Global Social Change

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What are some of the most important examples of social change in the contemporary world?

What forces have produced the greatest social changes throughout human history?

How do people in different societies, whether they live in villages, towns, or cities, experience social change in their daily lives?

How do sociologists create and apply models of social change?
One sultry African night, as the people of Blokosso were sleeping, a band of thieves crept into their houses and ransacked them. They stole radios, jewelry, and expensive articles of ceremonial clothing. But as the villagers assessed the damage early the next morning, they mourned a far greater loss. Never before in anyone’s memory had a robbery like this occurred in the village. It was not the goods themselves they missed, for these could be replaced. It was the loss of a way of life, a social world, that they lamented. “We loved to sleep outside on the very hot nights,” said Mr. Joseph, one of the most respected men in the village—“the women by this palm grove in the soft sand along the lagoon, the men under the lamp a bit. We like to talk and sleep with each other. We are not used to sleeping with our things.”

Throughout history, theirs had been a village society. Blokosso was one of several fishing villages inhabited by the Ebrié tribe. For as long as they could remember, the Ebrié people had made their living by fishing in the quiet waters of the lagoon, which was protected from the huge ocean swells by a long barrier island. In recent decades, however, the village had been engulfed by the rapidly growing city of Abidjan, the capital of Ivory Coast and a booming port. More and more of the tribesmen were now working in the city. The women continued to tend their garden plots, but they too were increasingly drawn into the economy of the city and felt an ever-increasing need for spending money, which they earned by renting rooms to migrant workers and selling their extra produce.

Gradually, in the time before the robbery occurred, Blokosso had ceased to be a self-sustaining village with its own economy and tribal culture. Instead, it was becoming a “village enclave,” a little island of cultural homogeneity in an urban society. The robbery was a blunt statement to the villagers about how much change had occurred in a short time and how much more was likely to come.

For me, the experience of living in Blokosso at that time (during 1962 and 1963) was as much of a revelation as the robbery was to the villagers.

I had been trained as a biologist and was living in Blokosso while teaching physics and chemistry in a junior college. During the day I delighted in opening up to students the secrets of matter and energy. In the evenings, however, the villagers taught me about living in a totally different social world, one that was experiencing even more rapid social change than my own.

Mr. Joseph, my best friend in the village, was a middle-level executive in one of Abidjan’s insurance agencies. He commuted across the lagoon in a motorized dugout canoe. During the day, his mind was entirely devoted to business. In the evenings, he dealt with the problems of a traditional African family. His three wives became increasingly jealous of one another as new wealth and their rising expectations led to new opportunities for better health and more leisure and also to new sources of conflict. I watched him and his family deal with the impact of change on their lives. I saw the villagers attempt to invoke their ancestral spirits and to use witchcraft to cope with new phenomena like robberies. The entire colony had become independent from France only two years before, and I saw the villagers—now
citizens of a new nation called Ivory Coast—becoming interested in politics and current events.

During that time, my own interests shifted from the physical to the social sciences. Nothing has ever interested me more than the villagers’ questions about what social change brought to them and what it caused them to lose. When I began to study sociology, I discovered that such questions are at the core of this young science.

THE NATURE OF SOCIAL CHANGE

 Throughout this book, we have dealt with social changes of all kinds. The term social change refers to variations over time in the ecological ordering of populations and communities, in patterns of roles and social interactions, in the structure and functioning of institutions, and in the cultures of societies. We have seen that such changes can result from social forces building within societies (endogenous forces) as well as from forces for change exerted from the outside (exogenous forces).

Ebríe is not a written language. The villagers speak their history to each other and to their children as they gather in the evenings around their home fires. When I was living with them, they often told stories about how, in the distant past before the whites came, a tribal village sometimes grew too large. When that happened, severe conflict would result. Factions would form and there would be fighting over land or other resources. Soon there would be a major split: The stronger faction would stay and keep the existing village while the less powerful faction would establish a new village on unused land along the lagoon. This is an example of people adjusting to endogenous change caused by population increase, a very common cause of social change.

The Ebríe also told stories about recent changes in their lives, changes brought on mainly by colonial conquest and, more recently, by their own efforts to create a new nation and maintain its social and economic growth. Colonial rule and rebellion against it are examples of social change produced by exogenous forces, particularly the influence of a powerful conquering society attempting to impose its culture on conquered peoples.

Social change affects people’s lives all over the world, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. As I sat under the palm trees with my Ebríe friends, we endlessly debated issues of social change. In many ways, our debates were about the difference between change and progress. “Before the white man came,” my friends told me, “we had time but no money. Now we have money but no time.” The village primary school was known in Ebríe as the “paper house” where children struggled to master the three R’s in order to be able to earn money, or “white man’s paper.” But there was also general agreement that many of the technologies the Europeans introduced were of immense value. Health care innovations that could prevent debilitating diseases like malaria or schistosomiasis were considered a great blessing. Yet the most prestigious Western invention from the villagers’ viewpoint was the camera, for with it, they exclaimed, “our children can see their ancestors.”

The people of Ivory Coast and other societies undergoing rapid social change do not see the future as a matter of becoming westernized. Their struggle to maintain aspects of their traditional way of life as they build a modern national state is documented in the Visual Sociology section titled “Social Change in Ivory Coast,” at the end of the chapter. They are aware of a decline in their sense of community and mourn the weakening of their culture, but they actively embrace the aspects of modernity that will permit more of them to lead longer and perhaps more enjoyable lives. For my Ebríe friends, there is no question of returning to an earlier state. Change is inevitable. However, they want to help make the change, and to do this, they understand that they must compete in modern social institutions like schools and businesses while attempting to preserve their village life as best they can.

Dilemmas of Social Change

Social change is a dominant theme of this book because it exerts such powerful influences on every aspect of our lives. Macro-level changes in the way the entire society is organized, such as the organization of metropolitan regions around automobile transportation, are relatively rapid. Our great-grandparents traveled in railroad sleeping cars and never imagined vast shopping malls with acres of automobile parking. Global social change accounts for the decline of whole sectors of the U.S. economy and the rise of new ones. At the middle level of social organization—in our communities and workplaces—social change can have drastic and immediate impacts. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, for example, accelerated an economic downturn that caused many communities to lose the revenue surpluses they had counted on to rebuild schools and parks, and employers began cutting back on hiring and sending layoff notices to their workers.

At the micro level, social change also has dramatic impacts. Changing norms of sexuality, for example, may create new and unexpected situations. As gay people realize their need to express their sexuality, they

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**social change:** Variations over time in the ecological ordering of populations and communities, in patterns of roles and social interactions, in the structure and functioning of institutions, and in the cultures of societies.

**endogenous force:** Pressure for social change that builds within a society.

**exogenous force:** Pressure for social change that is exerted from outside a society.
also wish to “come out” and speak frankly about their lifestyle with family members. Issues like abortion, interracial marriage, divorce, and drug abuse create similar conflicts and pressures. When we argue about norms within our intimate circle of family or friends, the result may be even greater confusion. Today, no aspect of life seems secure and free from conflict. (More comparative examples of social change at different levels of the social order are presented in Table 22.1.)

Wars and acts of terrorism, rampant political corruption and international bickering, famines and epidemics of AIDS and SARS—these are some of the current events that are shaking the stability of nations throughout the world. They are also changing much sociological thinking about social change. In the post–World War II period, when hundreds of former colonial nations like Ivory Coast were becoming independent, most sociologists and political leaders in the West regarded modernization as a process that would gradually but inevitably produce healthier societies and accelerated economic and social development in the poor regions of the world, just as it had in the wealthier regions. There would be new frontiers of democracy, new levels of international understanding through world bodies like the United Nations, and a decline in ethnic and religious intolerance because of increased trade, communication, and guarantees of people’s rights under the rule of law (Zakaria, 2003).

But many nations are not progressing toward the bright future envisioned for them after colonialism and the end of the world wars. Some have made great gains, but others are mired in poverty, corruption, and lawlessness (Kagan, 2003). Conflict among adherents of major world religions now threatenst to replace conflict between the Soviet empire and the American-led capitalist nations as a major cause of terrorism and war. Even in the most well-off and stable regions of the world, there are new conflicts and anxieties. In the United States, the gulf between the rich and the middle and lower classes is widening, just as there is a potentially widening gap between the beliefs of the religious and less religious segments of the population. Some of these changes were predicted by sociological models of social change developed in the mid-twentieth century, but others were not.

Unfortunately, Ivory Coast is among the modernizing nations that are doing quite badly. Along with Iraq and Sudan (discussed in Chapter 19), it is at risk of becoming a “failed state.” After years of worsening corruption and pillage of the nation’s riches, a civil war threatens Ivory Coast’s long-term stability. For me and my Ebrié friends, however, there is nonetheless great hope for the future. We know how far the nation has come since the colonial period. We also know that other nations, including the United States, have experienced civil war and emerged as a wiser people. I can only hope for the same positive outcome for my Ivorian friends as they confront some of the most difficult aspects of social change that anyone can imagine.

In revising their models of social change, sociologists ask a basic set of questions: Is social change universal? Is social change the same as progress? Can we intervene and control social change? And finally, can we predict social change better than we have in the past?

