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SOCIAL CHANGE

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Fourth Edition

STEVEN VAGO

SOCIAL CHANGE

Fourth Edition

Steven Vago

St. Louis University



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For Kathe, still . . .



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Preface

The fourth edition of this book is a response to the increasing demands for timely and comprehensive sociological analysis of one of the most important concerns of our time, social change. It offers increased emphasis on multicultural and international issues, retains the classroom-tested, pedagogically sound features and organizational framework of the previous editions, and remains scholarly, comprehensive, informative, at times controversial, and quite readable.

The objective of the book is to provide a clear, concise, and up-to-date analysis of the principal theoretical perspectives, sources, processes, patterns, and consequences of social change. It considers factors that stimulate or hinder the acceptance of change in a cross-cultural context, and it emphasizes unintended consequences and costs of both planned and unplanned change. It dwells on the ways of creating and on the methods of assessing change. Going beyond standard treatments of the topic, this text highlights those aspects of theory and research that have immediate practical implications for students of social change. Although the orientation of the book is sociological, I did not hesitate to incorporate theoretical and current empirical work from anthropology, social psychology, economics, political science, and history.

This edition reflects the many comments and recommendations made by students and colleagues who have used the book in their classrooms and research. Whereas the basic plan of the text remains unchanged, there is much that is new. Almost every page of this edition has been revised, not only for the purpose of updating, but also to increase its informative function, advance its analysis, and minimize lapses into dry academic prose. New sections have been added, and dated parts were dropped. Key concepts and ideas have been developed in virtually every chapter. Most chapters have been reconsidered and enlarged or reduced when warranted, and all have been updated to reflect the latest theoretical and empirical advances and the most recent statistics, but not at the expense of the rich classical literature that provides the intellectual foundation of this book. Thus the reader will have a chance to learn what is new while being exposed to traditional sociological thinking. The novel features include discussions on current developments in the former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact nations, global-





ization, trends in higher education, the social impact of the proliferation of personal computers, and the steadily increasing economic and social costs of environmental changes. A unique aspect of the book is its extensive use of cross-cultural illustrations.

Although any errors, inaccuracies, omissions, and commissions are accepted—and regretted—as my own responsibility, much of the book derives from many persons, mostly colleagues and students, whose help and cumulative wisdom I gratefully acknowledge. Special thanks go to my students in courses on social change over the past thirty years who patiently endured many earlier drafts of the various revisions and offered many valuable suggestions. As with other books and scholarly endeavors, the Vago Foundation once again made this project feasible and went beyond expectations in providing financial, research, and secretarial assistance; encouragement; and the requisite infrastructure for the preparation of this text.

At Prentice Hall, I extend my gratitude to Sharon Chambliss, Nancy Roberts, Kathryn Beck, and Kim Gueterman for their outstanding processing of the manuscript and to Aristide Sechandice for expertly preparing the index.

Steven Vago
St. Louis

Introduction: Dimensions and Sources of Change

At the onset of the second millennium, change continues to be all-pervasive, ubiquitous, and at times disconcerting. People from all walks of life talk about it, want it, oppose it, fear it, and at times they even want to make sense out of it. But there is nothing new in the allure of change. From the beginning, social change has been an integral part of the human condition. Since the earliest times, there has been a fascination with change, a constant preoccupation with its ramifications, and prolonged agitation about its consequences. This book is about that age-old concern with social change, which is, with all due modesty, one of the most important, challenging, and exciting topics in sociology.

The science of sociology began in the quest for explanations for social change. The advent of this new science marked the beginning of a long and sinuous road toward making "sense" of change. Yet, in spite of the multitude of efforts since its inception, the discipline of sociology is still confronted with the questions of how society changes, in what direction, why, in what specific ways, and by what forces these changes are created. Considering the fact that social change has been ubiquitous and, from time to time, a dramatic feature of society, there is still a great deal to learn about its nature and scope. Today social change is a central concern of sociology, and it is likely to remain one of the most intriguing and difficult problems in the discipline.

The intention of this book is to draw attention to the complexities and concerns inherent in the understanding of social change. It will concentrate on the more salient features, characteristics, processes, and perspectives of change in the United States and cross-culturally. The purpose is to try to make "sense" of change and to consider what is changing—and where, why, and how.



The principal mission of the book is to serve as a text in undergraduate courses on social change. The comprehensiveness and the large number of references included also make the book a valuable resource for both graduate students interested in social change and instructors who may be teaching a course on the subject for the first time. Because the book has been written with the undergraduate student in mind, no one particular perspective or approach to change has been taken, nor has a specific ideology or theoretical perspective been embraced. To have done so would have been too limiting for the scope of this book, since important contributions to social change would have had to have been excluded or would have been subject to criticism that such contributions were out of context. As a result, the book does not propound a single thesis; instead, it exposes the reader to a variety of theoretical perspectives proposed to account for social change in the social science literature.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book deals with modes of social inquiry of change. It examines the principal theoretical, empirical, analytical, and evaluative aspects in the study of social change. The discussion of the various topics combines sociological classics with significant contemporary insights and balances the presentation of theory with useful and testable hypotheses. When warranted, theoretical insights are translated into practical applications in a variety of situations. To make the text more comprehensive and interesting, the sociological perspectives are supplemented with viewpoints drawn from other disciplines in the social sciences and an abundance of cross-cultural and historical illustrations. The following comments on chapter contents will provide a schematic orientation for the reader.

This chapter examines the nature and the basic concepts of the subject matter and presents an approach for the conceptualization of social change. Next, the sources of change are considered. They encompass the impetus for change, the driving force behind change, and the conditions that are sufficient to produce it. The principal sources of change chosen for analysis are technology, ideology, competition, conflict, political and economic forces, and structural strains.

Sociological explanations of *why* social change occurs are as old as the discipline itself. To introduce the reader to the diverse theoretical orientations, Chapter 2 reviews the most influential and important classical and contemporary *theories* of social change. They are discussed by principal perspectives and proponents. The review concentrates on evolutionary, conflict, structural-functional, and social-psychological explanations of social change.



After the identification and analysis of forces that produce change, we need to consider the question of how and in what form change takes place. In Chapter 3 the discussion focuses on such *patterns* of change as evolution, diffusion, acculturation, revolution, modernization, industrialization, urbanization, and bureaucratization.

One might comment at this stage of the discourse: "So far, so good, but what has really changed in our contemporary world?" In response to this question, Chapter 4 examines trends in such specific social arrangements and *spheres* as family, population, stratification, power relations, education, and economy.

Once a change is accepted at any level of the social system, it is appropriate to ask how long it is likely to be sustained. Thus, the question of *duration* becomes important; this is discussed in Chapter 5 in terms of both the long-term and transitory phenomena of change such as fads, fashions, lifestyles, and cults.

Social change contains varying dialectical modes. It is neither automatic nor unopposed. It affects individuals and groups in society in different ways, for whom change may mean different things. Chapter 6, on the *motions* to change, looks at the social, psychological, cultural, and economic forces and conditions that facilitate or hinder the acceptance of change.

The question of what new social arrangements must be made, once change is brought about, has seldom been considered adequately in the literature on social change. The purpose of Chapter 7 is to examine the *impacts* and effects of change, its unintended consequences, and the methods of coping with change.

Any alteration of the social system and all forms of social engineering carry a price tag. But the price we pay for it is rarely mentioned. In Chapter 8, the discussion is concerned with the issues of the economics of change and the social and psychological *costs* of "progress."

How to bring about social change is among the most crucial and timely questions in the book. Thus, an analysis of strategies to create "desired" change is paramount. The aim of Chapter 9 is to analyze a series of social change *strategies* and tactics used in a variety of change efforts.

The last chapter is devoted to the current methodologies used in the *assessment* of the viability of change on social arrangements. Emphasis is placed on technology and environment assessment, techniques of change evaluation, and methodologies for forecasting change, with applicable policy implications.

The study of social change is naturally eclectic. Knowledge about it has accumulated in shreds and patches. In attempting to explain social change—whether on the scale of major transformations in society or of a more specialized, localized kind—one is tempted to look for "prime movers" analogous to the forces of Newtonian physics. But there are no "laws" in sociol-



ogy comparable to the laws of physics. At best, we have some good generalizations. Our investigations are guided by a number of theoretical perspectives, resulting in a variety of strands of thought and research. In pulling them together, we will be guided by the following concerns:

1. What do we need to know about social change? What are the principal issues in the study of change?
2. What do we really know? What are the major theories and findings in the field? How much confidence can we have in them?
3. What remains to be known? What are the major gaps, "unknowns," or lacunae, in theory and research?

In a sense, more problems are raised than can be solved in this volume. One of the fascinating aspects of the study of social change is that there are so many loose ends, so many ways of considering the subject, and so much yet to be learned. It is hoped that this book will serve as a useful point of departure for further study of change.

THE NATURE OF SOCIAL CHANGE

One of the central issues of our time is change. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus stated this in his oft-quoted proposition that one cannot step twice in the same river. The same observation in the words of a modern author: "The action in its repetition can never be the same. Everything involved in it has irrevocably changed in the intervening period" (Adam, 1990:168).

Everywhere change has become central to people's awareness, and there is a commitment to change that is irreversible, irresistible, and irrevocable. In every society, there is technological change, demographic change, rapid ecological change, and change induced by internal incongruities in economic and political patterns and by conflicting ideologies. Since the mid-1990s, Americans have had more than 4 million babies and 1.6 million abortions annually. Over 2 million couples wed every year, and a little over 1 million divorce. Life expectancy for Americans has reached a record level, while infant mortality rate has fallen to a new low (Stolberg, 1997). Forty-three million Americans move in a given year, 10 million change occupations, 1.5 million retire, and 2.5 million die. In the workplace, millions are hired, fired, promoted, demoted, and sued. New products appear on the market, and old skills become obsolete. New causes, issues, and excuses emerge with their appropriate slogans, politically correct vocabulary, and targets for blame. For our explorations, the fundamental questions relate to what is changing, at what level, and how fast. Further, we want to know what type of change is taking place—and what its magnitude and scope are.



An obvious first question in considering the nature of social change is "What is changing?" For the layperson, it could be everything or nothing. The question as it is phrased is just too broad, too general to be meaningful. In the United States, the standard form of greeting someone is usually followed by the question, "What's new?" Invariably, we are at a loss to come up with a coherent and cogent response to this habitual but ridiculous question. Still, it is an everyday occurrence. As a rule, we fire back an equally ridiculous and meaningless response: "not much," "nothing," or similar remarks in that vein. To avoid this dilemma of uncomfortable ambiguity, we need to go beyond the original question and specify what it is that is assertedly changing. Change, when it exists, is change of something with a specific identity—whether this be a norm, a relationship, or the divorce rate. Failure to specify the identity of *what* is changing can easily lead to confusion.

Once we have established the identity of what is changing, the next consideration is the *level* at which change takes place. Even though the concept of social change is inclusive of all social phenomena, in reality, we cannot study and comprehend change without knowing where it takes place. Thus, we need to identify the location in the social system in which a particular change is occurring. We can establish several units of study and focus our attention, for example, on the following levels: individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, and society.

Thus, change is becoming "social" and we are also becoming a bit more specific with our question. We might now pose the question, "What is changing and at what *level*?" We are now talking about the scope of change in relation to the number of persons or groups whose norms or social arrangement change: that is, the location of a particular change in a social system as well as the type of norm, attribute, or relationship that has changed. For example, on the *individual* level we can talk about changes in attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, and motivations. On the *group* level we might consider changes in the types of interaction patterns—in communication, methods of conflict resolution, cohesion, unity, competition, and acceptance and rejection patterns. At the level of *organizations*, the scope of change would include alterations in the structure and function of organizations and changes in hierarchy, communication, role relationship, productivity, recruitment, and socialization patterns. At the *institutional* level, change may include alterations in marriage and family patterns, education, and religious practices. At the level of *society*, change may be seen as the modification of the social stratification, economic, and political systems. In the context of the discussion, the level at which change takes place will be easily discernible to the reader.

Now we are getting closer. We know roughly what is changing and at what level. So we might as well be a bit more specific and raise the question, "How long does it take for a certain type of change to come about?" In other words, we are referring to the *rate* of change. That is, at what rate does a specific change take place? The rate of change can be measured by a specific set





of time intervals such as days, months, years, decades, or centuries; or, it can be designated as slow and rapid. Obviously, rate—that is, time in a comparative sense—enters into the study of social change through the use of words such as long-term or short-term, and will be an important consideration in discussing the duration of change.

The *magnitude* of change is somewhat more difficult to delineate. As an illustration, the three-part scheme proposed by Robert Dahl (1967) for measuring the magnitude of political change—incremental or marginal, comprehensive, and revolutionary—is suggested. Incremental or marginal changes would be those that expand, reduce, or otherwise modify the contours of a particular norm or behavior without altering or repudiating its basic substance or structure. There is consensus in the literature that incremental change is the most common and “normal” pattern of change in the United States. Comprehensive changes might represent the culmination of related incremental changes, or, in Dahl’s terms, “sweeping innovations or decisive reversals of established” (1967:264) norms or behavior patterns. Changes of revolutionary magnitude would involve wholesale substitution of one type of norm or behavior for another, and decisive rejection of the original behavior as well.

To round off our contemplations about the nature of change, we need to ask whether a particular change at a particular level is deliberate or unplanned. Deliberate or *planned* social change refers to inventing or developing social technologies consistent with existing social and behavioral knowledge and adequate to the practical and moral requirements of contemporary change situations. At the individual level, for example, it might be changing attitudes and behavior toward minorities. On the organizational level, it may entail attempts to increase efficiency and productivity. At the institutional level, the object may be to create more educational opportunities for disadvantaged students. At the level of society, change may entail the replacement of one political and economic system by another, as evidenced by recent large-scale transformations in Eastern Europe. The unplanned consequences of change include the unanticipated and the dysfunctional results of a planned change. For example, the minimum wage law, providing a minimum hourly wage of \$5.15 in late 1997, was intended to provide unskilled laborers with an income slightly above the poverty level. Unintentionally, however, this provision has contributed to the increase in teenage unemployment, particularly among black youth, and reduced job prospects for low-wage earners. It has also played a role in the increase in the gender wage gap (Shannon, 1996). When the minimum wage increased in the past, employers tended to hire more part-time than full-time workers; and the overall level of hiring was lower (*The Wall Street Journal*, 1987:60).

In sum, when considering social change, it is helpful to specify its identity (what is changing), and to determine its level, rate of change, magnitude, causes, and consequences. With this in mind, let us examine various ways of looking at social change.



CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

There are about as many ways of describing social change as there are ways of studying societies (Chiot, 1986:2). It is a buzz word for politicians, and change is the first thing newly hired administrators talk about. Economists, demographers, anthropologists, political scientists, historians, and sociologists bring their own special disciplines to the diverse conceptualizations of change (see, for example, Lindblom, 1997). Even among sociologists, discussions of social change often begin with complaints about the lack of uniformity concerning the definition of change. The point is well taken, for practically every book on social change has a section on definitions, conditioned by the author's theoretical and ideological orientation, in an attempt to narrow the concept down. There is a multiplicity of such ventures emphasizing different features, and the following sample of definitions will focus on the principal areas of emphasis in the post-Second World War social change literature. The elements that are variously highlighted over time are group activities, structure and functions, and social relationships.

Different Group Activities

In its most concrete sense, social change means that large numbers of people are engaging in group activities and relationships that are different from those in which they or their parents engaged in some time before. As stated by Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills: "By social change we refer to whatever may happen in the course of time to the roles, the institutions, or the orders comprising a social structure, their emergence, growth and decline" (1953:398). Society is a complex network of patterns of relationships in which all the members participate in varying degrees. These relationships change, and behavior changes at the same time. Individuals are faced with new situations to which they must respond. These situations reflect such factors as the introduction of new techniques, new ways of making a living, changes in place of residence, and new innovations, ideas, and social values. Thus, social change means modifications of the way people work, rear a family, educate their children, govern themselves, and seek ultimate meaning in life.

Change in the Structure of Society

Many sociologists view social change as a change in the structure of society or alteration of the social structure such as the structural transformation of small, isolated, and illiterate societies (Riehes, 1995). For instance, Morris Ginsberg (1958:205) writes: "By social change I understand a change in the social structure, for example, the size of a society, the composition or

balance of its parts or the type of its organizations. Examples of such changes are the contraction in the size of the family . . . the breaking up of the domainal economy with the rise of the cities, the transition from 'estates' to social classes. . . ." Viewed from a somewhat different perspective, "Social change is the significant alteration of social structures (that is, of patterns of social action and interaction), including consequences and manifestations of such structures embodied in norms (rules of conduct), values and cultural products and symbols" (Moore, 1968:366).

It is understandable why social structure (patterns of social behavior that include statuses, roles, groups, and institutions such as the family, religion, politics, and the economic system) is being emphasized in change. Social structures are not stable, tightly integrated, or harmonious, but are unstable, loosely put together, and torn by dissension. To ignore this profound phenomenon and process is to miss a central fact about societies.

Change in the Structure and Functioning of Society

Others stress that social change is not only a change in the structure, but also in the functioning of society. "Social change comprises modifications in social systems or subsystems in structure, functioning, or process over some period of time" (Allen, 1971:39). Similarly, "By 'social change' is meant only such alterations as occur in social organization—that is, the structure and functions of society" (Davis, 1949:622). Harry M. Johnson (1960:626, 628) goes into some detail in observing that: "Social change is change in the structure of a social system; what has been stable or relatively unchanging changes. Moreover, of structural changes the most important are those that have consequences for the functioning of the system—for attaining its goals more (or less) efficiently or for fulfilling more (or less) efficiently the conditions that must be met if the system is to survive at all." These classic conceptualizations can be illustrated by the large-scale transformation that took place in Taiwan since the 1960s that have accompanied massive economic development, industrialization, and urbanization (Marsh, 1996).

Change in Social Relationships

Some authors consider social change principally in terms of a specific change in social relationships. For example, "By social change is meant changes in social relationships . . . the changing ways in which human beings relate to one another" (Maclver & Page, 1949:511). A generation later, in the same vein, Judson R. Landis (1974:229) writes: "Social change refers to change in the structure and functioning of the social relationships of a society."





Change in Social Structure and Social Relationships

Ronald Edari (1976:2) combines both elements, social structure and social relationships, in his definition: "When we talk of social change, we mean, at the very minimum, two things: a) the change in the constitution of social entities over time, and b) the change in the relations among entities over time." Taking a somewhat broader and more inclusive view, Robert A. Nisbet (1969:168) views social change as "a succession of differences in time within a persisting identity." Robert H. Lauer (1991:4) considers change as "... an inclusive concept that refers to alterations in social phenomena at various levels of human life from the individual to the global," and John J. Macionis (1997:638) in a popular introductory text simply sums it up as "the transformation of culture and social institutions over time."

A Working Definition of Social Change

A common difficulty with these definitions of social change is the problem of *reification*, the tendency to equate conceptual abstractions of reality with an actual piece of reality. We can isolate the elements emphasized in the definitions, which include the social structure, the functioning of society, social relationships, forms of social processes, and time. But we still have difficulties in understanding what is changing. The term *change* is often used loosely, and as it has been illustrated, attempts at definitions are too numerous and conflicting to be of much help.

At this point, I propose a different approach toward a workable definition of social change. For the present purpose, *social change* is conceptualized as the process of planned or unplanned qualitative or quantitative alterations in social phenomena that can be analyzed in terms of five interrelated components. For the sake of simplicity, these components are called identity, level, duration, magnitude, and rate of change.

Identity of change refers to a specific social phenomenon undergoing transformation such as a definite practice, behavior, attitude, interaction pattern, authority structure, productivity rate, voting pattern, prestige, and stratification system.

Level of change delineates the location in a social system where a particular change takes place. Several levels may be designated such as individual, group, organization, institution, and society.

Duration refers to the question of how long a particular change form endures after it has been accepted. It may refer to the life span of long-term or short-term (transitory) change phenomena.

Magnitude may be based on the three-part scheme of incremental or marginal, comprehensive, and revolutionary changes, as discussed in the preceding section.

Rate of change may be based on any arbitrary scale such as fast or slow, continuous or spasmodic, orderly or erratic.

These dimensions of change are arbitrary and may be construed differently by those who are experiencing it or experimenting with it. However, when specific meanings are assigned to these dimensions, this conceptualization of social change can become a useful point of departure for empirical and theoretical endeavors in social change. With this background, we can now turn to the question: Why is social change inevitable? What is there in the nature of humans, society, and culture that demands and produces change? What are the reasons for the massive social changes we are facing today? What are the sources of change? Many different factors interact to generate changes in people's behavior and in the culture and structure of their society. Many of these factors are critical in making change inevitable and a few of them will be considered briefly in the following pages.

SOURCES OF CHANGE

There are several specific factors that generate changes in society, and an understanding of the different factors relevant to any change is required to be able to initiate and manage them (Perkins, 1997). The ones considered important in the sociological literature include technology, ideology, competition, conflict, political and economic factors, and structural strains. All these sources of change are in many ways interrelated. Economic, political, and technological factors go hand in hand with ideology, competition, conflict, and structural strains. Consequently, one should be careful not to assign undue weight to any particular one of these causes of change. Admittedly, it is often tempting and convenient to single out one "prime mover," one factor, one cause, one explanation, and use it indiscriminately in a number of situations. But this can result in an incomplete and possibly erroneous explanation of the phenomenon under consideration. With this in mind, let us turn to the examination of the sources of change.

Technology

Modern social theory is concerned with the rapidly growing role technology plays in social change (MacKenzie, 1996). By way of illustration, let us turn to David M. Freeman's (1974:12) description of the impact of technology (systematic knowledge, tools, and machines involved in the production of goods and services) by compressing it into a time frame. If we consider the approximately 5-billion-year lifetime of the earth scaled down to the past eighty days, then:

1. Life appeared sixty days ago.
2. Humans in their earliest forms appeared one hour ago.
3. The Stone Age started six minutes ago.





4. Modern humans appeared less than one minute ago.
5. The agricultural revolution occurred fifteen seconds ago.
6. Metals were utilized ten seconds ago.
7. The Industrial Revolution began three-tenths of one second ago.

Technology's capacity to change both the circumstances of human life and the character of social institutions is quite recent and, as the time frame indicates, is occurring at an increasingly rapid rate worldwide.

A noted characteristic of technology is exponential growth, as illustrated by the curve in Figure 1.1. It can be applied to such diverse phenomena as the number of books written, energy consumption, and population growth. Exponential growth is growth that doubles within equal periods of time. Many aspects of modern development exceed this minimum requirement and are doubling in decreasing intervals of time, such as the consumption of energy or the depletion of certain natural resources, such as fossil fuels.

Positive and Negative Features of Technology It is easy to demonstrate that throughout history technological innovations have often been a moving force in social change. For example, changes in agricultural technology resulted in food surpluses necessary for the growth of cities. The introduction of steam power pushed the world into the Industrial Revolution, which altered gender roles, work environments, and many other aspects of culture (see, for example, Goldstone, 1996). Changes in weapon technology often upset empires and nations (the long bow in Europe and the atomic bomb in Japan), and the discovery of the cotton gin revitalized a dying slave trade and helped to plant the seeds for the American Civil War.

The influence of technology reverberates in the lives of individuals in society, in social values, in the structure and functions of social institutions, and in the political organizations of society. Technology creates not only new alternatives and opportunities but also new problems for humans (Mesthene, 1986). It has both positive and negative effects that often occur at the same time. These ramifications can be seen even as a result of minor technological innovations such as the introduction of the snowmobile into northern areas such as Alaska and Lapland. The snowmobile drastically changed patterns of reindeer herding and hunting. It shortened the workweek of the hunters and trappers dramatically, increased their leisure time, increased their earnings, established a new basis for stratification in the community (who owns and who does not own a snowmobile), and it generated a serious ecological imbalance as populations of snowbound game animals were wiped out (Pelto & Muller-Willie, 1987).

The Steel Ax among the Yir Yoront Even the introduction of less sophisticated technology—such as, for example, the steel ax—can create far-reaching and unforeseen effects in other aspects of the social system.

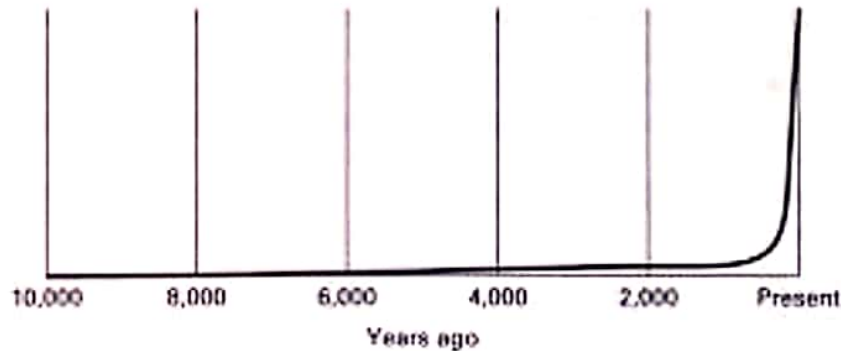


FIGURE 1.1 An exponential growth curve. This curve can be roughly applied to growth in several areas—for example, inventions, energy consumption, or population. For instance, world population growth clearly exhibits exponentiality. At the beginning of the Christian era, there were only 200 to 300 million persons on earth. By 1650, humankind totaled about 500 million. Three hundred years later, in 1950, the figure was more than 2,500 million, and, in 1994, it was over 5,600 million. In the year 2005, the world population is expected to be well over 6,600 million.

Consider the example of the Yir Yoront tribe of southeastern Australia, who depended on the stone ax as their most basic and essential tool for many centuries (Sharp, 1952). For them the stone ax was more than a tool; it was a symbol of status, of male dominance, and of basic rights of ownership. It played a role in religious ceremonies and was considered as one of the tribe's most valued objects. When a person needed an ax, he would approach one of the leaders to ask permission to use it. Only if the leader considered him worthy would permission be granted. The very scarcity of this valuable tool made access to it a considerable privilege; thus, it served as a means of social control.

Then came the Caucasians, bringing modern technology in the form of steel axes. But instead of progress, the introduction of the steel ax resulted in a drastic upheaval of the social structure of the tribe. It had the following effects:

1. In order to get a steel ax, it was necessary to go to the mission or to a trader and act "deserving, industrious, and dependent." That resulted in a decrease in self-reliance.
2. Possession of the ax had been considered a status symbol and a sign of manhood, but the Caucasians at times gave them directly to young men and children, resulting in the upset of status relations between the young and the old.
3. Similarly, in the past no woman could own an ax. Europeans often gave axes to women to use as their own, thereby upsetting the status relations between males and females.



4. Prior to the introduction of the ax, there was no overall leader or chief of the tribe. However, when dealing with the whites, it was necessary to appoint one or two spokesmen, who gradually acquired more power than they were entitled to traditionally, creating a leader-group form of organization in the tribe.

5. Easy access to axes diluted the entire notion of ownership and upset the norms of ownership, thus resulting in an increase in the incidence of stealing and trespassing.

6. Members of the tribe had explained the origins of every major artifact they possessed with some myth showing how the article was given to them by a distant mythical ancestor. Because they had very few artifacts and their technology was virtually stagnant, it was quite easy for them to believe in these stories. However, there was no mythical explanation for the origins of steel axes; the source was obvious. The result was to cast suspicion on the other myths and on the very structure of their religion.

In contemporary society, it is hard to find such dramatic changes in the social systems produced by one single piece of technology such as the steel ax among the Yir Yoront tribe. The closest we could come would be the number of changes followed by the series of technological innovations known as the Industrial Revolution. The basis of one's livelihood moved from the farm to the factory and from the country to the city. The size of individual enterprise changed as new methods of operation and financing became necessary to exploit technological innovation, resulting in the establishment of entirely new industries. The twentieth century has seen the rise of such mass complexes as the automobile, steel, rubber, glass, petroleum, and textile industries and, more recently, the chemical, aviation, and electronics industries. In a society increasingly dominated by mass industries, new social classes reflect the different productive functions. The big industrial unions are playing an important role in bringing about new power relations between labor and management.

Technology and Work The spread of technological and scientific developments in the workplace has been accompanied by a variety of changes. In analyzing how technological forces influence human activities, Neil J. Smelser (1976:96) suggests the following:

1. The technical arrangements of work determine in large part the amount of physical exertion required from the human organism.
2. The technical features of the job influence the degree to which work is paced and human activities are structured.
3. The technical arrangements of production influence the level of skills required of workers.

4. Technical aspects determine in part the degree of specialization of the division of labor and the structuring of authority.
5. Technological features of work influence the character of social interaction. . . . This influence often extends to off-the-job interaction as well.

The change from human to machine technology has transformed work in the industrial era. It resulted in the imposition of a steady pace or rhythm for work, bringing with it an increase in the discipline imposed on workers. This was the result of the need for the uninterrupted flow of material and the fact that workers must be organized around the machines' schedule. Because of the imposition of a steady pace and discipline, workers and work became increasingly time-oriented, which in turn affected other aspects of nonwork time (Linder, 1970).

When the technical aspects of work are highly routinized, monotonous, and devoid of much personal interaction, such as on the assembly lines in an automobile factory, Robert Blauner (1964:15–34) notes that workers become *alienated*, to the extent that they are *powerless* at carrying out their work (that is, they have no control over quantity, quality, direction, and pace of work), or to the extent that their work is *meaningless* (that is, it has no clear relation to a broader life program or production program), or to the extent that they are *self-estranged* (they do not identify with their work or enjoy it or find it challenging), or to the extent that they are socially *isolated* from their supervisors and co-workers.

