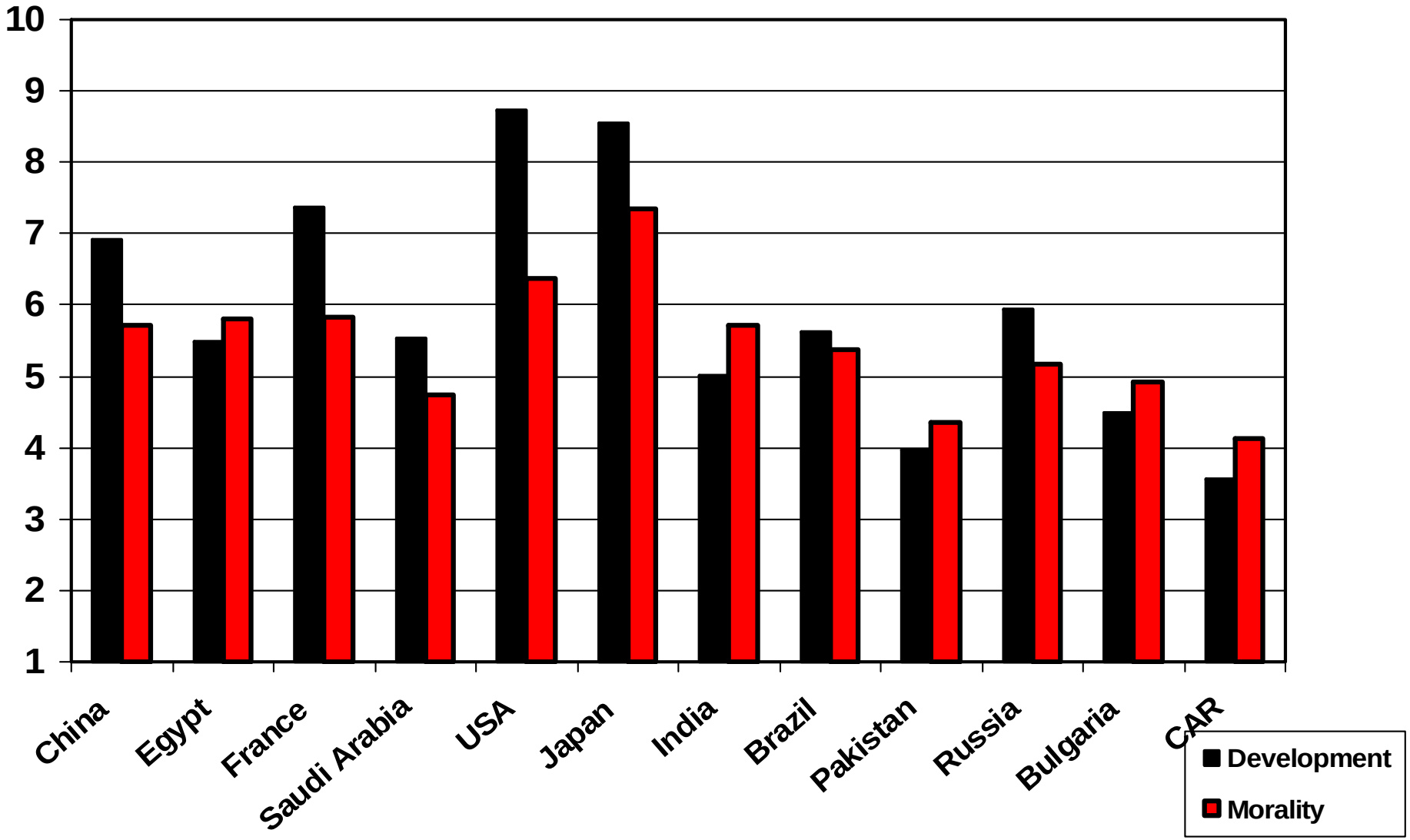
Change	Promote Modernization	Slow down Modernization
More women leaders	68.0	10.0
More arranged marriages	26.9	52.4
Marry at older ages	69.6	10.9
Have more children	2.3	93.7

*Third category “stay the same” not shown

Comparing Mean Country Development Ratings with Mean Country Morality Ratings (Perceptions of Young Egyptians)



Comparing Mean Country Development Ratings with Mean Country Morality Ratings (Perceptions of Ordinary Americans)



Current Project

- Design Comparable Questions for Use in Many Countries
- Comparable Surveys Conducted in Five Countries
  - Argentina
  - China
  - Egypt
  - Iran
  - United States

Planned Bulgarian Project

- Thornton/Philipov Argue that Developmental idealism Important for Understanding Recent Demographic Trends in Central/Eastern Europe
- People in the Region Understand a Developmental Heirarchy Across Europe
- Asking Bulgarians to rate 31 countries in Europe on Development

Planned Nepal Project

- Ask Developmental Idealism Questions in a Prospective Panel Study
- Repeat Ideational Questions at Quarterly Intervals Across Five Years
- Obtain Marriage and Fertility Histories Across Five Years
- Predict Marriage and Fertility Behavior with Ideational Information

Proposed Egypt Project

- Ask Developmental Idealism Questions in a Prospective Panel Study of Pregnant Mothers
- Obtain Subsequent Information on Maternal and Child Health and Behavior
- Predict Maternal and Child Health and Behavior with Ideational Information

Other Topics

- Migration
- Educational Attainment and Mobility
- Economic Policy
- Aging

Do Ordinary People Have the same framework?

1. Do they have a concept of development?
2. Is this concept like the UN's?
3. Do they know about different counries?
4. Can we measure knowledge of a developmental heirarchy?