**Is Social Change Universal?** It would seem that, ever since the Industrial Revolution about three centuries ago, social change has been occurring throughout the world. For thousands of years, people had lived in simpler societies that might or might not have been experiencing social change as a consequence of such processes as population growth, factional conflict, war, and disease. But with the advent of industrialization, urbanization, colonial conquest, and global warfare, all the societies of...
the earth were increasingly brought into what sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) has called the capitalist world system. Trade and markets, often dominated by the more powerful nations, enmesh all the world’s people in a network of relationships and interdependencies that make self-sufficiency and social equilibrium ever more difficult to attain. As we have noted in earlier chapters, perhaps no change in human history has been as far-reaching and universal in its consequences as the transition from an agrarian to an urban, industrial way of life brought about by the Industrial Revolution. In sum, social change may be more or less rapid in different societies and in different parts of the world, but the forces of global social change are felt everywhere. Thus, at least in our own era, it can be said that social change is universal.

Is Social Change Progress? Those who promote social change of one kind or another often equate change with progress, but in fact much social change is extremely difficult and disruptive for the people who live through it. In Iraq, for example, the U.S. government claims to be bringing democracy to that embattled nation, but in free elections held in 2006, Shia leaders, some of whom are fundamentalist leaders of local militias, assumed majority power and, at this writing, are more closely allied to neighboring Iran than they are to the United States and its allies (Falsafi, 2010). Elsewhere in the world, there are also major problems of development and social change. In Russia, for example, the fall of communism and the rise of the new capitalist economy have created many newly rich and many more newly poor Russians, and how the average citizen feels about progress often depends on how he or she is doing in the new economy.

“Progress” is defined differently, depending on the values of those who are trying to assess whether a particular change constitutes progress (Harper, 1993). In some instances, social change has positive consequences for many people, and perhaps even for an entire society. Fifty years ago, for example, the United States was a highly segregated society, unable to claim that it was realizing the democratic vision of its founders. Today, after decades of struggle, many aspects of segregation remain, but many of the worst aspects of racism have been reduced or eliminated through protest, compromise, new laws, and other forms of social change. However, for every instance of positive social change, there will be others that people do not agree on or that are seen as negative or too complicated to assess. When factories close and communities lose vital jobs, that is a form of social change that most people in the affected communities do not think of as progress. Yet when the same jobs become available in Mexico, people there rejoice at their good fortune. Similarly, when political leaders persuade local police forces to protect the rights of homosexuals, gay people may feel that progress has been made. Yet in the same communities, conservative residents may wish to return to a past in which homosexuals were considered sinners who did not deserve equal rights.

Can We Control Social Change? The examples of the American and British occupation of Iraq and changing race relations in the United States raise a fundamental question about social change: Is it something we can control intentionally, or is it a result of powerful social forces that are beyond our ability to shape or modify? The answer is that some social change is intentional and some is far beyond our power to control. In a society governed by laws and democratic processes, it appears possible to reduce injustice and even to reduce some of the worst forms of inequality. But global forces of social and economic change are extremely difficult to shape even if we can learn to accommodate and adjust to them.

Even when we engage in intentional social change, the results are often surprising and unanticipated. Before the Social Security and Medicare systems were created, the elderly experienced extremely high rates of poverty and untreated illness. These intentional and hotly debated programs changed that situation dramatically. However, it is impossible to control the rapid rise in the number of elderly people who will be covered by these programs in coming decades. This threat to the financial stability of the system may result in a weakening of the scope of Social Security and Medicare coverage in the future.

Can Social Change Be Predicted? Social science has had mixed success in predicting social change. The master trends of our era, such as economic globalization, population growth, urbanization, technological change, and the rising expectations of oppressed people, are well known. Their consequences can be understood and predicted, to a degree. Demographers can predict with reasonable certainty the major population trends that will affect societies over a twenty- or thirty-year period. Survey researchers can predict the outcomes of election campaigns or referenda on major social issues like immigration or crime. But we have limited ability to predict technological changes or to anticipate the outbreak of wars or the appearance of new social movements or new diseases. Yet these are some of the most important sources of social change. In fact, one difference between the “pop” sociology books sold in supermarkets and the sociological research conducted at universities is the caution with which the university researchers discuss social change (Chirot, 1994a).

Sociological researchers usually make projections based on current trends, with carefully stated assumptions about what will happen if those trends continue into the future. For example, we know that as members of the huge U.S. baby boom grow older and face death, the media will pay more attention to issues involving aging, death, and dying, just as they paid more attention to issues such as day care when the baby boomers were forming families. But other aspects of social change, especially those caused by technological innovations, are far more difficult to predict. We have difficulty predicting their appearance and limited success predicting their consequences.

Consider an example: For decades, sociological writers who produce forecasts for popular media have been predicting that computers and telecommunications networks would spell the end of the central city as a place of work and entertainment for masses of people (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990; Toffler, 1970). However, research exploring this prediction shows...
that the new technologies have very mixed consequences for urban downtown areas. In large cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Baltimore, there is an unpredicted renaissance of central-city business and entertainment and an explosion of new small businesses, often based on applications of computer and communications technologies. But it is also true that the new communications technologies make it easier for employers in the information industries to distribute work among employees at many different locations. Hence, the future of central cities as employment-generating environments is extremely difficult to predict.

In sum, we can study major trends and use them to predict some important aspects of continuing social change, but others are still far beyond the power of any social scientist to actually predict. The breakup of the Soviet empire in 1989, the outbreak of war in the Balkans, the dramatic changes in U.S. social policies after the Democratic sweep of the 2006 congressional elections, the impact of terrorism since 2001—none of these events was actually predicted, even though there were some indications that they might occur.

TWO FORCES OF SOCIAL CHANGE: WAR AND MODERNIZATION

War and modernization are among the most powerful and pervasive forces that produce social change at every level of social life. As we have noted, social change is caused by many other social forces, especially technological innovation and population growth or mobility, but we will see in this section that war and modernization also stimulate these other forces of change. Many of the most significant technological innovations of the twentieth century were developed in response to the crisis of war. And many of the greatest movements of people over the planet were first set in motion by the disruptions caused by warfare or modernization (Chirot, 1986, 1994a, 1994b; Kagan, 2003).

War and Conquest

War is among the greatest and certainly the most violent of the forces that produce social change. Ironically, the deadliest forms of warfare are associated with the rise of modern civilizations. As societies have become more advanced in their command of technology and their social organization, the devastation caused by war has increased. The wars fought by so-called primitive societies were frequently ritual affairs; the combatants often withdrew from the field after a single skirmish. Although not all preindustrial warfare was so ritualistic, relatively few combatants were killed because the technologies for killing were so limited compared with those available today.

In the Middle Ages, often viewed as a warlike time because of the influence of knights and Crusaders, the rate of fatalities among warriors in battle was about 2 percent. In World War I, in contrast, the proportion was 40 percent. Modern warfare is increasingly dangerous not only for the combatants but for civilians as well. In the Vietnam War, more than 75 percent of those who died were civilians (Galtung, 1985; McNeill, 1982). In Afghanistan, civilians know the terror of war—in the form of buried land mines or unexploded bombs—long after the warring armies have withdrawn from the field.

Although warfare is as old as human societies, the forms and conduct of war are always changing. New technologies, such as biological weapons delivered in missiles or dirty bombs that might spread a cloud of radioactive poisons, causing panic and hysteria in unprotected urban populations, or even the use of hijacked airplanes as flying bombs, are examples of current changes that may permit weaker forces to mount devastating attacks on stronger nations. Terrorism, using conventional weapons like mortar shells or unconventional ones like suicide bombs, is a form of asymmetrical warfare because the terrorist organization, whether sponsored by a nation or by a faction like al Qaeda, is militarily far weaker than the force it attacks (Vest, 2001).

In symmetrical warfare, such as occurred in the 2003 Iraq war, two or more conventional armies confront each other. In the case of Iraq, however, conventional symmetrical warfare soon gave way to terrorism and asymmetrical warfare once the U.S.-British coalition had prevailed on the conventional battlefield. The need for the occupying armies to quickly transform themselves from an invading force into a policing force capable of restoring order and tracking down war criminals highlighted the difficulties of adapting conventional armed forces for new roles in bringing about positive social change under hostile and chaotic conditions. In the contemporary world, it is clear that asymmetrical warfare and difficult peacekeeping assignments will be ever more common forms of war and the response to war.

Any evaluation of the place of war in social change must consider four broad questions:
What are the ecological effects of war on human populations? How do wars help shape the consciousness and culture of a people? How does warfare affect the roles of women in society? How does war change the institutions of societies?

The Ecological Impact of War

Casualties and conquest are the major ecological effects of war. Televised scenes of oil fires and polluted coastlines during the 1991 Persian Gulf War shocked viewers throughout the world, but the most significant ecological impacts of the Gulf War were felt by human populations. Like an epidemic of cholera or bubonic plague, war accounts for extraordinary and rapid declines in population. Pitirim Sorokin (1937) estimated that between 1100 and 1925, about 35.5 million people died in European wars alone. World War I claimed the lives of about 8.4 million soldiers and about 5 million civilians, and in World War II, about 17 million military personnel and about 34 million civilians died. It is estimated that the Soviet Union lost about 15 million people during World War II, and that about 22 million perished in China. Germany lost 3.7 million, Japan about 2.2 million, and the United States slightly under 300,000 (Beer, 1981).

When millions of soldiers are killed, entire populations are unbalanced for more than a generation. Many women remain single or become widows and either do not have children or raise children alone. The effect may be to reduce population pressure on food and other resources, but the loss of so many skilled workers also causes labor shortages and economic disarray.

War also results in large-scale shifts in population and rapid acceleration of economic change. For example, the western parts of the United States and Canada experienced their most rapid growth as a result of mobilization for war during the first half of the twentieth century. New dams, new electric power plants, and new factories to produce all kinds of goods were built. San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver all experienced massive population growth, as did many inland centers of industry and agriculture. The end of the war saw continued growth in the western states as young families who had come west during the war decided to settle there permanently.