Technological developments can also bring about alterations in the composition of the workforce. Of the 19 million new jobs created in the United States during the 1970s, only a small percentage was in the manufacturing sector. Almost 90 percent of the jobs—some 17 million new openings—were in the service and information sectors (Naisbitt, 1982:17). Many of the new jobs that were created in the nonmanufacturing sector are attributable to the significant advances made in computer technology in recent years and the increased utilization of microcomputers in the workforce, which requires specially trained workers (*Economist*, 1984a:2–22).

In addition to changes in the labor force, countless social effects can be attributed directly or indirectly to innovations in technology. For example, with the introduction of computers, microwave transmissions, television, and satellites, we have moved from a state of information scarcity to one of information surplus, and now we are producing information much faster than we can process it. This creates what one author calls "data smog" (Shenk, 1997) resulting in increased stress or "technostress" (Weil & Rosen, 1997), memory overload, compulsive behavior, and attention deficit disorder. Many other effects will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7. Technology's capacity to contribute to social change is increasing worldwide, with a much more rapid rate of growth in developing countries (Bernard & Peltó, 1987). In the following section, another important source of change, ideology, will be examined.





Ideology

An *ideology* is a complex belief system that explains social and political arrangements and relationships (Baradat, 1994; Feuer, 1975; Funderburk & Thobaben, 1994; Gouldner, 1976; McCarthy, 1994) and underlies all social and political discourse and actions (Freire & Macedo, 1998). The functions of ideology are the legitimization and rationalization of behavior and social relationships; the provision of a basis for solidarity in a group or society; and the motivation of individuals for certain types of action. In social change, the role of ideology can be analyzed different ways. It can promote stability and support the status quo, or it can contribute to change. It may be either a dependent or independent variable in accounting for any process of stability or change. In this section, ideology will be examined only as a source of change.

Ideology and Change Max Weber's highly influential study of the development of capitalism represents one of the most thorough efforts yet made to establish a relationship between ideology and social change. As discussed in the section on social-psychological theories of change, Weber wanted to establish the principle that ideas as well as technological developments and economic structures could be determining factors in bringing about change. To do this, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1958), he set out to identify the major factors responsible for the rise of capitalism as it had developed in Western societies—the type of capitalism characterized by double-entry bookkeeping, uniform pricing, systematic planning, and bureaucratic social organization.

Weber acknowledged that the development of industrial technology increased agricultural productivity, and improvements in sanitation, preventive medicine, and better methods of transportation had all been necessary to the development of capitalism, but he found the determining factor not in science or technology but in what he called "the Protestant ethic." Calvinism, Weber maintained, made possible the emergence of capitalism by providing people in Western societies with a new "this-worldly" orientation. In focusing their attention on such values as individualism, hard work, and frugality, it paved the way for a major restructuring of economic life.

More than a century ago, Karl Marx argued that the ruling ideas of any society are the ideas of its ruling classes. His point was that ideologies do not fall from the sky, nor are they "things" that have a life of their own. Ideologies must be developed and maintained; an ideology must be transmitted to new generations or it will soon perish; and the implications of an ideology for specific issues and events must be determined and communicated because powerful groups and institutions are better able to succeed in this process than are less-powerful groups. It is often their ideologies that are propagated.

Perhaps the best case for demonstrating the independent role of ideologies in social change at the macrolevel is Marxism.

As an ideology, as an active critic of established "capitalist" values and norms, and as the active propagator of "socialist" values and norms, Marxism may have caused more social change than any other force in the modern world. In both industrial and would-be industrial societies, its consequences have been very great. Only nationalist ideology, which is also a powerful and independent type of ideological system in the modern world and which the universalistic values expressed in Marxism have consistently neglected or underrated, might be said to have had an influence on modern social change of the same magnitude as Marxism. It can be argued that Marxist and nationalist ideologies together have caused as much social change as changes arising in the economy or polity. (Barber, 1971:260)

At this point, it should be noted that since the eighteenth century, social theorists are divided on the question of the relative importance of ideology and technology in social change and the division has continued down to the present day. Many have argued for the dominance of ideology while others for the greater importance of technology (Nolan & Lenski, 1996).

The Ideology of the Conjugal Family At a somewhat lesser degree of comprehensiveness in social systems, in the structure of family systems "we can again see the independent influence of ideology on social change, in the case of the worldwide change toward prevalence of the conjugal family" (Barber, 1971:260). William J. Goode (1963:19) provides a great deal of evidence both for the change and for the influence of ideology.

One important source of change is the ideology of "economic progress" and technological development, as well as the ideology of the conjugal family, and spokesmen for both appear in non-Western countries before any great changes are observable either in industrial or family areas of life.

Elders may deplore both ideologies, but both appeal to the intellectuals, often trained in Western schools, and to the young, to women, and generally, to the disadvantaged. The ideology of the conjugal family is a radical one, destructive of the older traditions in almost every society. It grows from a set of more general radical principles which also arouse these groups politically in perhaps every underdeveloped country. Its appeal is almost as universal as that of "redistribution of the land." It asserts the equality of individuals as against class, caste, or sex barriers.

The ideology of the conjugal family proclaims the right of the individual to choose his or her own spouse, place to live, and even which kin obligations to accept, as against the acceptance of others' decisions. It asserts the worth of the individual as against the inherited elements of wealth or ethnic group. The individual is to be evaluated, not his lineage. A strong theme of "democracy" runs through this ideology. It encourages love, which in every major civiliza-



tion has been given a prominent place in fantasy, poetry, art, and legend, as a wonderful, perhaps even exalted, experience, even when its reality was guarded against. Finally, it asserts that if one's family life is unpleasant, one has the right to change it.

Utopian Ideologies Sir Thomas More's famous book *Utopia* was published in 1516. It described an ideal society. Since that time, thousands of utopian schemes have been proposed on the basis of ideologies that "justify or criticize an imagined social system in which new values and norms prevail in a way that seems to current common sense knowledge or social science knowledge to be impossible" (Barber, 1971:262).

An example of utopian ideology is the Platonic ideology criticizing the conjugal family as a bastion of social inequality and recommending a familyless society. This system of sexual sharing has been tried repeatedly in contemporary communes. Among the several American communities that attempted to do away with sexual exclusiveness, only the Oneida community (we shall examine it in detail in Chapter 5), which flourished in upper New York State in the mid-nineteenth century, persisted for any length of time. Even though this Platonic ideology for a familyless society may not bring about the abolition of the conjugal family, it may aid in changes that could reduce the inequalitarian effects of the family, changes such as making property inheritance or access to education more equal.

A utopian ideology may still have considerable effects for social change, short of full realization of the utopia itself. "Utopian ideologies are exceptionally dramatic and often powerful systems of ideas that at least tell us the social directions our values and norms do or do not prefer" (Barber, 1971:262). Historically, several utopian ideologies contributed to major changes. The early ideology of Christianity is still with us; the Anabaptist ideology that preceded the Reformation in Germany generated a tradition that has survived to this day among pietist communities like the Amish and the Hutterites (Rise & Steinmetz, 1956). The Zionist ideology in the early twentieth century fostered the formation of a type of utopian community called the *kibbutz*, and there are more than 200 of these communities in modern Israel (Spiro, 1956). Finally, in recent years, utopian ideologies resulted in the formation of utopian communities in the United States for such diverse purposes as sexual sharing, political indoctrination, the practice of Buddhism, and the rehabilitation of drug addicts.

Utopian ideology also plays an important part in the strategy of social change; "... inventing and designing the shape of the future by extrapolating what we know of in the present is to envision a direction for planning and action in the present. If the image of a potential future is convincing and rationally persuasive to men in the present, the image may become part of the dynamics and motivation of present action" (Chun & Benne, 1985:30). We shall return to this point in the discussion of strategies of social change.



Political Ideologies Of all types of ideologies, and there are many, political ideologies have an impact on the principal institutions of society (Baradat, 1994; Funderburk & Thobaben, 1994). They are the source for action and, as such, perhaps the most important source of social change. The degree to which individuals ascribe to any political ideology affects their perception of the social structure and their notion of reality, which in turn guides their behavior. Examples of the main types of political ideologies include *communism* (a classless society in which private ownership of production ended, the state withered away along with other major institutions, and alienation ended); *democratic socialism* (a movement striving to attain the goals of socialism within the context of representative constitutional government); *liberalism* (there are two broad types: (1) *classical*, emphasizing the ideology of individualism, private property, and limited government and (2) *modern*, which strives to use social programs to create conditions conducive to individual development in the context of private property and constitutional government); *conservatism* (contending that liberty, private property, and constitutional government is best conserved by emphasizing tradition, stability, and very gradual social and political change); and *authoritarianism* (in which power is concentrated in the hands of a few, usually military, clerical, or political elites).

Competition

Competition in society arises from the scarcity of goods, statuses, and services that are universally desired. In the struggle for scarce commodities, competition is usually restrained by tradition, custom, or law. Because these limiting factors keep it within bounds, unrestricted competition is seldom found in actual behavior (Cvitkovic, 1993). Competition is an impersonal struggle for limited ends in accordance with socially prescribed rules. The goals of competition are likewise socially defined. Competition is both an effect and a cause of social change. It is an effect, in that a changing society has more goals open to competition than a static society. It causes social change by forcing individuals to adopt new forms of behavior to attain desired goals.

Competition for scarce resources has been an ever-present feature of human societies. Marx and the socialistic philosophers condemned competition—in particular, capitalistic competition—as a means for exploiting the worker. On the other hand, evolutionists such as William Graham Sumner and Herbert Spencer, as it will be discussed in Chapter 2, have lauded competition as the means whereby selection and progress were achieved. The renowned German sociologist Georg Simmel believed that “competition is endemic in any organization,” and he seriously doubted “the ability of either capitalistic or socialistic organizations to reduce competition significantly” (Duke, 1976:107).



Competition is present in a number of social arrangements. Competition between business firms for markets and profits is an inherent part of capitalism. Historically, the concept of competition was used to justify reduced hours of work, business opposition to unions, wage increases, paid vacations, health and safety regulations, antipollution laws, and so on (Rinehart, 1995). It is also evident among government agencies as they compete for a share of the tax dollar or among religious organizations as they compete for members and their support. (Religious and other voluntary organizations must also compete with alternative organizations for membership and money.) Competition to a great extent controls the organization's "choice of goals," in that its energies must be turned to their competitive activity.

Thus, competition can result in changes within the competing organizations. When there are competitors in the environment who could reduce the security, prestige, and profit of an organization, it can be expected that the organization will take action to overcome the threat from the competition (Hall, 1996:110-112). Such action would entail a greater emphasis on the security of the organization, evidenced in a variety of ways such as greater stress on employee loyalty, efficiency in the work process, and added emphasis on protecting confidential material. There is also a greater tendency to monitor the environment, especially the competing segments of that environment, that can produce changes in the principal activities and the internal normative structure (policies, rules, departmentalization, positions) of the organization. It can also result in increased manipulation of the environment, which may be seen in the form of lobbying, political sabotage, or even in such efforts as contributing time and money to such civic efforts as the United Way campaign. It can also result in attempts to either absorb or banish the competition (Hetzler, 1969:250). Thus, competition can force an organization to change its character to become more complex and more dynamic, thereby influencing the internal structure of organizations.

In sum, when competition is carried out legitimately for the allocation of scarce resources, it can be seen as an effective instrument of social change with positive results: "... a regenerative force that interjects new vitality into a social structure and becomes the basis of social reorganization" (Blau, 1967:301). In the next section, we examine a form of competition called conflict.

Conflict

Both competition and conflict are characterized by an attempt of two or more parties to reach certain objectives. But the two terms are not identical. Parties in a competition are seeking the same goal, and they must abide by the rules. Parties in a *conflict* believe they have incompatible goals, and often it involves attempts by adversaries to threaten, injure, or otherwise coerce



each other (Kriesberg, 1982:17; Rubin, et al., 1994:5-6). Unlike competition, which is continuous and impersonal, conflict is conscious, intermittent, and personal. The emotions of distrust, hatred, suspicion, and fear are accentuated in conflict. Conflict emphasizes the differences between parties and minimizes their similarities (Lulops, 1994).

Conflict is omnipresent in human societies. "The inevitability of conflict derives from mankind's innumerable and changing needs: if starvation is ended, men will fight for prestige; if one power system is destroyed, another emerges; if authority is eradicated, men will compete for precedence. There will be always a scarcity of 'commodities'—whether it be money, prestige, power, love—that will continue to set man against man. Therefore, all men will experience some form of conflict during their lifetime" (McCord & McCord, 1977:4). Conflict may occur among individuals in organizations, in institutions, in communities, in societies, or among nations. It is considered to be endemic to all social relations.

According to John Howard (1974:3-4), *substantive conflict* centers around the distribution of highly valued and scarce resources. He identifies three other bases of conflict: *conflict over symbolic issues*, as in the refusal to pledge alliance to the national flag; the *conflict of ideologies*, such as sexism and racism, which have been created to justify the advantages of various groups; and *cultural conflict*, resulting from differences in lifestyles and values, such as the repudiation of middle-class lifestyles by many American youth in the 1960s.

As it will be pointed out in the section on theories of conflict in Chapter 2, conflict should not be construed solely as having negative connotations. It can have many other consequences. For example, groups in conflict are likely to increase their internal solidarity and minimize intragroup disagreements. Conflict may also be a factor in the creation of innovative or creative strategies of benevolent intentions, and conflicting situations may result in various forms of accommodation or adjustment or other efforts to compromise or to alleviate tensions and underlying causes.

Conflicts are of primary significance in social change of and within a system (Coser, 1974). But the relationships between conflict and social change are neither simple nor always direct. Although conflict is an important source of change, change may occur without conflict. When conflict does result in change, that particular change may not be seen as desirable by those who are affected by it. The conditions under which conflict impels or impedes change, and those under which it impels change in a socially desirable direction, have yet to be indicated (Lauer, 1991). But, as Coser writes, "What is important for us is the idea that conflict prevents the ossification of the social system by exerting pressure for innovation and creativity" (1974:458). Conflict can generate new social norms and institutions and it may be directly stimulating in the economic and technologic realm (Carty & Singer, 1993). In the Marxian framework, total social systems undergo transformation through conflict.



In some conflict-laden situations, however, a relationship may be established between certain types of conflict conditions and the specific changes they have produced. Louis Kriesberg (1982:246–258), who systematically gathered evidence on the emergence of social conflicts and the processes of their escalation and de-escalation, gives some illustrative outcomes for conflict situations between workers and managers, university students and administrators, blacks and whites, females and males, and in the international arena. To Kriesberg's list, we can add the various conflicts that arose across Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union as a result of the sudden economic and political changes that took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Arnason, 1993).

