

Children and Developed Nations

Do developed societies have fewer children? What does it mean to be “developed,” in today’s world? The thing most developed in such nations is the government. It’s big, costly, and intrusive.

Such “development” drives up the cost of having children. Contrast today’s “helicopter parenting” with the “go outside and play” norm of my youth. Clearly, helicopter parenting consumes time – but isn’t that a consequence of too much government, rather than of increased economic well-being?

Children in “developed” nations spend more time in school than ever, but they don’t learn more, taken as a whole. That which is learned for tests is mostly forgotten. Children are forced to consume schooling for 18 or even 28 years. But is this a necessary consequence of a richer or more “developed” economy? Or is it a sign of a developed bureaucracy, throwing more sand into the gears of society, increasing the cost of education and parenting? A truly developed society would be better at education, not worse.

Perhaps we’re doing it wrong, and that might be part of why many Americans are less interested in raising children.