For the losers in war, the ecological consequences of defeat are usually far more dramatic. Population loss, economic subjugation, the imposition of a foreign language and culture, and forced movement to new towns and industrial areas are common. During more than a century of genocidal wars waged by whites against Native Americans in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the consequences for the losers were death, expulsion, and banishment to reservations. For tribal peoples of Africa, invasion, war, and conquest led to colonial rule and rapid social change, often imposed through taxation, labor gangs, military draft, and similar means. In areas of the world that are torn by war today—such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Kashmir, the former states of Yugoslavia (especially...
Bosnia and Kosovo, and African countries like Congo, Sudan, and Somalia—war has brought genocidal ethnic conflicts, mass expulsions (“ethnic cleansing”), and years of abject poverty in squalid refugee camps.

The Cultural Impact of War

War changes a society’s culture by stamping the memories of chaos and cruelty, heroism and camaraderie, on entire generations. Years after a major war, its effects on values and norms continue to be felt (Schuman & Scott, 1989). One need only think of the impact of the American Civil War on the former Confederate states, an impact that remains strong today and can be seen in Civil War memorials, rebel yells, the conduct of interracial relations, and North–South animosities. Recent sociological research shows that, even for generations that did not experience war firsthand, the memory or threat of warfare is perceived as extremely important. Table 22.2 shows that people will cite specific wars first among “national events or changes that seem especially important to you”—even if they were not alive during the wars they mention.

No doubt far more respondents would list terrorism at or near the top of the list if this study were repeated today. As evidence, note the Gallup Poll results shown in Table 22.3. On the evening just after the September 11, 2001, terrorist strikes, Americans were still hoping to learn more about the probable perpetrators before they committed themselves to a war against terrorism. But only a few days later, there was such a high level of approval of the war that it is quite clear that this event will occupy a major place in the memory of the present generation of teenagers and young adults.

As the violence in the Middle East spread to Lebanon and Israel in the summer of 2006, and with the situation in Iraq showing little improvement, public opinion polls showed that many Americans had a strongly negative view of how well the goals of the war were being realized. We see in Table 22.3 that, compared to how they felt at the beginning of the Iraq war, the vast majority of Americans believed that the war was either increasing the threat of terrorism or not having any effect.

The impact of a major war can also be seen in the damage done to the minds and bodies of the survivors. In addition to the thousands who are maimed and mutilated, thousands more suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, in
which the shock of war continues to haunt the victim; others experience survivor guilt, the feeling of shame that many survivors feel because they escaped the fate of their comrades. These effects, which occur at the micro level of interpersonal relations, have been described by the Italian social observer Primo Levi, who was imprisoned at Auschwitz and liberated by Russian soldiers. When the soldiers encountered the piles of dead and the groans of the dying, Levi reports, they felt shame: “They did not greet us, nor smile; they seemed oppressed. . . . It was the shame which the just man experiences when confronted by a crime committed by another, and he feels remorse because of its existence” (1989, p. 72).

This kind of shame and guilt pervades a culture that has been torn by war. People feel that those who died were the best, the most valorous of society’s members. Levi describes the shame he felt at the deaths of Chaim, a watchmaker who tried to teach him how to survive in the camp, and Szabo, a tall, silent Hungarian peasant who needed more food than others yet never failed to help his weaker companions. He tells of his guilt over the fact that Robert, a professor at the Sorbonne, died even though he “spread courage and trust all around him,” and that Baruch, a longshoreman from Livorno, died on the first day because he hit back when the guards beat him. “These, and innumerable others, died not despite their valor but because of it” (p. 83).

**War and Gender Relations** Throughout history, women and girls have suffered particular cruelties during wars and conquest. As refugees from warfare, or as civilians in the midst of deadly battle, women are often abused, degraded, raped, and killed, sometimes along with...

### TABLE 22.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Percentage in Favor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Should conduct immediate strikes</td>
<td>September 11, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should wait until identifying those responsible</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should not conduct strikes</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 14–15, 2001</strong></td>
<td><strong>Percentage in Favor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should not</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of the United States’ military action against Iraq, do you think the threat of terrorism against the United States has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Increased (%)</th>
<th>Decreased (%)</th>
<th>Same (%)</th>
<th>Unsure (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/11–13/06</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/29–31/05</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/29–8/2/05</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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<td>19</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/23–27/04</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/23–27/04</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/20–21/03</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/15–16/03</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/26–28/03</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/03</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49</td>
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**Notes:**
1Source: © 2001 The Gallup Organization.
their children. Thousands of Albanian women were forced to flee to the mountains of Kosovo, knowing that to stay in the path of their Serbian attackers was to risk rape, torture, and the possible violent death of their children. In Afghanistan, the defeat of the Taliban in 2001 temporarily ended a regime that had brought untold suffering for women. They were subjected to the strictest possible religious rules, which denied them even the most basic opportunities for education and health care. In these examples, and many others that could be cited, women have been caught in the middle of vicious local conflicts that have developed largely as a consequence of the end of the cold war and its uneasy equilibrium of competing superpowers. But all wars in the modern age have taken an extremely high toll on women, as thousands of war widows can attest.

Women are by no means merely passive victims of warfare. Sociologist Suzanne Staggenborg, a researcher on gender, family, and social movements, notes that “women’s peace movements had existed in many countries since the early twentieth century and included international organizations such as the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, which was founded in 1915” (1998, p. 45). Women’s opposition to war is nothing new, however; the ancient Greek playwright Aristophanes dealt with the subject in Lysistrata, a semiserious comedy in which the women of Athens go on strike in an effort to avert war with Sparta. During the twentieth century, the massive mobilizations of the two world wars—in which the vast majority of women and men had their lives disrupted and their careers dramatically altered by wartime industrial mobilization, military service, civilian defense, and the untimely death of loved ones who were also parents and breadwinners—had lasting effects on gender relations. These experiences increased the desire of women to enjoy the same rights and responsibilities as men, including the right to serve in the military. We return to this major aspect of social change later in the chapter.

War’s Impact on Social Institutions The structure of a society, especially its major social institutions, may be drastically changed by war and preparation for war. The mobilization of large numbers of people and the marshaling of new technologies for military purposes have a centralizing effect on social institutions. In the United States, for example, the growth of large research universities in the 1960s was accelerated by huge investments in applied science and technology after the Soviet Union became the first nation to launch a space satellite. Universities that were capable of developing new science programs grew rapidly, and their administrations gained greater power. The power and influence of the national government have also grown, often at the expense of local governmental institutions, as a consequence of the two world wars and the arms race. Providing for national defense is extremely expensive and requires that the central government be granted increased taxing powers.

The French sociologist Raymond Aron (1955) has called the twentieth century “the century of total war” because of the capacity of warfare to shape the destiny of entire regions and because of the unprecedented power of nuclear and other weapons. Aron’s phrase also captures the transforming power of modern war, its ability to alter societies. In the United States, for example, there is no doubt that the mobilization necessary to fight two world wars, major regional wars in Korea and Vietnam, and innumerable smaller skirmishes in Africa, Latin America, and Asia contributed to the controversial growth of the federal government during the twentieth century. The impetus for creating many of the institutions of the welfare state, such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (the former national welfare program), was the need to care for war widows and their children. The massive growth of the federal budget deficit during the latter part of the century was largely attributable to the expenditure of billions of dollars on military institutions (Galbraith, 1995).

Elsewhere in the world, the dominance of military institutions and the fragility of legal and governmental institutions produce “garri- son states” in which economic growth and the rule of law are subordinated to the needs of the military (Lasswell, 1941). The end of the cold war has led to political instability in middle Europe, parts of Africa, and many areas once dominated by the former Soviet Union. It has also caused unprecedented economic and social changes in western Europe. Political instability in many regions of the world is used to justify continued military spending; in the United States, military spending still exceeds $450 billion annually. Environmentalists and other opponents of high levels of military expenditures argue that individuals cannot comprehend the magnitude
Two Images of the Warrior When the Plains Indians and the U.S. Cavalry fought bloody battles during the period of westward expansion in the nineteenth century, warfare was brutal and deadly, especially for the less well-equipped Indian warriors. But as deadly as it was, war was not nearly as devastating for noncombatant populations as it is today. A century ago, warfare required guns and bayonets, cannons, and a great deal of organization and logistical support, but it did not involve sophisticated technologies like those represented by the modern fighter or bomber plane. As combat has become less a matter of brute force and more dependent on brains and technology, the possibility that well-trained women can compete as warriors has become a reality. This change in the conduct of war would have been inconceivable to General Custer or Sitting Bull.

Thinking Critically

Where do you stand on the issue of how the United States spends its taxpayers’ funds? Do you believe there is a need for “fortress America,” no matter what the cost? Are you worried about the effects the “war on terror” is having on social institutions? If so, what changes are of particular concern to you?

Modernization

A second major source of social change is the set of trends that are collectively known as modernization. This term encompasses all the changes that societies and individuals experience as a result of industrialization, urbanization, and the development of nation-states. These processes occurred during a period of two or more centuries in the Western nations and Japan, but they are taking place at a far more rapid rate in the former colonial societies that are today’s new nations.

modernization: A term used to describe the changes that societies and individuals experience as a result of industrialization, urbanization, and the development of nation-states.
The term *modernization* should be used cautiously, in its sociological sense rather than as a value judgment about different societies. It does not mean that we can judge life in modern societies as better or more satisfactory or more humane than life was for people in societies like the one the Ebrié once knew. As noted earlier, modern societies have developed the capacity to cause more destruction and human suffering than any simpler society could possibly have caused. And we have seen in other chapters that many of the advantages that most modern nations enjoy have come at a high cost to simpler, less modern societies.