Workers versus Managers The principal objective of trade unions has been to improve the working conditions and raise the wages of their members. The turbulent years of the unionization movement have produced a series of changes (Jacobs, 1994). There has been a general increase in the material well-being of the workers in an absolute sense: Working conditions have improved; fringe benefits have increased; the number of hours at work has decreased; and, in general, the prestige of blue-collar workers has gone up over the years. Similarly, in Western European countries, there have been some important gains. In France, for example, truck drivers and employees of the national railroads can retire with full benefits at the age of 55; in the event of a layoff in Germany, the former employee will receive 78 percent of wages for two years and generous benefits after that; in the Netherlands, workers with a 20 percent disability will receive 70 percent of their previous wage (Sawyer, 1997:4B). However, as Kriesberg points out, "More fundamental changes in the structure of the economy, the role of workers in it, and income differentials between workers and managers, were not sought by most trade unions and did not occur" (1982:247).

University Students versus Administrators Although university students have been engaged in conflict over community, national, and international issues ever since the 1960s, there are also more recent conflicts about the role of the university in international, national, and community affairs. These include university investment policies, such as those involving South Africa; research activities that have military implications, such as the Strategic Defense Initiative (the so-called Star Wars program aimed at developing a space-based defense against ballistic missiles); and certain types of university expansions involving the relocation of impoverished local residents. Other conflicts are related to academic matters, such as the relevance of certain courses or programs, methods of teaching, grading, student involvement in promotion and tenure decisions, dormitory rules, censorship of student publications, control over university organizations, and the treatment of students who are members of minority groups.



By the end of the 1960s, major changes had occurred on campuses. Dormitory rules were relaxed so that in many places members of the opposite sex were permitted not only to visit but to stay overnight; consumption of alcoholic beverages was allowed; administrative control over student publications declined (Vago, 1997:266–270); and important changes took place in curriculum and grading procedures. Special programs in black studies, women's studies, and environmental studies had been added to the curriculum on many campuses. Grading has been relaxed, language requirements for doctoral programs have been eliminated, and new options such as the pass-or-fail system or credit for "real-life" experience have been introduced. Some universities have terminated their contracts with the federal government or with private industries because of activities considered undesirable by students.

In general, students have gained more direct control of university affairs, particularly as they relate to internal matters. They serve on various committees, in some cases as voting members. In some instances, they also participate in faculty recruitment, promotion, and tenure procedures. Kriesberg (1982:249) warns, however, that "It would be an error . . . to regard all these changes as the product of a simple conflict between students and administrators and faculty in which coercion was the sole or even dominant way of changing the other side's position." To a considerable extent, these changes have reflected the dominant ideas in society, ideas that students have helped to formulate. Some of these changes also reflect nonconflicting forces, such as the change in the economy and in the population of students, who then instigated changes in the curriculum as a form of market response.

Blacks versus Whites As a consequence of the racial conflict of the 1960s, there have been important collective gains for blacks (Kriesberg, 1982:250–252). Examples of these aggregate gains include the increase in educational opportunities and attainment; a reduction of income differences between blacks and whites; and a drop in the proportion of blacks below the poverty level. In 1996, about 85 percent of blacks have finished high school, 32 percent attended college, and 14 percent have a college degree. For the same year, 92 percent of whites are high school graduates, 29 percent attended college, and 30 percent have a college degree. About 63 percent of blacks age 16 and over are in the labor force, compared with 67 percent of whites. Per capita income for the same period for blacks was \$10,982, compared with \$19,759 for whites.

Changes took place in the structure of dominance (Moland, 1996), and there has also been an increase in the collective political power of blacks, especially in the South, in major urban areas, and in the Congress. Although it is true that the day-to-day life of many blacks has not changed, or has improved only marginally in spite of the massive efforts and major legislation, commentators maintain that many genuinely significant changes have



taken place (see, for example, Jones & Morris, 1993). Still, according to a 1997 Gallup Organization poll, a majority of Americans are pessimistic that blacks and whites will ever learn to get along—55 percent of both blacks and whites believe that relations between whites and blacks will “always be a problem” in the United States (Society, 1997:2).

Females versus Males Not long ago, it was argued without embarrassment that if a man was paid more than a woman for doing the same job, it was because he had a family to support; that if a stewardess was fired at the age of 30, she shouldn't want to be flying anyway; and that women just weren't cut out to be cops, soldiers, or marathon runners. That these arguments have been resolved in women's favor is one of the biggest changes of our times. In effect, the debate about whether women should have equal pay, opportunities, and responsibilities is over.

The collective status of women in recent decades has changed in many ways as a result of their struggle for equality. Women, for the most part, have widened their choices to include not only the role of wife and mother but also a dazzling array of formerly male-dominated professions. Today, well over one-fifth of all lawyers and physicians are women, as are nearly half of all managers and administrators. More than half of the nation's largest companies have at least one woman director (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 1994). Women undergraduate students outnumber their male counterparts. For the first time in American history, a woman appeared on the presidential ticket of a major political party in 1984. As the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, Geraldine Ferraro heralded new opportunities for women in the political process. The number of women holding state and local public offices is rapidly increasing, and at the beginning of the 103d Congress in 1993, there were 54 women, compared with 30 at the start of the 102d in 1991 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997:281, 285). Of course, not all of the changes have been positive. Women are still at a pay disadvantage; although from 1979 to 1993, women's median earnings rose from 62 percent of men's to 77 percent, reflecting women's greater opportunities, education, and work experience. By 1997, the trend reversed, and the median weekly earnings of full-time working women decreased to 75 percent as a result of shifts in the workforce, such as greater concentration of women in lower-paying jobs, partly as a result of the welfare reform of 1997 (Lewin, 1997). It is interesting to note that women make more than men in less than 16 percent of all couples (Roberts, 1994). Women's overall physical health has deteriorated relative to men's in recent years. Women are suffering from more ulcers and respiratory ailments than ever before. They also experience a higher incidence of stress and stress-related illnesses. In a sense, they are adopting lifestyles that affect adversely their longevity. American women of the late 1990s continue to perform more household tasks than men and balance between caregiving and breadearning roles. Women still continue to respect their traditional



roles at home despite increased gender equality. However, equal standing and economic independence led to an increase in divorce, out-of-wedlock childbearing, and same-sex relationships (Bianchi & Spain, 1996).

International Conflicts The most obvious manifestation of conflict at the international level is war (see, for example, Betts, 1994; Fukuyama, 1997; Wait, 1996). The twentieth century has already had more than 200 wars, resulting in a loss of almost 80 million lives. This is in addition to the mass killings of 20 million in the former Soviet Union under Stalin's reign of terror, 1936–1953, and another 20 million during Mao's Cultural Revolution in China between 1966 and 1976 (Masland, 1994). The two world wars alone took over 50 million lives. Two-thirds of the countries of the world, some 97 percent of the global population, have been involved in at least one war in this century (Sivard, 1987:9).

There are many causes of such conflict: War may be triggered by a dispute over a soccer match, as was the case between Honduras and El Salvador. On the other hand, it could be the result of economic expansion; of scarcity of land or resources; or a series of other factors. Most of the armed conflicts that had arisen since the end of the Cold War have been within nations, between peoples with ethnic or religious differences who are seeking national identities (Shultz, 1995).

The consequences of such hostilities are too well known to catalogue here. However, some of the major change-producing effects of war can be seen in the development of new technologies, in the formation of new political systems, in the reorganization of existing institutions, in the redistribution of wealth, in the redrawing of political boundaries, and in the changes in the composition of the labor force.

Conflict in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union The rapid collapse of the power structures and capitulations of the power elites in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s came as a surprise to most observers. The changes in Eastern Europe, from Communist control to multiparty democracy and from command economy to the free market, could not have been more extreme (Pridham & Vanhanen, 1994). Yet they happened in a very short time. One of the results of the rapid transformations was the emergence of political, economic, religious, and ethnic conflicts. Nationalistic extreme-right sentiments and prejudices are on the rise, and, when misused, they can lead to discrimination, "ethnic cleansing," and full-scale wars (Hockenjos, 1994). In the case of Yugoslavia, these conflicts culminated in a vicious civil war in which tens of thousands of people were killed and injured and millions dislocated. Tensions between Romanians and ethnic Hungarians have erupted in fighting on occasion and have cooled relations between Hungary and Romania. Some groups in Romania also claim that the former Soviet state of Moldova belongs to Romania. In



Poland, Romania, Ukraine, and other former Soviet republics, Jews have been the victims of discrimination and are once again the scapegoats for economic problems—in the same manner as during World War II under the Nazis. The two separate republics of Czech and Slovak (formerly Czechoslovakia) are still trying to define their relationship, and ethnic tension is mounting in Slovakia against the remaining Czechs and the large numbers of Gypsies and other ethnic minorities.

On the economic front, the countries are facing growing inflation, unemployment, and growing polarization of classes. To varying extents, all of the Eastern European governments have debts of billions of dollars. The prospects of additional loans of any magnitude are slim, which slows down the transition to capitalism. The countries are producing less and less because of antiquated technology, and they cannot compete with the West, reducing national wealth across the board (Perlez, 1994). They are faced with a shortage of hard currency, and, to make matters worse, all of the Eastern European countries had to lift the price controls that had been the norm under Communism. Subsidies on basics such as food and fuel were terminated, and prices rose rapidly. As a result, in the early 1990s, inflation ranged from 40 percent in Hungary, 400 percent in Romania, to 2,000 percent in Russia (Ryckman, 1994).

The Eastern bloc countries also began to experience unemployment for the first time on a large scale. Under Communism, everyone had a job, and basic security was assured at the cost of inefficiency of industry. When companies were privatized and the public sector industries struggled to reduce costs, jobs were eliminated. Unemployment rates of 15 to 25 percent became common. In Russia, for example, there is a tenfold increase in families living below the poverty line, and mortality rate is up 35 percent compared with the pre-1989 rate. The state of public health is a horror story. In Moscow, 50 percent of the youth are unfit for military duty, and only 15 percent of the high school graduates are classified as healthy. Half of the 4.5 million children below the age of two do not receive adequate nutrition (Remnick, 1997). By 1992, the homicide rate per 100,000 reached twice that of the United States and is still rising, along with organized crime (Crossette, 1994). Organized crime cells that saw their beginnings in black market operations in the Soviet Union grew into complex criminal enterprises of fraud and extortion, often reaching into the United States and Western Europe (Myers, 1996).

The class divisions are deepening, and the rising disparities between the rich and the poor are offensive in a society in which everyone once lived equally. A small percentage of the newly rich engage in conspicuous consumption, their purchases ranging from expensive automobiles to French wines, while the rest of the population can barely meet their basic needs. The empty shops, a common sight under Communism, are now full of Western goods. However, real wealth has decreased, and fewer people can afford the



goods that are finally available. Spending power in the region is falling dramatically, and it could lead to increasing social and political unrest that might threaten the stability of the whole of Europe.

The end of Communist rule and the rise of market forces not only changed the political and economic life of the states of Central and Eastern Europe but radically altered personal relations as well. Friendships were sorely tested or broken as people's priorities changed. There was less and less time to spend with friends, and, as the price controls were lifted, less money was available to spend in a restaurant or theater. People became more self-reliant, and, in some places, considerably more aggressive. Relationships became more contractual, with a greater reliance on formal mechanisms of dispute resolution. Crime rates have soared as a result of amnesties, unemployment, and open borders, which enabled everyone, from petty criminals to organized crime bosses, to look for new opportunities. Not surprisingly, more and more people are nostalgic about the old regime, and an increasing number of the former elite is returning to power—but through a democratic process.

In sum, conflict is an endemic and omnipresent feature of human societies. It is a crucial impetus for innovation and change for groups that are driven to seek a competitive advantage in conflict. Conflict can also provide the impetus for change by producing loyalty, solidarity, and cohesiveness in social groups that unite in the face of an antagonist. In the next section, a potentially conflict-laden mechanism of change—polity—will be considered.

Polity

Politics is basically a process of authoritatively deciding who gets what, when, and how (Lasswell, 1958). Those with political power have the ability to control or influence the allocation of resources—which affect people's life chances—through the political process (Etzioni-Halevy, 1981:151). In the United States, polity is organized at three levels—federal, state, and local—and each consists of executive, legislative, and judicial branches. At a given time, any branch of government at any level may be actively seeking to maintain stability or to foster change in particular areas of American life. For the moment, only the latter will be considered.

Polity has traditionally played an important part in fostering change both nationally and internationally (Lebow, 1997). At times, the goals were specific and often were those being advocated by local or regional interests. They involved, among other things, land acquisition and suppression of native Americans; the building of roads and railroads; the encouragement of manufacturing; the irrigation of the land; the development of land grant colleges; the exploration of new lands; and the education of children. More recently, there have been attempts to provide financial security for the





elderly and adequate health care for all. Attempts have been made also to alter long-standing patterns of inequality between whites and blacks and males and females, and to improve the economic status of recent immigrants (Issel, 1985).

The volume of activities undertaken by modern governments is greater, and the range of such activities is broader than it ever was before. Governments bring about change through the processes of distribution, regulation, and redistribution (Lowi, 1964). This classification depends upon the number of people affected and their relationships with one another. *Distribution* may involve relatively small numbers of people; it may include government contracts, public works projects, and industries that will bring new wealth to an area. *Regulation* deals with the restriction or limitation of the actions of others; it may include issues such as labor-management relations and protection of the consumer and the environment. *Redistribution* calls for the transfer of resources among or between large groups or classes in society. Illustrations of this include graduated income taxes and other public policies intended to transfer resources from one group to another, for example, from the "haves" to the "have-nots." There is, however, a tendency in political systems and subsystems to develop a "mobilization of bias" (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970)—that is, a set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals, and formal and informal institutional procedures that operate systematically and consistently to benefit some people and groups at the expense of others. Those who benefit most can defend and promote their vested interests. Usually, the status quo defenders are also the group with the most power. For example, the history of blacks' demands for access to effective problem-solving apparatus by polity validates this perspective.

It should also be noted that "The structures of power in which the political process takes place offer an explanation not only of how change originates and what direction it takes, but also why it is necessary. Power always implies non-power and therefore resistance. The dialectic of power and resistance is the motive force of history. From the interests of those in power at a given time we can infer the interests of the powerless, and with them the direction of change" (Dahrendorf, 1973:502). In the United States, this has been illustrated by several developments, such as the war, or attempted war, on poverty, the conflict that is intensifying among the haves and have-nots, and the existing contradictions among racial and ethnic groups.

At all levels and branches of polity, new programs and activities are initiated on a regular basis. The impetus for these may come from within the polity or from without. There are specific demands, such as hot-lunch programs in schools or increased regulation of insurance companies, or general demands requesting the polity to "get moving" to earn its keep, to work for the common good. In the United States, "Government is supposed to have programs. Agencies are supposed to do something, to advance toward some



goals. A government with no program is a bad government. An agency without a program is a bad or stagnant agency. Government then takes great pains to show what it is doing. A flock of new programs are announced each year, guaranteed to help the nation or the world. When a new government takes office or when a new man takes the helm at an agency, program-mongering becomes more acute" (Friedman, 1975:190).