The concept of modernization does not assume that change is irreversible. For example, the rise of nation-states throughout the world during the past few centuries does not imply the end of loyalties based on a sense of “peoplehood” that conflict with the sense of shared citizenship in a nation (see Chapter 4). The bloodshed in Lebanon and in many places on the African continent bears heartrending witness to the strength of feelings about peoplehood as opposed to loyalty to the modern nation-state with its laws and governments.

Nevertheless, the term *modernization* summarizes most of the major changes, for better or worse, that societies throughout the world are experiencing, albeit at differing rates and with varying amounts of social disruption (Chirot, 1994a). Neil Smelser (1966) associates modernization with the following set of changes:

1. In the realm of technology, a developing society is changing from simple and traditionalized techniques toward the application of scientific knowledge.

2. In agriculture, the developing society evolves from subsistence farming toward the commercial production of agricultural goods. This means specialization in cash crops, purchase of nonagricultural products in the market, and often agricultural wage labor.

3. In industry, the developing society undergoes a transition from the use of human and animal power toward industrialization proper, or men working for wages at power-driven machines, which produce commodities marketed outside the community of production.

4. In ecological arrangements, the developing society moves from the farm and village toward urban concentrations. (pp. 110–11)

These processes can take place simultaneously, but this is not always the case. Many societies mechanize their agriculture and begin to produce cash crops for foreign markets before their cities and urban forms of employment have begun to grow rapidly. This was the case, for example, in Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), Indonesia, and many of the newer African nations.

Smelser and others who study modernization have shown that “technical, economic, and ecological changes ramify through the whole social and cultural fabric” (1966, p. 111). In the political sphere of life, we see the authority systems of the village yielding to domination by the institutions of nation-states. In the area of education, as societies attempt to produce workers who can meet the needs of new industries, new educational institutions are established. In the area of religion, the strength of organized religions has decreased. Families change as traditional extended families adapt to new economic institutions that demand greater mobility.

Patterns of inequality in societies also change. Older patterns of gender inequality are modified (and often replaced by new forms of inequality) as women are in greater demand to fill positions in new economic institutions. The emergence of a new class, the wage workers, increases the power of the common people, usually adding to their determination to become better educated and to participate more fully in political life. None of these changes is inevitable or irreversible; workers, for example, may see their unions “busted” in times of recession or economic change. In the long run, however, all of these trends are likely to appear in a modernizing society.

**Modernity, Technology, and Cultural Lag**

The central part that technology plays in modern societies has led some sociologists to view

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### Table 22.4: Long-Term* Budgetary Costs of the War in Iraq

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Budgetary Cost</th>
<th>$1.3 Trillion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest payments on debt; combat and support operations</td>
<td>$386 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future spending</strong></td>
<td>271 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spent to date</strong></td>
<td>251 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased military spending (e.g., higher pay, cost for recruitment, research and development, and maintenance)</td>
<td>139 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability payments to veterans</td>
<td>122 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care costs for veterans</td>
<td>92 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demobilization costs</td>
<td>8 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Assumes a small continued U.S. presence in Iraq until 2015.
it as a basic principle of social change. The classic statement of this view is that of William Fielding Ogburn (1942). Ogburn hypothesized that inventions affect the size of populations, which in turn influences the course of history. (For example, overpopulation often leads to wars and migrations.) Some inventions affect population directly: Improvements in sanitation, the development of cures for fatal diseases, and more effective contraceptive techniques are examples. But inventions can also have indirect effects on population. For example, techniques that improve crop yields or permit long-term storage of food surpluses make it possible to support a larger population with a given amount of farmland. And improvements in military technology (for example, the use of horses in warfare, the invention of gunpowder, and the development of the armored tank) have had dramatic effects on the conduct of war and hence on population size.

Ogburn also proposed the theory known as cultural lag. In his words, “A cultural lag occurs when one of two parts of culture which are correlated changes before or in greater degree than the other part does, thereby causing less adjustment between the two parts than existed previously” (1957, p. 167). This theory is most often applied to the adaptation of social institutions to changing technologies. For example, the Industrial Revolution gave birth to many kinds of machines, often with moving parts that made them dangerous to use. The rates of injury and death resulting from industrial accidents climbed rapidly in the decades following the introduction of the new machines to the United States around 1870. Such accidents spelled disaster for workers and their families because it was hard to prove that the employer was responsible for the accident. Not until around 1910 were the concepts of employer liability and workers’ compensation adopted, a lag of about forty years.

One problem with the cultural lag theory is that it fails to account for the effects of social power. For example, workers who sought compensation for the costs of industrial accidents did not have nearly as much power as the owners of the machines. When this power imbalance changed as a result of the labor movement, it became possible to enact legislation that would protect the workers.

The Postmodernist Critique For more than two centuries, the forces of modernity have been changing societies throughout the world. In fact, all species of life on the earth are affected by these broad-ranging changes in the way humans exist. It is not surprising, then, that the forces of modernity also stimulate a wide variety of countertrends and reactions. The desire for gender and racial equality that accompanies modernity is countered by antifeminist and racial supremacy movements. The increasing influence of scientific thought is countered by revivals of fundamentalist religious beliefs and opposition to scientific education. The demand by some Christian conservative groups that public schools teach an anti-Darwinian view of creation, sometimes called “creation science,” is an example of this trend in the United States.

Many other social movements are direct attacks on modernity itself or on specific aspects of modern thought. One of those aspects is rationality, which Max Weber viewed as a central principle of modernity (see Chapter 6). When applied to economic and governmental affairs, rationality fosters the development of bureaucracies, which, at least in principle, apply rational codes and regulations to the conduct of their affairs. The modern emphasis on rationality in scientific thought has been accompanied by an increase in secularism—separation of church and state, abolishment of state religions, and protection of free speech (including agnosticism and atheism). However, many critics point out that along with the bounty provided by scientific rationality have come the destructiveness of the nuclear age and the erosion of religious and ethical values.

In recent decades, the critique of modernity in the older developed nations has given rise to a diffuse school of thought known as postmodernism (Foucault, 1973, 1984; Lash, 1992). Postmodernism can be defined as a critique of modern societies and cultures. It argues that science, rationality, and all the “isms” of the modern world—capitalism, socialism, behaviorism, to name only a few—deprive human lives of spirituality, mystery, myth, and diversity of expression. Modern economic institutions transform popular forms of music and art into mass-produced products. Postmodernist critics also believe that the major institutions of modern societies, including markets, laboratories, clinics, the military, and other bureaucratically controlled administrations, have become instruments of social control by powerful elites (Harper, 1993). According to postmodernist theories (which in some ways resemble New Age ideas), this control is weakening as people feel increasingly estranged from modern institutions and turn to new expressions of fantasy,
myth, sexuality, and styles of dress and architecture. In health care, for example, disillusionment with some aspects of modern medicine leads people to try a wide range of alternatives, such as folk healing, holistic medical practices, and remedies that have not been scientifically tested (Deierlein, 1994).

Postmodernism remains influential as a critique of modernity and an explanation for the proliferation of often zany styles and behaviors in today’s world. It is especially popular in academic circles, but aside from stimulating the development of some new cultural products (for example, styles of architecture that refer to many different periods), it has not had any perceptible influence on modern corporations or other bureaucracies. The postmodernist critique is an important reminder that modernization has many negative effects, but it has not stimulated social movements that seriously challenge the growing influence of modern social institutions such as global corporations. The same cannot be said for other antimodernist cultural movements, such as fundamentalism, as we will see shortly.

**Modernization in Developing Nations**

Social scientists often use the term *third world* to refer to nations that have won independence from colonial dominance in the decades since World War II. If the “first world” is that of the capitalist nation-states and the “second world” that of the former communist nations, the third world nations are those that are not aligned with either of these “worlds” but are united in their need to survive in an environment dominated by more politically or economically powerful nations.

But the term *third world* can be misleading, because many of these nations have made strides toward modernity in the past thirty years. Moreover, trends in global social and economic change have produced impoverished areas—sometimes called the “fourth world”—in affluent nations where illegal immigrants or stigmatized minorities work under conditions similar to those found elsewhere in the third world (Sassen, 1991, 1998). Therefore, we prefer to use the term *developing nations* or *modernizing nations*. A *developing nation* is undergoing a set of transformations whose effect is to increase the productivity of its people, their health, their literacy, and their ability to participate in political decision making. These transformations occur at different rates in different nations and different regions of the world. To measure modernization and compare rates of change in different nations or regions, sociologists use a variety of quantitative indicators, as explained in the Research Methods box on pages 578–579.

**Antimodernist Movements**

The theory of modernization as we have described it implies that modernization will occur in a similar fashion in every society. But the differing experiences of the developing nations call this view into question. Not only do we often see the industrialization of agriculture (that is, the growth of huge mechanized farms) without the rise of industrial cities, or the growth of cities without a decline in the strength of organized religions or the emergence of modern educational institutions, but we also see the rise of antimodernist social movements in some of these nations (Randall, 1998). Events in the Islamic world are a case in point. In Algeria, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Sudan, and other Islamic nations, a fundamentalist religious movement has been gaining strength in the past quarter century. This resurgence of traditional Islamic beliefs and practices denies that modernization must be accompanied by the rejection of religious faith, by the separation of religion and government, or by more democratic political participation. These and other aspects of the Western version of modernity are being strongly challenged by the Islamic...
Studies of these antimodernist movements are being conducted throughout the world. For example, in her studies of Algerian women confronting the antimodernist movement sweeping through the Arab nations, Algerian American sociologist Marnia Lazreg (1994) found that these movements are misnamed. In reality, she concludes, they are actually radical attempts to seize political power in which the movement’s leaders use the religious fervor of the masses to achieve their goal.