These activities may result in a series of palliative or placating measures, or they may produce creative incremental measures that may "breed new possibilities for subsequent radical change, although at the moment of adoption they appear quite modest" (Goulet, 1973:295).

The polity continuously fosters change in society at various levels. Its role obviously varies from situation to situation. On the institutional level, in the context of economic development, Szymon Chodak (1973:247) identifies three ways in which polity can induce change:

1. The polity can create conditions supportive of economic development without interfering in the actual course of economic activities. This would mean support of trade, business, entrepreneurial, and other activities while safeguarding private capital, investments, and the rights of ownership. This takes place during the early stages of capitalism.
2. The polity can regulate some economic activities such as the protection of workers and farmers, but the market retains its competitive character. This is illustrative of advanced capitalism.
3. The polity engages directly in the planning and implementing of economic development by becoming owners of economic enterprises, as evidenced by the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries.

In addition to these activities, the polity can stimulate change in developing countries by regulating incentives, controlling prices and trade, and by helping individuals to liberate themselves from traditional kinship, village, or tribal ties. In essence, it entails the provision of welfare and related services that were traditionally provided by one's extended family. Finally, it facilitates integration of society through conflict regulation and accommodation of diverse demands.

In sum, some of the most far-reaching changes have occurred in recent decades in societies that are in the process of development. In modern industrial societies, changes instigated by the polity are principally distributive, regulative, and redistributive in nature.

The Economy

Economic systems have a variety of extraeconomic consequences and play a major role in social change (Lobao & Rulli, 1996). Their importance



varies from theorist to theorist, but in general there is agreement that, indeed, economic forces shape and guide our lives. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, Marx argued that the manner in which people obtain their livelihood determines the way they establish their programs of justice, religion, kinship, education, and other social institutions. He pointed to the mode of production and stated that it determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes in society. His idea of economic determinism is still an influential one with a substantial number of followers. However, economic forces are only one of the several factors that seem central in initiating and directing social change. Therefore, instead of describing how economic conditions are seen as "prime movers," the emphasis on the following pages will be on illustrating how economic factors foster change in specific walks of life rather than contributing to the transformation of entire societies.

In the United States, business, industry, and finance are considered to be the great sources of change and progress. They are supported by a strong ideology of free enterprise, which is evident throughout our economic institutions. In many ways, change is built into daily life as part of the economic system.

An important aspect of the economy is the division of labor. One's occupation, particularly in the middle class, is decisive, for it provides the person with a certain level of monetary reward, power, and prestige. Increased demand for products and increased specialization to meet those demands have greatly contributed to the growth in the division of labor and the number of occupations. The *1992 Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, the latest issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, for example, includes comprehensive descriptions of job duties and related information for over 20,000 occupations in the United States. The degree of specialization is almost as infinite, as is shown in the following illustration:

In the baking industry one can make a living as a cracker breaker, meringue spreader, a pie stripper, or pan dumper. In the slaughter or meat-packing industry one can specialize as: a large stock scalper, belly shaver, crotch buster, gut snatcher, gut sorter, snout puller, ear cutter, eyelid remover, stomach washer (sometimes called belly pumper), hindleg toenail puller, frontleg toenail puller, and oxtail washer. (Wilensky, 1967:78-79)

Increased differentiation in the economic sphere in turn brings about increased differentiation in stratification patterns. One's class position, in turn, determines one's lifestyle, values, interaction patterns, power, mobility—in short, one's life chances. Economic factors thus condition the distribution of rewards and the allocation of status and prestige. They also contribute to the differentiation between the haves and the have-nots (that is, inequality) both within and between societies. For example, the gap in per capita income between the industrial and developing worlds tripled between 1960 and 1993, from \$5,700 to \$15,400 (Speth, 1996). As it will be fur-

ther discussed in Chapter 4, today the net worth of the world's 358 richest people is equal to the combined income of the poorest 45 percent of the world's population—about 2.3 billion people.

Economic factors contribute to inequality, which, in turn, begets other forms of inequality that are likely to increase further economic inequality. Economic surpluses have long been considered as a basis for stratification and in the creation of inequality (Lenski, 1966). Jonathan H. Turner and Charles Starnes (1976:3), using the United States as an example, note that economic surplus creates distribution problems, which lead people to compete for the surplus. Those who win in this competition are able to buy power that can be used to maintain or increase their advantage. Once power is bought, there is a decrease of reliance on force, and the emphasis switches to the legitimization of inequality by the use of ideas in order to mitigate inherent conflicts of interest between the privileged and those who are less privileged. Because those who are better off need not expend their resources on forcing acceptance of their privilege, they can now use their increased power to gather more of the economic surplus.

In addition to changes in the division of labor and stratification patterns, economic factors can literally make or break communities through the creation of markets, industries, employment opportunities, or through their manipulation. In a classic study, W. Fred Cottrell (1974) examines one change in the basic economic institution of a community and traces the effects of it throughout the social structure. He has chosen a one-industry town where other economic considerations would not enter to complicate the case.

Caliente, as Cottrell called the town, came into existence in order to service the steam locomotive, which, in the beginning, required frequent stops. The city grew and prospered with the railroad. People built homes, put in a water system using cast iron pipes, established businesses, and built a twenty-seven-bed hospital, school buildings, a theater, and even a park. They also established a number of civic organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Masonic lodge. The town was solid, growing, and optimistic.

The town was suddenly threatened with extinction in the mid-1940s when the railroad announced that it would no longer maintain its facilities there. "The location of Caliente, as far as the railroad was concerned, was a function of boiler temperature and pressure and the resultant service requirements of the locomotive" (Cottrell, 1974:683). The replacement of steam engines by diesel engines made the city obsolete from the perspective of the railroad.

Everyone in the town experienced some loss. The railroad company owned thirty-nine homes, a clubhouse, and a hotel in town that became virtually worthless. Workers who had seniority only in the local union had lost even more. One-fourth of the workers had to look for new jobs, as the diesel engine reduced overall labor needs. The local merchants also lost badly. The younger ones could move out, but even they lost because their property



became worthless. Friendship patterns rapidly changed, and the community structure, built on a seemingly solid foundation, began to disintegrate. Attempts to attract new industry failed, and residents found it difficult to justify the cold-blooded, profit-motive decision of the railroad. But the town was dead, the victim of economic forces beyond the control of the community. Almost the same thing happened in 1988 with the closing of the Chrysler assembly plant in Kenosha, Wisconsin. When nearly six thousand workers lost their jobs in the shutdown, the community faced a series of economic crises, resulting in major changes in earning power, status, and power relations (Dudley, 1994).

Other economic forces also exert pressure on social life. John Kenneth Galbraith (1973) contends that large corporations, by virtue of their size and power, can create and control the market. Large corporations, he suggests, constitute a "planning system" in the American economy. They determine what customers shall eat, drink, wear, and smoke, and how their homes shall look, and, within broad limits, what price they shall pay for what they buy. The concentration of economic power in large corporations also involves the decline of countervailing power. When a firm buys its former competitors, it is removing checks on its power. An example of this is the beer industry (Currie & Skolnick, 1997:30-32). Over half of the domestic beer market is controlled by giant corporations such as Anheuser-Busch and Miller. Thousands of small breweries either went out of business or were bought up by a few large corporations. Local brands were taken over, the taste of beer became more standardized, and prices rose sharply. At the same time, production costs were reduced as a result of mass production and relocation to parts of the country with cheaper labor. Although some new jobs were created, many people became unemployed because of the buy-outs and relocations.

Globalization

The world economic landscape is changing dramatically as a result of globalization, the international integration of markets for goods, services, and capital. More and more of the world has been drawn into a network of economic and social relationships that transcend conventional political, economic, and cultural barriers (Schaeffer, 1997). Barriers to the global tradability of goods and services and the mobility of capital and labor are increasingly being eliminated by technological innovations, the widespread movement towards the liberalization of trade and capital markets, and the growing globalization of corporate production and distribution strategies. The trend towards internationalization is creating new opportunities as well as challenges at all levels in society.

There is an integration of the world economy as the major players—large corporations that are "multinational"—draw more and more of the globe into networks of capitalist production and markets. For example, ITT



employs over 400,000 workers in sixty-eight countries. Exxon operates in almost a hundred countries, and its fleet of oil tankers constitutes a navy the size of Great Britain's. General Motors has facilities in thirty-nine countries and sells over \$80 billion worth of products annually. Multinationals account for more than one-fourth of total world economic production, and their share is increasing. The different parts of the world economy are more interconnected, and people most everywhere are being affected by recent advances in telecommunications, transport, and the arrival of multinationals wishing to market a particular global brand of soap, food, or cigarette. Globalization is also seen as a cultural homogenization force (most easily summed up in words such as "Coca-Colaization" or "Hollywoodization" or in the powerful image of McDonalds' golden arches striding purposefully across the world) via consumerism (Hunter, 1995), creating similarities in social forms across political boundaries, resulting in the emergence of cultural cosmopolitanism (Stevenson, 1997).

There are obvious "social contradictions" of globalization (MacEwan, 1996) and controversial economic consequences. Perhaps the most damaging social contradiction of globalization is its impact on democracy by limiting people's power to exercise political control over their economic lives because the power of government is limited in regulating private business. Critics argue that the globalization of business contributes to the decline of the power of labor as well as to the decline of small business as a result of the inability of smaller businesses to compete in the marketplace (Harrison, 1984). Globalization makes it difficult for the U.S. government to keep up with the activities of such corporations, thus making U.S. regulatory agencies highly ineffective. The nationally oriented institutions are being replaced by globally oriented institutions under the legitimizing cloak of efficiency and financial credibility (McMichael, 1996). It reduces employment opportunities for American workers and undermines the power of the nation-state to maintain economic and political stability within its territory (Barnet & Cavanagh, 1994). Globalization also creates wage inequalities and falling relative wages among unskilled workers (Lee, 1996). In the United States, the earnings of unskilled labor fell, even as the economy enjoyed years of prosperity. The factors that account for the decline include stiff competition from Asia, a flood of immigrants, and automation in manufacturing (Wolman & Colamosca, 1997).

Highly paid workers in developed countries cannot compete with workers in developing countries who are paid much less but who are equally skilled. This could lead to a breakdown of the international trading system and continued downsizing (Kennedy, 1997). Changes in the global economy have also reshaped local labor markets, polarizing labor demand into high-skill and low-skill categories. This polarization also reflects an emerging duality between a primary labor market of well-paid, secure, and pensionable jobs and a secondary labor market of poorly paid, insecure, and



often part-time employment and has obvious implications for international migration in terms of differential pull and push factors for "brain drain" versus "contract" migrants.

Finally, the forces of globalization and new technology threaten to weaken the power governments have to tax their citizens. Modern tax systems were developed after World War II when cross-border movements in goods, capital, and labor were relatively small. Now firms and people are more mobile, and can exploit tax differences between countries. Globalization is a tax problem because firms have more freedom to decide where to locate and thereby take advantage of the great variation in corporate taxes among countries. Other tax-related questions concern where global companies should pay tax, how to tax high-income individuals who are highly mobile, and how to tax businesses that carry out business in cyberspace (*Economist*, 1997).

Globalization has profound positive implications for developing countries. It creates important new opportunities—wider markets for trade, an expanding array of tradables, larger private capital inflows, improved access to technology. Defenders of multinationals contend that they introduce great wealth and create jobs in poor countries (*Business Week*, 1994:92-93). They contribute to the economic development of third-world nations by introducing the latest manufacturing techniques, by upgrading the educational level of the labor force, by paying taxes and relatively high wages, by helping to modernize the infrastructure, and by providing jobs and promoting efficiency in the manufacturing and service sectors. Thus, the presence of multinationals is seen as a catalyst for modernization because the economies of the host societies will grow from wages and taxes paid by the corporations.

Globalization and economic factors foster change in society in many other ways. They play a role in the reduction of geographical and entrepreneurial frontier opportunities. They sharpen the dichotomy between the employed and the unemployed and contribute to the rise in higher expectations and keener perception of the gap between actualities and potentialities. Current economic conditions also play a role in the transition from a basic condition of labor scarcity to one of job scarcity, and the expanded power of the labor force induces wages to follow increasing productivity, which results in an inflationary force. They can also lead to the emergence of social problems triggered by competition and scarcities and to damages to the cohesion of civil societies (Dahrendorf, 1995). These in turn produce further changes in economic, political, and other institutional domains.

Economic problems can also create a chain of events that can set off changes in a number of ways. Examples of such problems include fluctuating currencies, foreign debts, and trade deficits (Silk, 1987). The almost 40 percent drop in the value of the United States dollar since 1986 in relation to Western European and Japanese currencies significantly increased the price of imported goods and brought in huge amounts of foreign investments in



the mid-1990s. At the same time, the increase in the export of American goods remained negligible in spite of the passing by Congress major trade agreements such as NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) in 1993 and GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) in November 1994. Because of domestic economic problems, several third-world debtor nations, such as Brazil and Argentina, suspended payment of the interest on almost \$90 billion worth of debts (*Economist*, 1994b:95). This shocked the financial world, and many American banks raised their prime interest rates in response. This brought about an increase in home mortgage loan rates, which, in turn, slowed down the housing industry. A decrease in new-home construction, in turn, reverberated in other aspects of the economy. As a result of its huge trade deficit, the United States has become the world's largest debtor nation, and its net foreign debt is growing rapidly. Among other things, this trade deficit has resulted in a tighter domestic budget with major reductions in many areas such as education, health care, and programs for the disadvantaged.

In sum, economic forces permeate all aspects of life in society. They are considered to be among the most potent inducements for social change.

STRUCTURAL STRAINS

The concept of *strain* refers to a discrepancy between two or more elements of the social system. It is based on the assumption that the social system is made up of interrelated components. As long as the components are compatible and fulfill positive functions for each other, the social system is relatively stable. In situations where two or more components become incompatible, the equilibrium of the social system is upset, and this may result in social change. Several types of strains can be identified that produce incompatibility among the components of the social system and thus contribute to change of that system. They include population imbalances, anomie, certain forms of scarcity, role conflicts, inconsistencies between the ideal and the real, conflict of values, and status anguish.

Demographic imbalances are inherent in social systems, and they are likely to be manifested in change-producing strains (Brown & Kane, 1994). The aging of the baby boom generation may mean increased age-discrimination litigation because of the size of the potential plaintiff pool, the baby boomers' self-centeredness, their history of rebelling against authority, and the corporate downsizings and consolidations with which they are already confronted. (Stansky, 1997). Trends in birthrates, for example, may be out of phase with respect to plans for building and improving schools. Migration trends may be out of phase with the receiving area's ability to accommodate new arrivals. Changes in population composition can have an effect on labor force characteristics; for example, increasing or decreasing the size of nonworking or

working populations. Population growth creates imbalances in food supply and distribution. It adversely affects resource utilization, causes resource depletion, and contributes to large concentrations in urban areas where the resulting strains may be seen in an overload of transportation facilities and traffic congestions. The circadian rhythm impels nearly everyone to go to work at the same time, to take a break at the same time, and to impose demands on energy sources at the same time.

Change-producing strains are created in a society also by *anomie*, a condition of normative confusion in which the individual has few socially validated guides to behavior. According to Robert K. Merton's (1957:140) often-debated hypothesis, the source of this strain is the discrepancy between goals and means in a society. Individuals are uniformly committed to the goals society tells them to desire, but they encounter unequal access to the means socially defined as legitimate for achieving these goals. Many people in society are thus subject to intense frustration of their socially legitimate desires—for instance, to be successful, popular, and happy. By being poor, black, or otherwise disadvantaged, many individuals are severely handicapped in the race toward the goals society tells them they ought to value and pursue. Because of this frustration in finding access to legitimate means for achieving goals, individuals sometimes turn to illegitimate means—that is, deviance—to achieve them. Such deviance may include crime, alcoholism, drug addiction, or even suicide by those who cannot cope with the pressure; or rebellion by those who try to solve the problem by undermining the social order and establishing a new one.

Rebellion as a reaction to strain is considered an important source of social change. This kind of adjustment is characteristic of individuals who start social movements, and it has been used as an explanation for the student unrest in the late 1960s. This pattern also helps us to understand why individuals form communes, occupy buildings, destroy property, and formulate new ideologies in attempts to substitute new goals and norms for the dominant ones in society.

The presence of universal scarcities in society is another ubiquitous source of change-producing strains. "Any viable social system requires norms that determine allocation of these scarcities, but the latter remain omnipresent sources of potential strain in individual behavior in the relations between and among groups and social categories" (Moore, 1970:132). The allocation of scarce goods is always subject to challenge in society. If the challenge is successful and brings about alterations in the distribution of scarce resources such as in the Marxian perspective, it can have far-ranging consequences on all aspects of life. In modern societies, even time is considered as a scarce resource. "We are all of us compelled to read for profit, party for contacts, lunch for contracts, bowl for unity, drive for mileage, gamble for charity, go out for the evening for the greater glory of the municipality, and stay home for the weekend to rebuild the house" (Kerr, quoted by Lindert, 1970:4).



Ambiguity in role expectations and conflict among social roles can also result in change-producing strains. A typical illustration of role ambiguity is the case of the modern American woman whose traditional domestic duties have become uncertain. A commonly used illustration for role conflict is the situation of a black physician whose occupational role calls for deference from others but whose racial role traditionally has called for deference to others.

Moore (1974:20-21) suggests that a "ubiquitous source of change-producing strain arises from the inherent fact that social order is a moral order and from the associated fact that nonconformity to the moral order occurs in all societies." As a result, "the inconsistency between the ideal and the actual is tension producing and hospitable to change." For example, recent manifestations of changing moral standards among youth are indicative of changes in ideal patterns. In addition to discrepancies between expectations and actual situations, conflict in values can also result in strains, culminating in changes. Differences in values among social classes and among ethnic or religious groups often instigate changes, as evidenced by the consequences of recent efforts in school busing.

Finally, strains in a society can be produced by what Robert H. Lauer (1991) calls *status anguish*, which includes marginality, status inconsistency, status withdrawal, and relative deprivation. *Marginality* is existence in two or more social worlds without being fully a part of any of them. Illustrations of this would be the foreman, the black psychiatrist, and supervisor in industry. Marginality is also a ubiquitous factor of contemporary urban life as a result of conditions of poverty and destitution, ethno-racial divisions, and growing social inequalities (Wacquant, 1996). *Status inconsistency* refers to occupying statuses that have different implications for one's location in a system of stratification, as, for example, the rising number of unemployed Ph.D.s (Neresiscek, 1994). *Status withdrawal* will be discussed in connection with Hagen's notion of economic development in Chapter 2. *Relative deprivation* is some kind of perceived or subjective deprivation in regard to some specific standards. These four types of status anguish have, in various degrees, contributed to change in society.

SUMMARY

Social change occurs constantly—although at varying rates—in society. An awareness of the components of change is essential to the understanding and explanation of change. Thus, attention must be paid to what is changing, at what level in a social system, at what rate and magnitude, and in which direction. A distinction needs to be made also between planned and unplanned changes and their consequences.

Social change may be defined a number of ways. For the present purpose, it is conceptualized as the process of planned or unplanned qualitative



or quantitative alterations in social phenomena that can be analyzed in terms of the following interrelated components: identity, level, duration, magnitude, and rate of change. This conceptualization of social change is proposed as a heuristic device for the empirical and theoretical study of social change.

Change in society is produced by a number of factors, and it is important not to assign undue weight to any one of these factors in isolation. It is always tempting to have a "pet" theory or a unitary "prime mover," but to account for broad social changes such an exercise would be meaningless.

Among the mechanisms of change analyzed in this chapter, it was noted that technology creates new alternatives, but it also generates new problems, as evidenced by the introduction of the steel ax among Australian aborigines and the snowmobile among Eskimos. In modern society, technology is associated with changes at work and is considered a factor in alienation.

There are several types of ideologies. Max Weber contended that the Protestant ethic was instrumental in the rise of capitalism. On the other hand, Marxism is associated with large-scale societal transformations. The ideology of the conjugal family contributed to greater equality and freedom of family members. Some of the utopian ideologies are important instigators of change. One way or another, these ideologies all challenge existing social arrangements.

Competition is an endemic aspect of society. It contributes to social change in both ecological and organizational contexts. It stimulates innovation and has been effectively used as a motivating force for social change in development programs. When competitors do not abide by rules and regulations, the relationship turns into conflict. It may be substantive, or over ideological, symbolic, or cultural issues. Conflict should not be viewed as having only negative connotations. It plays an important role in social change, as illustrated by the outcomes of conflict between workers and management, university students and administrators; blacks and whites; females and males; in the international arena; and by some of the recent events in the former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries.

The polity has traditionally played a role in social change through its activities of distribution, regulation, and redistribution. Government is expected to "do something," and the result is often change at the various levels within society as well as among societies.

Economic factors have contributed to the increase in the division of labor, with concomitant changes in the stratification system. In small communities, change in the basic economic institution can have disastrous results, as illustrated by the case of the town of Caliente. Globalization refers to the international integration of markets for goods, services, and capital and has diverse social consequences. Finally, structural strains produced by population imbalances, anomie, scarcity, role and value conflicts, inconsistencies, and status anguish are also ubiquitous sources of change. In the following chapter, several prominent theories of change will be examined.



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Chapter 2

Theories of Change

Attempts at sociological explanations of social change are as old as the discipline itself. This chapter shall draw on the rich literature of sociological theory to examine and illustrate the specific and complementary contributions to the study of social change that some of the major influential "classic" and contemporary theorists have made. We will consider their contributions to social change from the evolutionary, conflict, structural-functional, and social-psychological perspectives.

The chapter deals with only a few of the important classical and contemporary theories of social change in a rather brief fashion. This approach serves certain goals. It provides the reader with some conception of the content of the different theories and how the various theories relate to one another. The discussion of these theories clearly shows the complex and multifaceted nature of social change and also serves to provide, through classification and examination of the various theories, a way of differentiating, organizing, and understanding a great mass of material. Thus, although the concern is to suggest the magnitude of the field, an attempt is made also to lend order and diversity to that magnitude.

Over three decades ago, Wilbert E. Moore (1969:810) accurately noted that "The mention of 'theory of social change' will make most social scientists appear defensive, furtive, guilt ridden, or frightened. Yet the source of this unease may be in part an unduly awe-stricken regard for the explicitly singular, and implicitly capitalized word 'Theory.'" But the word *theory* in itself should not be that frightening. *It is simply a network of interrelated hypotheses* (statements of probable relationships between two or more variables—actions or attributes that can be measured or categorized) or *propositions* (statements of relationships between two or more facts or concepts) con-



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cerning a phenomenon (an observed or observable fact, occurrence, or circumstance) or set of phenomena. Sociological theories are attempted models (abstractions of reality that are used for analytical purposes) of social reality. Some theories approach more closely to this reality, but they are never an entirely accurate picture of it. What is essential to this conception is that theories are never true or false, right or wrong, but always *more or less* adequate.

At this point it will be useful to note the major purposes served by theory. First of all, theory is a convenient way of organizing experience. It allows one to handle large amounts of empirical data with relatively few propositions. It also enables one to go beyond the empirical data and to see implications and relationships that are not evident from any datum taken alone. Furthermore, a theory also provides a stimulus and a guide for further empirical research. Theory leads to predictions about events not yet observed and encourages the investigator to examine the consequences of these predictions. These, in turn, either may lead to further empirical data in support of the theory or may suggest needed modifications or possible rejection of the theory. Consequently, we cannot ignore theory; instead, we can only choose among alternative theories. All theories purport to say something about actual events and phenomena and are not merely fictitious representations of imaginary situations. The issue is not to use or ignore theories, but to decide among alternatives.

Prior to the discussion of specific theoretical approaches, a cautionary note is in order regarding the procedures followed in this chapter for classifying various theories. It will become clear that many theories of social change tend to overlap and, for all practical purposes, may fall under several different headings. For example, the reader may find that a theory that has been placed under the heading of "structural-functional" will contain similar elements to those embodied in "evolutionary theories." Any such effort at classification of theories should be viewed essentially as a heuristic device to facilitate discussion rather than to reflect the final status of the theories considered.

Any attempt to group or categorize theories under particular labels is open to question. The present effort should not be an exception. The categories used are in some ways arbitrary; the number of categories can be increased or decreased depending on one's objectives. These categorizations simply provide some semblance of order for the principal theoretical approaches to social change. In the schema employed, theories are presented in a chronological order and are classified under the general headings of *evolutionary theories*, based on assumptions of predictable, cumulative change from one stage to another, usually more complex, and in the direction of increasing adaptability; *conflict theories*, based on the assumption that conflict is endemic to all societies as a result of inequities and exploitation; *structural-functional theories*, devoted to the explanation of the function that a given structure performs in the maintenance of the stability of a social system or its subsystems; and *social-psychological theories*, focusing on individuals and their personality.

EVOLUTIONARY THEORIES

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the concept of evolution assumed a central place in explanations of all forms of human development in both the social and biological sciences. The most influential among the biological evolutionists was Charles Darwin (1809–1882), whose theory of natural selection provided a solid base for the explanation of biological evolution. Just as biologists traced stages in the development of the organisms, sociologists envisioned society as proceeding inevitably through a fixed set of stages—for example, from savagery through barbarism to civilization. This evolution was believed to occur in response to a set of “natural laws” that explained each stage in the organization of a society in terms of the stage that preceded it (Timasheff, 1961:23). Moreover, the idea of evolution was tied with ideas of progress, development, and advancement; each stage represented a “higher” stage than the one before it, with the final stage in the series approximating societal perfection.

But Robert A. Nisbet (1969:161) warns us that it is a popular misconception to assume that nineteenth-century social evolutionism was just an adaptation of the ideas of biological evolutionism, as advocated by Darwin, to the investigation of social institutions. Many of the major works on social evolution appeared or were begun before the publication of Darwin’s book, notably those of Comte, Spencer, and Morgan. Nisbet points out that there is a substantial difference between the theory of biological evolution and the theory of social evolution. Although the two approaches have some common features, the methodologies used in the biological and social sciences are different. The biological theory is mostly a statistical theory and deals with statistical abstractions of biological organisms.

By contrast, in evolutionary theories, *typologies* (ways of grouping or classifying data and ideas) are dominant. Nisbet (1969:162) notes that the object of inquiry in any theory of social evolution seems to be invariably social class, kinship, culture, law, society as a whole, or other classifications of institutionalized and structured behavior. The early sociologists all believed in *social evolution*, the progressive development of social patterns over long periods of time. Among others, Auguste Comte (1798–1857), Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881), and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) were particularly concerned with the identification of the types of stages through which they assumed all societies must pass. I will describe their theories in some detail.

Auguste Comte

The theories of progress that developed broadly and loosely in the eighteenth century, particularly by Condorcet, and advanced in the early nineteenth century, particularly by Saint-Simon, formed the starting point



France, believed in progress toward a perfect society. He insisted, however, that it would come about not by political revolution, but by the proper application of a new moral science, which he named "sociology" in 1839. Comte thus became known as the "father of sociology." The highest of all sciences, it would use the "positivist" scientific method of observation, experimentation, and comparison to understand order and promote progress.

The road to perfect society involved the human intellect passing through three historical phases of sophistication: the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. The progress of knowledge, which is the underlying basis for his theory of evolution through the "law of the three stages," is not only inevitable but also irreversible. It is, in addition, *asymptotic*; that is, we always approach, but never attain, perfect positive knowledge.

Comte's description of each of the three stages is as follows: In the *theological* stage, people think inanimate objects are alive. This general view itself goes through three phases: animism or fetishism, which views each object as having its own will; polytheism, which believes that many divine wills impose themselves on objects; and monotheism, which conceives the will of one god as imposing itself on objects. The second, or *metaphysical*, stage is a period in which causality is explained in terms of abstract forces; causes and forces replace desires, and one great entity—nature—prevails. The third, or *positive*, stage is the scientific period in which people develop explanations in terms of natural processes and scientific laws. At this point in a society's development, it becomes possible to control human events. Comte contended that Western civilization had already reached the positive stage in control of the physical environment and was on the verge of the positive stage with respect to social relations.

Each stage not only exhibits a particular form of mental development but also has a corresponding material development. In the theological state, military life predominates; in the metaphysical state, legal forms achieve dominance; and the positive stage is the stage of industrial society. Thus, Comte held that historical development shows a matching movement of ideas and institutions.

Lewis Henry Morgan

Another nineteenth-century proponent of uniform evolutionary stages was Lewis Henry Morgan. After graduating from Union College in 1840, he practiced law in upstate New York for a few years, but he devoted much of his time to anthropological research, which eventually became his chief interest. He is among the most influential nineteenth-century anthropologists, and his writings are widely read today. His best-known work, *Ancient Society*, was published in 1877. Morgan's ideas of evolution made a strong impression on



Marx and his co-worker, Engels. The latter, following the advice of Marx, in 1884 published *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, a volume making extensive use of Morgan's theories and of his illustrations, taken largely from observations of native American tribes. Morgan is considered as a founder of Marxist anthropology and was more recognized in the former Soviet Union and China than in his native country (Tooker, 1992:357).

Morgan postulated that the stages of technological developments and kinship systems were associated with different social and political institutions. On the basis of historical data, he concluded that culture evolves in successive stages that are essentially the same in all parts of the world. The order of stages is inevitable, and their content is limited because mental processes are similar among all peoples under similar conditions in various societies.