The rise of antimodernist movements is not limited to the Islamic nations. Similar movements can be seen in the United States. Conservative groups plead for a return to more traditional values, and some radical groups advocate a return to self-sufficient communities that would engage in farming on a small scale. The effects of such movements on a society’s institutions show that modernization does not necessarily follow a single direction or imply a single set of changes (for example, the decline of religious faith, the rise of science, or the growth of industrial cities).

Another challenge to this view of modernization is posed by the fact that the world’s resources of raw materials, water, and energy are far less plentiful than they once were. Today, there are serious doubts about whether those resources are adequate to permit the poor nations to become developed to anywhere near the extent that the Western nations have, or whether the rich nations can continue to grow as they have in the past.

Cultural conservatives—people who are concerned about the direction of modern culture in the United States and elsewhere—have extremely important views. Their criticisms help keep society from veering too far in one direction, just as more radical social thought has helped us move beyond the status quo of inequality. So what distinguishes true antimodernists from cultural conservatives?

**Modernization and Dependency** Some sociologists argue that the development of the more advanced modern nations actually impedes development in the newer nations, or at least channels it in directions that are not always beneficial. In a general statement of this theory, André Gunder Frank (1966) questioned the idea that the less developed societies are merely at an earlier stage of modernization than the advanced nations. He cited the development of one-crop economies in many parts of Latin America as evidence of how social forces in the developed nations actually transform the tropical countryside. According to Frank, when peasants give up subsistence agriculture and trading in local markets because their land has been absorbed into huge banana or coffee plantations, the result is a form of underdevelopment that did not exist before, one in which the peasantry is transformed into a class of landless rural laborers.

Immanuel Wallerstein (1974; Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1996) has proposed a more general theory that he calls world system theory. In this theory, he divides the world into core states, semiperipheral areas, and peripheral areas. The core states include the United States, England, France, Russia, Germany, and Japan, which are the most technologically advanced nations and which dominate the banking and financial functions of the world economy. The semiperipheral areas are places like Spain and Portugal, the oil-producing nations of the Middle East, and Brazil and Mexico. In these areas, industry and financial institutions are developed to some extent, but they remain dependent on capital and technology provided by the core states. The peripheral areas include much of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They supply basic resources and labor power to the core states and the semiperipheral areas. This world system, Wallerstein asserts, is based on various forms of economic domination and does not require political repression.

Wallerstein’s theory has the drawback of suggesting that the so-called core states do not include any areas of production that may resemble the peripheral, dependent regions more than they do the fully modernized nations. Evidence suggests that even the most modern nations contain such regions. For example, in a study of sharecropping in California, Miriam Wells (1996) showed that large California berry growers have been dividing their land into small plots and renting them to low-income farm laborers. Wells contends that the growers have adopted this strategy as a means of avoiding the higher costs of unionized farm labor. “The sharecropper is responsible for maintaining the plots, for harvesting and packing the fruit, and for hiring and paying whatever labor is necessary to accomplish these tasks” (p. 17). In return, the sharecropper receives from 50

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**core state:** A technologically advanced nation that has a dominant position in the world economy.

**semiperipheral area:** A state or region in which industry and financial institutions are developed to some extent but that remains dependent on capital and technology provided by other states.

**peripheral area:** A region that supplies basic resources and labor power to more advanced states.
1. Population Change. The preceding chapter introduced some of the basic measures of population growth, such as doubling time and crude rates. Another important rate is the total fertility rate (TFI), the average number of children a woman would have, assuming that current age-specific birthrates remain constant throughout her childbearing years (ages 15 to 49). When the TFI reaches 2—that is, the average number of children per woman is 2—the couple is said to just “replace themselves with two children.” Populations with this low fertility rate will soon stabilize, meaning that they will not be growing as a result of “natural” increases. In the United States, the TFI is 2.1, representing an extremely slow rate of natural increase, but the U.S. population is growing far more rapidly because of immigration. As we saw in the preceding chapter, a region’s or nation’s population doubling time is a convenient measure of growth because it indicates how quickly extremely large numbers of people will be added to a population. Note that in 2000, the doubling time for the world’s population was about 51 years, but it was 809 years for the world’s more developed nations.

2. Population Health. Infant mortality, the annual number of deaths of infants under age one per 1,000 live births, is an extremely important measure of a population’s relative health. Most infants who die before they are one year old do so because of malnutrition, poor or absent pre- and postnatal care, infections caused by poor public health systems (especially contaminated drinking water), and other preventable illnesses. In North America, the rate varies around 6.0, whereas it is over 70 in very poor nations like Nigeria or Pakistan.

3. Life Expectancy. Life expectancy, the number of years a newborn infant can expect to live, assuming current mortality levels, ranges from seventy-nine years among women in more developed nations to a low of sixty years for men in less developed nations (excluding China).

4. HIV/AIDS. The percentage of adults aged fifteen to forty-nine with HIV/AIDS is a measure of how well a region’s or nation’s health care system is doing in the face of a worldwide epidemic. High rates of AIDS infection will exert immense burdens on the economies, cultures, and social structures of nations and regions for decades to come.

5. Economic Indicators. A nation or region’s gross national product per capita includes the value of all domestic and foreign output divided by total population. It is a quick measure of how much wealth per person an economy generates, but it does not indicate how well that wealth is actually distributed.

6. Urbanization. The percentage of a nation’s or region’s population that is urbanized is a crude measure of how much of the rural–urban to 55 percent of the proceeds minus the costs of handling, loading, hauling, and marketing the crop. Wells points out that modernization theory views sharecropping as an obsolete form of production, yet it can reappear even in the most advanced societies under certain conditions, such as lack of machinery for harvesting. Once again, therefore, we see that modernization is not a unilinear process with inevitable outcomes for every society or nation. People in all societies, including our own, experience social change in an infinite number of ways, as we see in the next section.

SOCIAL CHANGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

People often experience social change as highly problematic, and they often blame themselves for not coping with it more effectively. But as we saw in Chapter 1, the sociological imagination requires that we ask how our own troubles are related to larger social forces. And we have seen that modernity brings with it many contradictions. In seeking new opportunities in education, leisure pursuits, intimate relationships, and political participation, we also create new problems for ourselves. Thus, according to social theorist Ralf Dahrendorf (1990), anomie has become an element of the lives of many people, especially those who are still on the way to attaining full membership in their societies. The Ebrìe felt such anomie when their peaceful habit of sleeping outside their houses was shattered by a robbery.

In many parts of the world, the experience of anomie is even stronger and has stimulated extremely violent attacks on what are perceived as threats to traditional values and ways of life. An example is the anger against the United States and other Western nations that accompanied the attacks of September 11, 2001. Although the immediate political context of the terrorism was the Arab–Israeli conflict in the Middle East, many demonstrators voiced the belief that Western ways—including materialism, secularism, feminism, and other traits believed to be distinctly Western—were also being attacked.

Like most social theorists, Dahrendorf does not believe that we can or should attempt to reverse the course of modernization. Instead, he suggests, we need flexible institutions that can be adjusted without disruption. We are far from achieving such flexibility, however. When we look at the range of problems we encounter in our daily lives, we can readily see how much more change is needed.
Sociology & Social Justice

MODERNIZATION AND THE RULE OF LAW Are you afraid that late one night the police or members of the military will come to your house and drag you to prison for something you said to a foreign reporter? Are you concerned that when you travel you may be stopped by bandits who will rob you of all your possessions? Are the political leaders of your country stealing the nation’s wealth and sending it to secret bank accounts? If you sue a negligent landlord, do you think the judge will rule in favor of whoever has the most wealth and power? Does your country’s constitution guarantee its citizens’ basic rights to life, liberty, property, and the “pursuit of happiness”?

If you answered a resounding no to all but the last question, chances are excellent that you live in the United States or one of the most modern nations in the world, where the rule of law is well established. Throughout much of the world, however, these perils are common. When the rule of law is weak or absent, everyone but the most powerful suffers, and economic and social development are seriously hampered (Zhao & Zhang, 2008). Yet the rule of law, which is so essential to progress toward social justice for women, children, the poor, and all groups that lack wealth and power, is extremely difficult to develop and sustain because so many powerful and rich individuals and groups throughout the world have selfish reasons for subverting the law or taking it into their own hands.

As we see in Figure 22.1, when we consider what is required to establish the rule of law, it helps to understand the legal and political institutions involved. The World Justice Project (2010), with the help of the Gates Foundation and other major global foundations, is developing a comparative Rule of Law Index. The different factors to be measured are organized under four principles, or bands:

1. The government and its officials and agents are accountable under the law.
2. The laws are clear, publicized, stable, and fair, and protect fundamental rights, including the security of people and property.
3. The process by which the laws are enacted, administered, and enforced is accessible, fair, and efficient.
4. Access to justice is provided by competent, independent, and ethical adjudicators, attorneys, or representatives, and judicial officers who are of sufficient number, have adequate resources, and reflect the makeup of the communities they serve.

The accompanying table presents these measures for the world as a whole and for selected regions of the world. Note the huge differences between the less developed and more developed nations. At the same time, it is important to recognize that, despite some reversals (due, for example, to the impact of AIDS), there have been significant improvements in these measures in many parts of the world.

### Indicators of Social Change and Modernization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Fertility Rate</th>
<th>Doubling Time</th>
<th>Infant Mortality Rate</th>
<th>Life Expectancy</th>
<th>Percent with HIV</th>
<th>Percent Urban</th>
<th>GNP per Capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Developed</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Developed</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Developed</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(excluding China)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central Asia</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including India)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including China)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government accountability, in turn, depends on whether there is a constitution that defines and limits the state’s powers, on whether the police and military are held accountable for their actions, and so on. Equivalent criteria for the other major aspects of the rule of law are shown in Figure 22.1. However, it is far easier to define and measure progress toward the rule of law than it is to actually build and maintain the institutions that sustain it. Examples of this dilemma can be seen in the news every day. In Pakistan, for example, a lawyers’ movement for the rule of law arose in 2007, after the nation’s president dissolved the supreme court and fired its judges in a political dispute that almost brought down the entire government. Lawyers and journalists who protested were arrested, tortured, beaten by law enforcement authorities, and even killed. Several media organizations were prevented from performing their normal duties; their equipment was confiscated and ordinances were issued to limit the freedom of the media. The judges were also arrested, and many of them, including the chief justice, remained under house arrest. As the lawyers and their allies continued to protest, their cause drew immense popular support and eventually led to new elections and new leadership that freed the imprisoned judges and reestablished the independent judiciary (Ahmed, 2010).
As this example begins to demonstrate, establishment of the rule of law is always difficult and the process is never completely finished. Think about the United States itself. We enjoy levels of protection under the rule of law that are among the strongest in the world, but are our laws always applied in the interest of fairness and social justice? Clarence Darrow, the greatest criminal defense lawyer in American history, gave this verdict on the rule of law in a famous speech to the inmates of the Illinois State Penitentiary:

First and last it’s a question of money. Those men who own the earth make the laws to protect what they have. They fix up a sort of fence or pen around what they have, and they fix the law so the fellow on the outside cannot get in. The laws are really organized for the protection of the men who rule the world. They were never organized or enforced to do justice. We have no system for doing justice, not the slightest in the world.

Let me illustrate: Take the poorest person in this room. If the community had provided a system of doing justice the poorest person in this room would have as good a lawyer as the richest, would he not? When you went into court you would have just as long a trial, and just as fair a trial as the richest person in Chicago. Your case would not be tried in fifteen or twenty minutes, whereas it would take fifteen days to get through with a rich man’s case.

Darrow was a radical and a reformer. He believed deeply in the rule of law, but he also knew that even with the most advanced legal institutions in the world, legal contests were always slanted in favor of those with wealth and power. To be critical of our government and its institutions, as Darrow and many others have been, is not to be subversive or un-American. Quite the contrary: Most of the gains of minority groups, women, and others who seek social justice depend on legal procedures and fair judges, and although they must organize and plead for funds to pay legal fees, their efforts over the years have had remarkable success. They prove that fairness and social justice are often attainable in this democracy, where, despite its imperfections, the rule of law is supported by our basic legal and governmental institutions.

Gender Roles and the Family

Clearly, one of the most significant social changes in Western societies in the past thirty years has been the changing definition of women’s roles. The entry of women into the labor force is only one indicator of this aspect of social change. Today, over 70 percent of all married women with children are at work in offices, factories, and other workplaces, compared with only about 4 percent in 1890 (Statistical Abstract, 2005). But it should be noted that there have always been subgroups in the population, especially African Americans and immigrants, for whom women’s wages were necessary to the family’s survival. Even among women who “kept house” a century ago, some 20 percent took in lodgers and earned cash in this fashion (Modell & Hareven, 1973).

For both women and men, these changes often produce feelings of guilt and stress. One writer on the subject (Fallows, 1985) urged young mothers to reject career goals so that they could raise their children themselves. On the basis of observations of day care centers, she had concluded that day care is a poorly developed institution that cannot substitute for maternal care. Arguments of this nature are common. Other studies show, however, that high-quality day care does not impede a child’s development. Moreover, advocates of gender equality question the assumption that child rearing should remain the primary role of women. This assumption has the effect of depriving women of opportunities to contribute their skills and talents to society. If day care is inadequate, a more practical response would be to improve it through public funding, education of child care workers, and the like, rather than forcing women to return to their traditional role as homemakers (Bergmann & Hartmann, 1995; Wrigley, 1995).

These arguments call attention to the need for more research on the future of families and other intimate groups in which children are
reared. Some sociologists attempt to show how day care can be improved. Others conduct research on how people actually cope with changes in the household division of labor. Are we moving toward a “symmetrical society” in which men and women share equally in household and occupational pursuits? If so, the evidence suggests that we still have a long way to go. In an analysis of data from 555 couples, Carmi Schooler, Joanne Miller, and their associates (1985) found that typically the husband’s sphere of household work “tends to be limited to household repairs, whereas wives are responsible for and actually do a vastly wider range of the household tasks” (p. 112).

Research on time use conducted by John Robinson confirms these findings. Robinson’s analysis of detailed diaries of how men and women use their time each day shows that, on average, women spend about thirty hours per week on child care, housework, and family care, whereas men spend less than ten hours per week on such activities. Although men often assume other responsibilities for the family, including putting in extra time at work, the data show that they are not yet close to sharing equally in family chores (Robinson, 1988; Robinson & Godbey, 1997). Women who have young children and work full-time are the most harried segment of the population; they have only an average of thirty-one hours per week of free time, as opposed to thirty-six hours per week for women who stay home with their children.

Another major issue related to changes in the family is the requirement that welfare recipients work at paid jobs to remain eligible for welfare benefits. This policy also involves the matter of day care: Single parents must have adequate care for their children while they gain the skills and experience needed to enter the labor force. Are we willing, as a society, to invest in social-welfare institutions like day care? The answer awaits further debate and political conflict. So too does the question of what, if anything, we can do about problems like teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, or high rates of divorce. Changes in values give us more choices and more opportunities to realize our potential as individuals, but at what cost to society?

**Race and Ethnic Relations in a Postindustrial Society**

Another significant area of social change is race relations. When we look at the bitter ethnic strife occurring in Rwanda or Kosovo, we often congratulate ourselves on the progress our society has made toward racial and ethnic equality. Racial discrimination in the United States, which until fairly recently was supported by laws in many parts of the nation and by informal norms elsewhere, has decreased a great deal as a result of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Since that stormy decade, black Americans have made gains in all of our society’s major institutions. Voting rights, greater access to education and jobs, achievement in sports, and full civil rights for blacks are often taken for granted. Yet, as the 1992 Los Angeles riots (prompted by the acquittal of the police officers who beat Rodney King) clearly demonstrated, much needs to be done to address racial inequality. In the words of philosopher and sociologist Cornel West:

> The verdict that sparked the incidents in Los Angeles was perceived to be wrong by the vast majority of Americans. But whites have often failed to acknowledge the widespread mistreatment of black people, especially black men, by law-enforcement agencies, which helped ignite the spark. The Rodney King verdict was merely the occasion for deep-seated rage to come to the surface. This rage is fed by the “silent” depression ravaging the country—in which real weekly wages of all American workers since 1973 declined nearly 20 percent, while at the same time wealth has been upwardly distributed.

The exodus of stable industrial jobs from urban centers to cheaper labor markets here and abroad, housing policies that have created “chocolate cities and vanilla suburbs,” white fear of black crime and the urban influx of poor Spanish-speaking and Asian immigrants—all have helped erode the tax base of American cities just as the federal government has cut its supports and programs. The result is unemployment, hunger, homelessness, and sickness for millions (1992, p. 24).

West’s critical observations signal some of the ways in which inequalities of wealth and opportunity overlap with inequalities of race and tend to exacerbate the problem of race relations in American society.

Changes in the economic structure of society supply the main explanation for the growing divergence between the haves and the have-nots. Manufacturing jobs and many kinds of blue-collar service jobs are becoming far less numerous, while the number of jobs in white-collar service industries like finance, insurance, and banking is growing rapidly. Despite high overall levels of employment during the 1990s, higher levels of production of high-technology items like computers have not yet made up for
the loss of well-paid jobs in heavy manufacturing industries like steel, autos, glass, and rubber. Blacks and Hispanics are more severely affected by these changes because they have long depended on heavy industry as a source of jobs.

**Environmental Politics and Policies**

A third area in which social change touches the individual is public policy. *Public policies* are laws and administrative regulations formulated by governments to control, regulate, or guide behavior. What public policies are likely to emerge as the United States is transformed into a postindustrial society and as other regions of the world industrialize? Clearly, one area of policy that will gain in urgency involves measures to safeguard the earth's environment. The contemporary exploration of space, applying the most advanced technologies, has allowed us to see the planet as a whole, which in turn has stimulated the development of environmental thinking and efforts to develop policies that will reduce problems such as global warming. However, to the extent that environmental policies impinge on people's livelihoods and on their reproductive behavior, these policies are bound to be extremely controversial and difficult to formulate (Perutz, 1992).

Environmental issues like the exhaustion of food resources, the spread of deserts, the destruction of forests by acid rain, and the denuding of large tracts of land for fuelwood are fast gaining a high place on the agenda of world politics. Figure 22.2 shows that population growth in excess of food-producing capacity is occurring in the Middle East and many parts of Africa; that fuelwood is scarce in India, Africa, and eastern Brazil; and that deserts are expanding on all the continents. Victims of "food insecurity" (people who lack sufficient food for normal health and physical activity) now total more than 100 million (Brown, Flavin, & French, 1997).

**The Accelerating Impact of Climate Change**

The Worldwatch Institute, which monitors global environmental conditions and their consequences for regional populations concludes that "Climate change will further challenge food production through myriad mechanisms and is expected to reduce yields significantly in many regions of the world—particularly those where food scarcity is already endemic" (Worldwatch Institute, 2009). The data on the growth of global undernourishment are closely related to climate change, which causes the expansion of deserts and an increase in floods and other natural disasters, which, in turn, result in population displacement (see Figure 22.3). The United Nations estimates that climate change alone will force at least 250 million people, and perhaps many more than that, to become homeless refugees over the next forty years.