He described the progress of humankind through three main stages of evolution: savagery, barbarism, and civilization. But he also subdivided savagery and barbarism into upper, middle, and lower segments. He distinguished these stages in terms of technological achievements. The seven stages are, in his words:

- I. Lower Status of Savagery, From the Infancy of the Human Race to the commencement of the next Period.
- II. Middle Status of Savagery, From the acquisition of a fish subsistence and a knowledge of the use of fire, to etc.
- III. Upper Status of Savagery, From the Invention of the Bow and Arrow, to etc.
- IV. Lower Status of Barbarism, From the Invention of the Art of Pottery, to etc.
- V. Middle Status of Barbarism, From the Domestication of animals on the Eastern Hemisphere, and in the Western from the cultivation of maize and plants by Irrigation, with the use of adobe-brick and stone, to etc.
- VI. Upper Status of Barbarism, From the Invention of the process of Smelting Iron Ore, with the use of iron tools, to etc.
- VII. Status of Civilization, From the Invention of a Phonetic Alphabet, with the use of writing, to the present time. (L. H. Morgan, 1964:18)

Morgan contended that each stage and substage was initiated by a major technological invention. For example, he considered pottery to be characteristic of lower barbarism, domestication of plants and animals to be characteristic of middle barbarism, and iron tools to be characteristic of upper barbarism. Civilization was heralded by the invention of the phonetic alphabet, and the organization of political society on a territorial basis was the line of demarcation where modern civilization began. Each of these stages of technological evolution, Morgan maintained, was correlated with characteristic developments in the family, religion, political organization, and property arrangements. For example, he speculated that the family evolved through six stages. Human society began with indiscriminate promiscuity and without a real family structure. It was followed by cohabitation of brothers and sisters. In the third stage, group marriage prevailed,





but brothers and sisters were not allowed to mate. Then came marriage between single pairs, followed by the patriarchal family in which the husband could have more than one wife. Finally, the stage of civilization was characterized by monogamous family with a degree of equality between husband and wife. Morgan's ideas even influenced the evolution of marriage laws in the United States (Ottenheimer, 1990). In contrast to European countries, individual states enacted laws prohibiting cousin marriage, and currently some 60 percent of the states consider first-cousin marriage illegal. This is a reflection on a nineteenth-century evolutionary perspective that categorized cousin marriage as an early type of evolutionary institution—something to be avoided by so-called civilized peoples.

Herbert Spencer

Herbert Spencer was an English railroad engineer who became "the second founding father of sociology" (Timasheff, 1961:30). Spencer saw evolution as a unilinear development—that is, as a steadily continuing accumulative process by which everything in the cosmos was continually being synthesized at ever higher levels of complexity. He maintained that human society had followed a course of natural development, from relatively simple patterns of organization to more complex structures, characterized by an increasing specialization of parts.

Spencer held that the process of societal evolution followed inexorable laws of nature in that it led inevitably toward progress, toward the development of increasingly desirable and just forms of society. But Spencer also posited that there is an equilibrium between population and food supply. Should the population growth exceed the needed resources for survival, a struggle for existence will occur. Those individuals who are best able to adapt to the new conditions will manage to survive. Crucial to an understanding of Spencer's evolutionary model is the basic analogy between change in both biological and social organisms. He suggested that an increase in mass or size in either of these organisms corresponds to an "increase in structure from a few like parts to numerous interrelated parts" (Appelbaum, 1970:30).

He also argued that although a particular stage of societal evolution might seem oppressive or undesirable, it was absurd to believe that society could be improved by legislation. The state should play the smallest possible role in regulation of society in order not to interfere with natural evolutionary processes.

Spencer had a strong influence on the young science of sociology. For example, in the United States at the turn of the century, William Graham Sumner (1840-1910), one of the most important American sociologists, became an outspoken theorist of social evolution. In a famous dictum, Sumner (1896:87-88) argued that stateways could not change folkways. That is,



social improvement could only come about through natural evolution of society and not by legislation. His arguments are still echoed today by those who oppose laws providing for more equitable treatment of minorities on the ground that morality cannot be legislated. But to equate his ideas wholly with right-wing ideology is a mistake largely caused by sociologists' misunderstanding of his work. That would be too simple a portrayal of Spencer's genius (Turner, 1991:412).

Other Evolutionists

Other vanguards of American sociology accepted part of the evolutionary theory of social change while embracing the notion that society could be improved by deliberate effort. Lester Frank Ward (1841–1913), a paleontologist who became the first president of the American Sociological Society in 1906, for instance, believed that both human beings and human society had developed through eons of evolution, but he maintained that once intellect had evolved in humans, they gained the ability to help shape the subsequent evolution of social forms (Ward, 1911:451). Through the application of intelligence, people could effect desired changes in society (although desired changes to some may not be desired by others). In this respect Ward was following in the tradition of Auguste Comte, who maintained that human intelligence had reached the point where society could be reconstructed through application of the scientific method.

Several other sociologists have taken an evolutionary approach to social change. In Germany, Ferdinand Toennies (1855–1936) described the trend from what he calls *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* as one in which small, primitive, traditional, homogeneous, closely knit communities are eradicated and replaced by a large, urbanized, industrial society in which human relations are impersonal, formal, contractual, utilitarian, realistic, and specialized. The *Gemeinschaft* relationship is an intimate one, not unlike that found in primary groups such as the family. The close interpersonal ties that bind lifelong friends and neighbors in a rural village provides one familiar example. Because members of the community are concerned with each other's well-being, they do things for each other without consideration of repayment or personal gain. The *Gesellschaft* relationship, on the other hand, is based on individualistic and mutual distrust. In Toennies' (1957:65) words:

Here everybody is by himself and isolated, and there exists a condition of tension against all others. Their spheres of activity and power are sharply separated, so that everybody refuses to everyone else contacts with and admittance to his sphere, i.e., intrusions are regarded as hostile acts.

In the *Gesellschaft* relationships, people are competitive and struggle with each other to gain a personal advantage. There is no common sentiment



that generates trust or concern for one another. Contract becomes instrumental in defining relationships: "For everything pleasant which someone does for someone else, he expects, even demands, at least an equivalent" (Toennies, 1957:78). Urbanization of society is considered as the main reason for the increase in *Gesellschaft* relationships.

Similarly, Howard P. Becker (1899–1960) saw the transition as being one from a sacred, traditionally oriented society to a secular society that evaluates customs and practices in terms of their pragmatic outcomes (1950). In anthropology, Robert Redfield (1897–1958) put the transition as being from folk to urban (folk-urban continuum). He described folk society as

small, isolated and homogeneous with a strong sense of group solidarity. The ways of living are conventionalized into that coherent system which we call a "culture." Behavior is traditional, spontaneous, uncritical and personal. There is no legislation or habit of experiment and reflection for intellectual ends. Kinship, its relationships and institutions are the type categories of experience and the familial group is the unit of action, the sacred prevails over the secular, the economy is one of status rather than of market. (Redfield, 1947:294)

Change for Redfield is the consequence of an "increase of contacts bringing about heterogeneity and disorganization of culture" (1941:369).

Judging from this representative sample of evolutionary theories, there seems to be agreement among theorists that change is natural, directional, imminent, continuous, and necessary and proceeds from uniform causes (Nisbet, 1969:159–189). These theories also contained, as all theories do, an implicit ideological component. The general evolutionary approach, because of its emphasis on natural laws and its fixed series of stages, perhaps had a special appeal to political conservatives. Sumner, for example, used it to justify the social class system of the time, maintaining that the operation of natural selection had placed the most able groups at the top of the structure. He also believed that people should not interfere with the operation of natural laws and the evolution of society, and thus he opposed all ideas of the possibility of guided social change.

By the early part of the twentieth century, enough information had been gathered by social scientists on societies throughout the world to make it appear unlikely that societies everywhere had passed through the same series of stages. Thus, the idea of a unilinear evolution was generally discarded. Furthermore, both ideas—(1) that present societies represent the highest stage in any evolutionary sequence and (2) that there is a necessary link between social change and progress—were discredited.

The evolutionary approach is, however, still with us in more contemporary forms such as attempts to account for long-term economic growth (Hodgson, 1996) or the emergence of a new world system (Schafer, 1996).



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The renewed interest in evolutionary theory is also evidenced, for example, by Gerhard and Jean Lenski's and Patrick Nolan's analysis of the evolution of societies. They maintain that continuity, innovation, and extinction are basic aspects of the evolutionary process and that evolution is fundamentally cumulative change because it involves a gradual addition of new elements to an already established base (Lenski, Nolan, & Lenski, 1995:66-77). But the idea of *unilinear evolution*—that is, all societies inevitably passing through the same set of fixed stages—has given way to the idea of a *multilinear evolution* (Stewart, 1953:313-336). Those who hold this view reason that, because societies were often very different to begin with, they may have appropriately undergone varying patterns of change and that the same patterns of change may produce slightly varying products in a society that started from different beginnings.

Remnants of the classical, evolutionary theories of social change can still be found in some of the contemporary anthropological theories such as those of Leslie White and Julian Steward (Lauer, 1991); perspectives on sustainability (Jeffrey, 1996), and theories dealing with economic development or societal modernization. An example of the latter point would be Walt W. Rostow's (1961) classic and still controversial and provocative sketch of the stages of economic growth, which is also illustrative of the duration of change (Chapter 5). His basic assumption is that the lengthy process of economic development can be depicted according to various stages and that uniformities tend to occur in the sequence of development. Rostow postulates that the overall process of economic growth proceeds through the following five stages:

1. *The Traditional Society.* Agriculture is predominant, there is little capital accumulation, savings are practically nonexistent, and the traditional mentality and attitudes of people hamper development.

2. *The Preconditions for Takeoff.* They include a population increase, the existence of entrepreneurs, an increase in agricultural production, and "reactive nationalism." The idea spreads that economic progress is not only possible but necessary. Education is geared to substantiate the new economic outlook. Banks and other economic institutions are formed, and the state is becoming more centralized.

3. *The Takeoff.* Economic growth becomes the normal condition. The main features of the takeoff are: (a) an increase in the ratio of savings and investment to national income from perhaps 5 to 10 percent or more; (b) the development of one or more substantial manufacturing sectors with high rates of growth; and (c) the existence or quick emergence of a political, social, and institutional framework to exploit the impulses to expansion in the modern sector. The takeoff period began in Britain after 1783, in France and the United States around 1840, and in India around 1950.

4. *The Drive to Maturity.* The application of modern technology becomes evident in all sectors of the economy. From 10 to 20 percent of the national income is steadily reinvested, permitting output regularly to outstrip the increase in population. It takes about sixty years to reach this stage “in which an economy demonstrates the capacity to move beyond the original industries which powered its take-off and to absorb and to apply efficiently over a very wide range of its resources—if not the whole range—the most advanced fruits of (then) modern technology” (Rostow, 1961:10).

5. *The Age of High Mass Consumption.* The economy shifts toward the production of consumer goods and services. More and more funds are allocated to welfare in the society, and there is a striving for power in the international arena. Rostow thinks that the United States entered this stage of high mass consumption around 1920, followed by western Europe and Japan in the 1950s.

In sum, we may turn to the main assumptions to which, according to Smith (1973:27–28), evolutionists subscribed:

1. *Holism*—studying the whole unit rather than its parts.
2. *Universalism*—change is natural, universal, perpetual, and ubiquitous, and requires no explanation.
3. *Potentiality*—change is inherent and endogenous in the unit undergoing change.
4. *Directionality*—change is progressive.
5. *Determinism*—change is inevitable and irreversible for all units.
6. *Gradualism*—change is continuous, cumulative growth.
7. *Reductionism*—“laws of succession” are uniform and the basic topic of change is everywhere the same.

CONFLICT THEORIES

Conflict theory assumes that social behavior can best be understood in terms of tension and conflict between groups and individuals. It suggests that society is an arena in which struggles over scarce commodities take place. Conflict theorists consider change, rather than order, as the essential element of social life. Change is viewed as an intrinsic process in society, not merely the outcome of some improperly functioning or imbalanced part of the social system. Structural differentiation is felt to be the source of conflict, and social change occurs only through this conflict. A number of social theorists have espoused this approach, and in this section we shall focus on the main ideas of three important conflict theorists: Karl Marx, Lewis Coser, and Ralf Dahrendorf.



Karl Marx

Of all the social theorists, few were as important, brilliant, original, or influential as Karl Marx (1818-1883). Part philosopher, part economist, part sociologist, and part historian, Marx combined political partisanship with deep scholarship in his work. His writings are generally considered among the most basic and most crucial in the study of conflict theory with regard to social change. In his words: "Without conflict, no progress: this is the law which civilization has followed to the present day" (Marx, quoted by Dahrendorf, 1959:27).

Marx postulated that every society, whatever its stage of historical development, rests on an economic foundation. He called this the "mode of production" of commodities. The mode of production, in turn, has two elements. The first is "the forces of production," or the physical or technological arrangement of economic activity. The second is "the social relations of production," or the indispensable human attachments that people must form with one another in carrying out this economic activity. In Marx's words:

The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. (Marx, 1959:43–44)

The determinant or independent variable for Marx is the mode of production. Changes in this produce changes in the relations of production; that is, changes in the way in which groups of people are attached to this production technology. To illustrate this point, Marx divided history into five major stages, each characterized by a type of economic production. These stages are: (1) tribal ownership, a type of primitive communism; (2) ancient communal and state ownership accompanied by slavery; (3) feudalism; (4) capitalism; and (5) communism, which is divided into a dictatorship of the proletariat and "pure" communism. With the exception of pure communism, each stage is characterized by economic and other conflicts between two or more opposing economic groups with the separate and opposing eco-





conomic interests. The economic conflict between these groups inevitably leads to further social and political conflicts, as each group seeks to further its own interests at the expense of other groups. This is epitomized in the opening lines of the famous *Communist Manifesto* of 1848:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open, fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (Marx & Engels, 1955:1)

For Marx, conflict is a normal condition of social life whose nature and variations are some of the most important things to be described and analyzed by social science. Conflict and change for him are inseparable. The economic production is the substructure upon which the rest of society, the superstructure, is built. Social institutions—such as the government, the family, education, and religion—are dependent on the mode of economic production in a given society. Variations and changes in economic production give rise to variations and changes in other social institutions with their associated values, attitudes, and norms.

In a capitalistic society, all individuals will move from intermediate groups to become either proletarians (workers) or bourgeoisie (property owners). The struggle is inevitable between these two classes and will result, as class consciousness and militant class action develop, in the overthrow of the existing system. It will culminate in the establishment of a new form of economic production—communistic production—and the new historical stage, communism. The proletariat, having won the revolution, will become the dominant group in this final historical stage.