What are the political implications of these physical and social conditions? Gro Harlem Brundtland, former chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development, answers that "to secure our common future, we need a new international ethic based on the realization that the issues with which we wrestle are globally interconnected." The only
way different nations can pursue their own self-interest, she adds, is for
the United Nations or a similar world political body to become the insti-
tution in which environmental policy is made. And that policy cannot
“insult the poor and tell them that they must remain in poverty to ‘protect
the environment’” (1989, p. 190). Clearly, the wealthy nations must make
equal sacrifices to achieve a stable environment.

As the worldwide environmental crisis worsens, citizens of the
United States and Canada will increasingly be faced with the need to
regulate their economies and to end practices
that contribute to pollution. This will be a costly
and politically wrenching process, as evidenced
by the difficulties encountered in developing
policies for solid-waste disposal or the abate-
ment of acid rain. A divided society, in which
many people wish to be responsive to the envi-
ronmental crisis but many others do not wish
to think about it, is certain to produce conflict
for years to come—unless a crisis such as flood-
ing caused by global warming creates such an
obvious threat that unity of purpose is achieved
overnight. Thus we face a dilemma brought on
by great changes in the environment coupled
with slower changes in the ability of political
institutions to deal with them. This situation
points to the need to look more closely at the
models that sociologists use in assessing social
change and predicting its course.

**MODELS OF CHANGE**

“We are such stuff as dreams are made
on, and our little life is rounded
with a sleep.” These words from Shakespeare’s
*The Tempest* capture one of the basic difficul-
ties of studying social change. In one short life-
time, we catch glimpses of our ability to create
a better world, but we can never realize all our ambitions, nor can we know what will become of our achievements or the problems we leave to later generations. Terrorists may strike again; prices may shoot up again if inflation rates rise; long lines may form at gasoline pumps during a new oil shortage; or we may be faced with new medical problems like AIDS or dengue fever. To cope with these changes, we may join new social movements and attempt to build new institutions or work to improve the ones we already have. We may also record our desire for a better society in cultural products of all kinds—in poetry and plays and novels, in film and music, and perhaps in social-scientific studies. Yet we know that social change will continue after we are gone, and we wonder whether it is possible to foresee what will happen to our society and civilization in the distant future.

Sociologists have often attempted to develop models of social change that span many generations and predict the future of whole societies or civilizations. Of course, none of these theories can be tested using data from actual experience. As Robert Nisbet has observed, “None of us has ever seen a civilization die, and it is unimaginable, short of cosmic disaster or thermonuclear holocaust, that anyone ever will” (1969, p. 3). Instead, he continues:

We see migrations and wars, dynasties toppled, governments overthrown, economic systems made affluent or poor; revolutions in power, privilege, and wealth. We see human beings born, mating, child-rearing, working, worshiping, playing, educating, writing, philosophizing, governing. We see generation succeeding generation, each new one accepting, modifying, rejecting in different proportions the works of preceding generations. We see, depending upon our moral or esthetic disposition, good and evil, greatness and meanness, tragedy, comedy, and bathos, nobility and baseness, success and failure. (p. 3)

Nisbet’s point is that we can trace trends in all of these areas, but it is extremely difficult to develop theories that can explain them all and, more important, predict the decline of existing societies and civilizations or the rise of new ones. Even when we believe we are witnessing the birth of a new society out of the chaos of revolution or war, it takes many generations to distinguish what is truly new, in terms of culture and social structure, from what has been carried over from the past. Despite these difficulties, models of change that seek to predict the future of entire societies or civilizations can be helpful. They allow us at least to compare new ideas about social change with those that have been in use for many decades. In this section, therefore, we review the most significant models of large-scale social change that have been proposed by sociologists in the past two centuries.

**Evolutionary Models**

**Unilinear Models** Many of the founders of sociology were strongly influenced by evolutionary views of social change even before Darwin’s theory seemed to offer an analogy between biological and social evolution (Chirot, 1994a; Nisbet, 1969). The main components of the nineteenth-century evolutionary model are as follows:

1. *Social change is natural and constant.* Social order exists even while change occurs; social change, on the other hand, is the means of attaining higher levels of social order.
2. *Social evolution has a direction.* Societies become increasingly complex. Émile Durkheim, for example, viewed societies as evolving from simpler forms based on similar segments like villages into more complex forms based on division of labor and the resultant interdependence among ever-larger numbers of people.
3. *Social evolution is continuous.* Change occurs as a result of social forces acting within a society, even without exogenous influences like colonialism. This happens through a steady series of stages. Many, but not all, evolutionary theories interpret social change as progress toward better conditions of life.
4. *Change is necessary and proceeds from uniform causes.* Because social change occurs naturally, continuously, and from within, it must be necessary. In other words, whether or not we want change, it will occur because of the logic of social evolution. And social evolution will be similar in all societies because all societies are similar in their ways of dealing with the dilemmas of human existence.

Two assumptions implicit in the nineteenth-century model of social evolution have been strongly criticized by twentieth-century social scientists. The first is that all of the world’s societies would eventually resemble those of western Europe in their institutions and even in their cultural values and ideologies. The second is that social evolution represents progress.

Modern evolutionary theorists refer to earlier models as *unilinear* because they predict that all societies will inevitably come to
resemble Western societies. A less ethnocentric version of evolutionary theory is found in multilinear models of social change. These models do not assume that large-scale change in a society represents progress, and they attempt to account for the values that are lost as well as for those that are gained.

**Multilinear Models** Multilinear models also emphasize that one must study each society separately to discover the evolutionary stages that are unique to a particular society as well as those that other societies have experienced (Lenski & Lenski, 1982; Sahlins, 1960; Steward, 1955). Thus, societies like Ivory Coast, where the Ebrié live, have not developed much heavy industry and may never do so. On the other hand, Ivory Coast has a relatively advanced agricultural base that provides the surpluses needed for modernization to take place in other areas of social life.

Multilinear models can be useful in accounting for the erratic course of modernization in the Islamic world, or in helping the Ebrié in their attempts to understand what aspects of their village culture might remain viable even as their tribe becomes incorporated into a modern African state. But such models do not tell us why societies like Great Britain have declined from the heights of imperial power or why the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Rome flourished, declined, and are now known primarily through courses in ancient history and classics. An alternative viewpoint is found in cyclical theories of social change, which attempt to explain such phenomena by placing the possibility of decline at the same level as that of growth and "progress."

**Cyclical Theories**

**Oswald Spengler** In 1918, when Europe had been devastated by World War I, Oswald Spengler, a German schoolteacher turned historian, published a controversial book titled *The Decline of the West*. Spengler’s gloomy thesis was that all societies pass through stages that are roughly equivalent to the life stages of human beings: infancy, youth, adulthood, and old age. The West, he argued, had passed through its maturity in the eighteenth century and was now experiencing a long period of decline. This process was inevitable and irreversible. There was nothing anyone could do to change its course.

**Arnold Toynbee** A similar but more positive “rise and fall” theory of social change was developed by British historian Arnold Toynbee (1972). In his “challenge and response” model, Toynbee suggested that all societies grow and decline as they respond to the challenges posed by their physical and social environments. For example, England needed to solve basic ecological problems, such as the fact that it is a small island nation with a limited supply of farmland. It responded by emphasizing foreign trade and using its superior naval power to protect its trade routes. When its naval power declined, it had to find new ways of meeting its challenges or face further decline. Thus, for Toynbee, the rise and fall of a society is accounted for by continual innovation in response to changes in its environment. However, although this theory is quite convincing as an explanation of history, it says little about what any particular society may expect in the way of challenges in the future.

**Pitirim Sorokin** Pitirim Sorokin (1937), a Russian immigrant who greatly influenced American social theory in the early twentieth century, also developed a cyclical theory of social change. His theory attempted to account for why a society or civilization might change in a particular way. All societies, he wrote, are continually experiencing social change, and such change originates in their cultures because cultures are not unified but are marked by opposing sets of values, norms, and lifestyles. At one extreme of a society’s cultural system is its “ideational culture,” so named because it stresses spiritual values, hard work, self-denial, and a strong moral code. At the other extreme is its “sensate culture.” This set of cultural traits encourages sensory experiences, self-expression, and gratification of individual desires. Neither of these extremes can produce a stable society. Ideational culture results in benefits that are enjoyed by pleasure seekers in later generations, and the society will decline until this trend is reversed and ideational traits are emphasized once again. At some point in its history, a society may combine these two cultural tendencies. Then, according to Sorokin, it has reached its “idealistic point.” But such a golden age is not likely to last forever.

**Conflict Models**

Cyclical theories of social change, with their cycles of rise and fall and their brief golden ages, may seem to confirm the common notion that history repeats itself (Chirot, 1994a). This notion is erroneous, however. Societies may experience similar events, such as wars or revolutions, at different times in their history, but the actual populations and issues involved are never exactly the same. More important, cyclical theories fail to deal with changes in social
institutions or class structures. This is where conflict models of social change are most useful. They argue that conflict among groups with different amounts of power produces social change, which leads to a new system of social stratification, which in turn leads to further conflict and further change.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels “The history of all hitherto existing societies,” wrote Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in The Communist Manifesto (1848), “is the history of class struggles.” As we saw in Chapter 10, social classes are defined by how people make their living or gain their wealth. Marx argued that struggles between classes (for example, workers versus managers and company owners) are the source of social change in every period of history. In any society, the main conflicting classes will be the exploiters and the exploited: those who control the means of production and those whose labor power is necessary to make those means of production actually produce. The exploited workers could become a revolutionary class—that is, one that could bring about an entirely new social order. But this can occur only when changes in the means of production—for example, new technologies like the factory system—make older classes obsolete.

We know that revolutionary class conflict has not occurred in many capitalist societies, nor did the former communist societies of eastern Europe or the Soviet Union succeed in eliminating worker exploitation. Yet as we look around the world at the struggles between the haves and the have-nots, the rulers and the ruled, the rich nations and the poorer nations, we cannot help but apply Marxian categories and test Marx’s theory of social change over and over again.

Ralf Dahrendorf Some modern conflict theorists depart from the Marxian view of social change, finding conflict among many different kinds of groups and in every social institution. For Ralf Dahrendorf (1990, 1997), this conflict produces social change at all times, but the change is not always revolutionary. We cannot change our laws, our bureaucracies, or even our families, for example, without first experiencing conflicts among various group and individual interests. An example of such a conflict is the controversy aroused by a statement by the Reverend Jerry Falwell, speaking on Pat Robertson’s national television broadcast directly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Falwell said that the American Civil Liberties Union, abortion providers, proponents of gay rights, and federal courts that had banned school prayer and legalized abortion had so weakened the United States spiritually that it was left exposed to terrorist attacks (Niebuhr, 2001). These comments were widely condemned in the United States and throughout the world, but they are a succinct statement of the resentment that a minority of people feel about changes that appear to them to be amoral. In most cases, however, only when whole classes or other major population groups experience severe anger or deprivation are violent unrest and revolutionary social change likely to occur.

Functionalist Models

From a functionalist perspective, social change occurs as a result of population growth, changes in technology, social inequality, and efforts by different groups to meet their needs in a world of scarce resources. There is no prediction of rise and fall or unilinear changes like those we find in early evolutionary theory or even in classical Marxian theory. Instead, the functionalist model sees change as occurring on so many fronts that it seems incredible that society can exist at all.

One of the dominant figures in functionalist social theory, Talcott Parsons (1960), developed a homeostatic model of society. As change occurs, said Parsons, a society’s institutions attempt to restore it to something approaching equilibrium. Conflict is minimized through the emergence of legitimate governing institutions; decisions are made about who governs and with what form and degree of authority. Adjustments are also made in economic institutions: New occupational roles develop; old roles decline; wages and status rankings such as occupational prestige explain who gets what rewards. Cultural institutions, schools, the arts, the media, and religious institutions maintain the shared values that support our feeling that our government is legitimate, that a certain amount of inequality is required to maintain individual initiative, and that opportunities are distributed as well as can be expected.

Parsons and other functionalist theorists do not contend that efforts to adapt to change, to create an integrated, well-functioning social system, always work. The integrated functioning of social institutions can be disrupted, sometimes severely, when some institutions experience rapid change while others are slow to adapt. Technological innovations in health care, for instance, make longer lives for some individuals possible at great expense, but other economic and political institutions have been slow to develop norms for distributing these costly benefits among the members of society and finding
Applied Models of Change

The last two models we described—the conflict and functionalist models—clearly reflect two of the theoretical perspectives that are among the basic conceptual tools of sociology. They are most useful at the global or macro level of analysis, but they can also be used, along with the interactionist perspective, to explain social change at the micro and middle levels of social analysis.

How can we apply the basic sociological perspectives to understand what is happening to the Ebrié as they become part of a bustling West African city? Starting from an ecological viewpoint, we must ask how the Ebrié are managing to make the transition from rural to urban life. We see them becoming more dependent on a worldwide economy. Changes in the value of their nation’s currency, for example, affect them now just as much as the failure of a yam crop might have in an earlier time. The interactionist perspective helps us listen as they speak about how these changes affect them. It lets us see how they are adapting to a life led largely among strangers. Functionalism helps us understand how some of their tribal institutions can survive in a modern society. We see new roles emerging and, at the same time, we see old ones declining in the face of new values like those regarding the place of women in society. Finally, the conflict perspective tells us that a good part of the answer to how much of Ebrié culture will persist and how much will be lost depends on the extent to which the Ebrié resist assimilation into the national culture. Their struggle to maintain their language, their forms of worship, and their worldview will continue, even if it produces some conflict among themselves.
of Blokosso is home to one of the region’s finest Harrist churches, shown here. Harris was an African missionary who preached an African form of Protestantism that became extremely popular among the lagoon peoples of Liberia, Ivory Coast, and Ghana in the early twentieth century. Harrist church ceremonies are lively and colorful, with many aspects of traditional African music and dance incorporated into the Protestant service.

Over decades, as cities have developed around them, many of the Ebrié villages have become hemmed in by the crush of poorly housed urban migrants. Adjame, shown here, was once a peaceful Ebrié village but has become an urban slum. Does the same fate await Blokosso? Perhaps. But that village is fortunate to be located along the lagoon, along with luxury hotels and villas. It is unlikely that migrants to the region will crowd this part of the city. Thus, the people of Blokosso are able to maintain their delicate balance between traditional and modern African ways of life, at least for the time being.

### Models of Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evolutionary</td>
<td>Social change is natural and constant, has a direction, and is continuous. Change is necessary and proceeds from uniform causes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilinear</td>
<td>Large-scale change in a society does not represent progress. Each society must be studied separately to discover the evolutionary stages unique to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilinear</td>
<td>All societies pass through stages like the life stages of humans and eventually decline. Societies grow and decline as they respond to the challenges posed by their physical and social environments. Social change originates in a society’s culture, which alternates between “ideational” and “sensate.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclical</td>
<td>Social change results from conflict between social classes, which are defined by how people make their living or gain their wealth. Social change results from conflicts among many different kinds of groups and in every social institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts</td>
<td>As change occurs, a society’s institutions attempt to restore equilibrium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionalist</td>
<td>As change occurs, a society’s institutions attempt to restore equilibrium.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are some of the most important examples of social change in the contemporary world?

- Social change refers to variations over time in the ecological ordering of populations and communities, in patterns of roles and social interactions, in the structure and functioning of institutions, and in the cultures of societies.

- Such changes can result from forces building within societies (endogenous forces) as well as from forces exerted from the outside (exogenous forces).

- Changes at the micro, middle, and macro levels of social life usually are interrelated.

- No social change in human history has been as far-reaching and universal in its consequences as the transition to an urban, industrial way of life. However, not all people who are experiencing such changes think of them as progress. Nor can all forms of social change be controlled, although some changes are intentional. Similarly, although social scientists can understand and predict the master trends of their era, they have limited ability to anticipate major forms of change such as wars, social movements, or technological changes.

What forces have produced the greatest social changes throughout human history?

- One of the major forces that produce social change is war. The primary ecological effects of war are casualties and conquest. War also results in large-scale shifts in population and rapid acceleration of economic change. It can affect a society’s culture in a variety of ways, and it may drastically change the structure of a society, especially its major social institutions.

- A second major source of social change is modernization—the changes that have taken place in societies throughout the world as a result of industrialization, urbanization, and the development of nation-states.

- These changes include a shift from simple techniques toward the application of scientific knowledge; an evolution from subsistence farming toward the commercial production of agricultural goods; a transition from the use of human and animal power toward the use of power-driven machines; and a movement from the farm and village toward urban concentrations. These processes may or may not take place simultaneously.

- Some sociologists view technology as a basic principle of social change. They recognize, however, that social institutions are often slow to adapt to changing technologies. This recognition forms the basis of the theory known as cultural lag.

- Postmodernist critics argue that technology and rationality deprive human lives of spirituality; they also believe that major institutions of modern societies have become instruments of social control by powerful elites.

- The so-called third world nations are those that have won independence from colonial dominance in the decades since World War II. Such nations are also called developing nations or modernizing nations. They are undergoing a set of transformations whose effect is to increase the productivity of their people, their health, their literacy, and their ability to participate in political decision making.

- Wallerstein’s world system theory divides the world into core states, semiperipheral areas, and peripheral areas.

How do people in different societies, whether they live in villages, towns, or cities, experience social change in their daily lives?

- People often experience social change as highly problematic. In pursuing new opportunities in education, leisure activities, intimate relationships, and political participation, they may find themselves without a clear set of norms to guide their lives and hence may experience anomie.

- The entry of large numbers of women into the labor force, for example, has upset the traditional norms of family life.
• Similarly, the civil rights movement has greatly reduced racial discrimination in the United States, but for a large proportion of the black population, these gains have been offset by changes in the structure of the economy.

• A third area in which social change touches the individual is public policy, which may involve trade-offs between conflicting goals such as eliminating poverty and protecting the environment.

How do sociologists create and apply models of social change?

• Sociologists have often attempted to develop models of social change that can be used to predict the future of whole societies or civilizations.

• Many of the founders of sociology favored an evolutionary model in which social change is seen as natural and constant; all societies inevitably become increasingly complex through a steady series of stages. Modern evolutionary theorists refer to such models as unilinear because they predict that all societies will undergo the same process of change.

• Multilinear models emphasize that one must study each society separately to discover the evolutionary stages that are unique to a particular society.

• A variety of theories have taken a cyclical view of social change, in which civilizations rise and fall, respond to a series of challenges, or alternate between two opposing sets of cultural values.

• Conflict theorists argue that conflict among groups with different amounts of power produces social change, which leads to a new system of social stratification, which in turn leads to further conflict and further change.

• From a functionalist perspective, social change occurs as a result of population growth, changes in technology, social inequality, and efforts by different groups to meet their needs in a world of scarce resources. The latter two perspectives can be applied to change at the micro and middle levels of social life as well as to macro-level changes.

The Kornblum Companion Website

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