In brief, the series of events leading to an ultimate proletariat revolution is as follows: "(1) the need for production; (2) the expansion of the division of labor; (3) the development of private property; (4) increasing social inequality; (5) class struggle; (6) creation of political structures to represent each class's interests, and finally, (7) revolution. Each event leads inevitably to the next event" (Duke, 1976:28). And, according to Marx, no person or group of people can stop the revolution from occurring.

The Marxian approach to social change has been attacked on a number of grounds. One group of criticisms deals with the fact that it overemphasized economic determination and ignored ideological, political, and other factors that influence social change. Others maintain that it insisted on the dialectical model of change through thesis, antithesis, and synthesis (action, reaction, and combination) and did not allow for regressive change or for change to occur in other ways. Some sociologists have criticized Marx, saying he placed too much emphasis on conflict and economically based power

and rank. They argue, instead, that conflict is often integrative, as we shall see in the writings of Coser; and that consensus, integration, and cooperation are much more frequently in evidence than is conflict. These critics argue that shared values are common to normative systems, and functional and economic interdependence all tend to gloss over or reduce class conflict to a minimum. Finally, many critics have challenged his formulations regarding revolution. They have stressed that most revolutions, especially those in the twentieth century, have been middle-class revolutions. They argue that, aside from Marx's inadequate predictions of the place of revolution, he misjudged the depth of alienation and frustration of the average worker. Marx also failed to see the tendency of workers to identify with national, community, religious, racial, sexual, and occupational groups.

Notwithstanding these limitations, scholars felt compelled to develop and expand his ideas and, in so doing, often produced some of their most important work. Each succeeding generation has had sociologists working directly in the Marxian tradition, and Marxism continues to meet a religious or teleological need among Western intellectuals (Sherman, 1995). Most recently in the late 1990s, neo-Marxism has become one of the most important theoretical schools in American sociology (McQuarrie, 1995:121.) The study of Marxism remains relevant in contemporary times in many areas. For example, many economic theories, including the computation of national income, accounting, and input-output models, are based on Marxist theories (Hollander, 1995). His approach remains an important, influential, and viable one in contemporary social, economic, and political thought.

Lewis A. Coser

The conflict approach to social change gained additional momentum during the middle of the twentieth century, prompted by race conflicts, class struggles, and the warring of interests. Undoubtedly, the best-known conflict theorist among contemporary American sociologists is Lewis A. Coser. In his widely read book, *The Functions of Social Conflict*, Coser (1956) holds that conflict has both positive and negative effects. He explains that conflict is part of the socialization process and that no social group can be completely harmonious. Conflict in society is inevitable because individuals have a predisposition for hate as well as love. Thus, conflict is part of the human condition. But conflict can be constructive as well as destructive because it frequently resolves disagreements and leads eventually to unity. He believes that conflict makes for an increase in adjustment and adaptation as groups learn to live side by side. Moreover, conflict encourages "in-group" cohesion because the members of the group have a common enemy and a common cause.

Coser views conflict as a means of promoting social change. People who feel that their society satisfies their needs are not likely to want to alter anything in it. Those whose needs are not satisfied will attempt to change the



situation by confronting the dominant group that has suppressed their goals. An obvious example is the civil rights movement in the United States. But Coser maintains that conflict can lead to change in a number of ways, including the establishment of new group boundaries, the drawing off of hostility and tension, the development of more complex group structures to deal with conflict and its accompaniments, and the creation of alliances with other parties. Each of these can result in a new distribution of social values, with the concomitant formation of a new social order. Therefore, conflict is seen as a creative force that stimulates change in society (Coser, 1956:153).

Ralf Dahrendorf

Another influential contemporary conflict theorist is Ralf Dahrendorf. He rejects the Marxian notion of social class as determined by the relations to the means of production and defines it in terms of the unequal distribution of authority. All groups in society are seen as divided into those who have authority and those who do not. He maintains that social conflict has a structural origin and is to be "understood as a conflict about the legitimacy of relations of authority" (Dahrendorf, 1959:176). In any organization, roles and positions can be dichotomized into two "quasi-groups" whose members have opposed "latent interests." The group in position of power or authority is interested in preserving the status quo, whereas the subordinated group is interested in change. These two "quasi-groups" are potential antagonists, in that their members share common experiences, roles, and interests, whether or not they are aware of them.

Under proper "conditions of organization," interest groups emerge out of quasi-groups as the members develop a leadership cadre, effective intra-group communication, a consistent ideology, and an awareness of their common interests. Dahrendorf suggests that the more the subordinate interest groups become organized, the more likely they will be in conflict with the dominant group. The "conditions of conflict," such as opportunities for social mobility and the responses of the agents of social control, will determine the intensity and violence of conflict. By "intensity" he refers to the emotional involvement and animosity felt by the participants. He proposes that the more organized the interest groups and the more regulated their conflict, the less violent the conflict will be. Conflict, in turn, leads to structural change as a result of a change in dominance relations. The type, speed, and magnitude of change depend on the "conditions of structural change." These conditions include the capacity of those in power to stay in power and the pressure potential of the dominated interest group. Conflict between workers and management, the unionization process, and the changes brought about by the unions are used by Dahrendorf to illustrate his theory.

He concluded that "the great creative force" that leads to change in society is social conflict. "The notion that wherever there is social life there



is conflict may be unpleasant and disturbing." But ". . . societies and social organizations are held together not by consensus but by constraint, not by universal agreement but by the coercion of some by others . . . and as conflict generates change, so constraint may be thought of as generating conflict. We assume that conflict is ubiquitous, since constraint is ubiquitous wherever human beings set up social organizations" (Dahrendorf, 1967:479-480).

Dahrendorf altered Marx's theory in several ways. He saw conflict as a problem of unequal authority in all sectors of society, in contrast to the strict Marxian notion of classes. Then, he suggested the importance of dealing with external conflict while, in the Marxian conception, conflict is identified as its primary source in the internal workings of society. Furthermore, Dahrendorf pointed out that conflict in a given society results not from internal contradictions arising in historical development but from pressures exerted by other societies. Finally, Dahrendorf contended that many of the conflicts are not capable of resolution as Marx has suggested, but most frequently are controlled through "compromise" (Dahrendorf, 1990).

Unlike other conflict theorists, Dahrendorf argued that ". . . it is the task of sociology to derive conflicts from special social structures and not to relegate these conflicts to psychological variables (aggressiveness) or to descriptive historical ones (the influx of Negroes into the United States) or to chance" (Dahrendorf, 1973:102).

The conflict perspective has proved to be a lasting contribution to sociological theory. With the recent collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist states and the consequent ethnic and political turmoil, conflict theory has reemerged as a viable perspective albeit without its pronounced traditional Marxist flavor. The past few years witnessed the rise of a series of middle-range conflict perspectives that are variously referred to in the sociological literature as "radical," "activist," "critical," "humanist," and the like. Examples of these include the Critical Legal Studies Movement and Feminist Legal Theory, which are currently prevalent in progressive law schools (Vago, 1997:47-55). These theoretical approaches are greatly influenced by the writings of C. Wright Mills, whose polemic attacks on "the power elite" gave direction to a whole group of generally younger sociologists who reject the concept of value-free science and use their research and teaching to promote what they believe to be desirable—what some define as radical social change (Mills, 1956). For these sociologists, directed social change is the primary goal of scientific endeavors.

STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONAL THEORIES

Although many scholars now accept the theory that all industrialized societies eventually develop institutions, traits, structures, and cultures with certain similarities, controversy rages over the way in which these changes

come about (see, for example, Pettit, 1996). In sociological theorizing, there is a group of thinkers who emphasize the so-called functionalist, or *structural-functional*, approach. The word *structure* generally refers to a set of relatively stable and patterned relationships of social units, and *function* refers to those consequences of any social activity that make for the adaptation or adjustment of a given structure or its component parts. In other words, *structure* refers to a system with relatively enduring patterns, and *function* refers to the dynamic process within the structure. The structures are the various parts of the social system. In the case of society, the principal structures are usually considered to be the societies' institutions—family, government, economic system, religion, and education—and the analysis focuses on the interrelations among these institutions. Each structure and each part within the larger structure is conceived to have a function in assisting the society to operate and preserving it intact.

Historically, structural-functional theorizing was brought into sociology by borrowing directly, and developing analogies for, concepts in the biological sciences. Biology, since the middle of the nineteenth century, frequently referred to the *structure* of an organism, meaning a relatively stable arrangement of relationships between the different cells, and to the *function* of the organism, which considered the consequences of the activity of the various organs in the life process. The principal consideration of this organic analogy was how each part of the organism contributes to the survival and maintenance of the whole.

Sociologists of the structural-functional school usually distinguish between the latent function and the manifest functions of social relationship (Merton, 1957:19–84). *Manifest* functions are those that are built into a social system by design; like manifest goals, they are well understood by group members. *Latent* functions are, by contrast, unintentional and often unrecognized. They are unanticipated consequences of the system that has been set up to achieve other ends. For example, the system of free public education in the United States has the manifest function of opening educational opportunities to all citizens and thereby increasing their ability to participate equally in a democratic society. In practice, however, the system has had the unintended effect of opening opportunity for some and closing it for others based on financial considerations.

Despite Spencer's adoption of the word *function*, the first systematic formulation of the logic of a structural-functional approach in sociology can be found in the works of Émile Durkheim (1858–1917). In the sociological classic, *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim (1947) makes a clear distinction between the function of the division of labor and its efficient cause. Its basic function is the integration of society, its cause was the increase in "moral density" induced by population pressure. Function, for Durkheim, is a contribution to the maintenance of social life and society, as it can be seen further in his discussions on the social significance of religion, punishment, and ceremony.



In addition to Durkheim, structural-functional analysis in the United States was greatly influenced by the works of two British anthropologists: A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski. Function was seen by Radcliffe-Brown (1956:189) as a contribution to the continuing existence of the social structure. Institutions and individuals alike worked toward this goal. "The continuity of structure is maintained by the process of social life, which consists of the activities and interaction of the individual human beings and of the organized groups into which they are united. The *social life* of the community is here defined as the functioning of the social structure. The *function* of any recurrent activity, such as the punishment of a crime, or a funeral ceremony, is the part it plays in the social life as a whole and therefore the contribution it makes to the maintenance of the structure continuity." Maintenance of the structure, for him, entails harmonious relationships between groups, social continuity or the nurturing of tradition, and the existence of those institutions necessary for survival.

Malinowski's (1926) theoretical perspective was built around the assertion that cultural items exist to fulfill basic human and cultural needs: "The functional view of culture insists therefore upon the principle that every type of civilization, every custom, material object, idea and belief fulfills some vital function, has some task to accomplish, represents an indispensable part within a working whole." Such a theory, by its very nature "aims at the explanation of anthropological facts at all levels of development by their function, by the part which they play within the integral system of culture, by the manner in which they are related to each other within the system. . . ." (1926:132-133).

The early structural-functional theorists viewed the world in systematic terms (Turner & Maryanski, 1995:49-55). For them such systems were considered to have needs and prerequisites that had to be met to assure survival. They tended to view such systems with needs and requisites as having normal and pathological states, thus connoting a system of equilibrium and homeostasis. The social world was seen as composed of mutually interrelated parts, and the analysis of these interrelated parts focused on how they fulfilled the requisites of the systems as a whole and how, therefore, system equilibrium was maintained.

Some of these ideas are incorporated in contemporary structural-functional analysis, especially the notion of systems of interrelated parts. To account for social change in a structural-functional context, let us now look at some of the principal tenets of this approach:

1. Societies must be analyzed "holistically as systems of interrelated parts";
2. Cause and effect relations are "multiple and reciprocal";
3. Social systems are in a state of "dynamic equilibrium" such that adjustment to forces affecting the system is made with minimal change within the system;



4. Perfect integration is never attained so that every social system has strains and deviations, but the latter tend to be neutralized through institutionalization;
5. Change is fundamentally a slow, adaptive process, rather than a revolutionary shift;
6. Change is the consequence of the adjustment of changes outside the system, growth by differentiation, and internal innovations; and
7. The system is integrated through shared values. (Van den Berghe, 1967:294-295)

One way to examine the structural-functional approach to social change is in terms of the negative or unintended or, as Merton would say, dysfunctional elements. Merton (1968:40) is suggesting that the dysfunctional elements that tend normally to be a part of any social system may themselves, in their accumulation, culminate in the more overt types of change that affect the structure itself. Accordingly, "By focusing on dysfunctions as well as functions, this approach can assess not only the bases of social stability but the potential sources of change. . . . The stresses and strains in a social structure which accumulate as dysfunctional consequences of existing elements . . . will, in due course, lead to institutional breakdown and basic social change. When this change has passed beyond a given and not easily identifiable point, it is customary to say that a new social system has emerged."

Stability and change in society are basically complementary processes. Parsons (1966:21) argues that "At the most general theoretical levels, there is no difference between processes which serve to maintain a system and those which serve to change it." Or, as Kingsley Davis (1949:634) put it, "It is only in terms of equilibrium that most sociological concepts make sense. Either tacitly or explicitly anyone who thinks about society tends to use the notion. The functional structural approach to sociological analysis is basically an equilibrium theory." The widespread use of equilibrium approaches is characteristic not only of sociology but of other social sciences as well.

In essence, equilibrium theory seeks to uncover the general conditions for the maintenance of a social system in stable equilibrium and specify the mechanisms by which that stability is preserved or reestablished after the occurrence of internal or external disturbances.

Talcott Parsons

The most influential and best-known representative of contemporary American sociologists embracing this approach is Talcott Parsons (1902-1979). Detailed examination of Parsons's complex ideas concerning social change that appeared in a number of his publications over time (for example, *The Social System* (1951); *Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives* (1966); *The System of Modern Societies* (1971); and *The Evolution of*



Societies (1977)] is beyond the scope of this discussion. The ensuing analysis will only consider some of his ideas of change in the context of equilibrium theory.

Parsons considers stability “. . . as a defining characteristic of structure . . . equivalent to the more specific concept of stable equilibrium—which in another reference may be either ‘static’ or ‘moving.’” For him, “a system then is stable or (relatively) in equilibrium when the relation between its structure and the processes which go on within it and between it and its environment are such as to maintain those properties and relations, which for the purposes in hand have been called its structure, relatively unchanged. Very generally, always in ‘dynamic’ systems, this maintenance is dependent on continually varying processes, which ‘neutralize’ either endogenous or exogenous sources of variability which, if they went far enough, would change the structure.” By analogy, “A classic example of equilibrium . . . is the maintenance of nearly constant body temperature by mammals and birds—in the face of continuing variation in environmental temperature and through mechanisms which operate either to produce heat, including slowing up its loss, or to slow down the rate of heat production or accelerate its dissipation.” Therefore, “Contrasted then with stability or equilibrating processes are those processes which operate to bring about structural change. That such processes exist and that they are of fundamental scientific importance is nowhere in question” (Parsons, 1973:73).

In “An Outline of the Social System,” which succinctly summarizes functionalism, Parsons (1961) views society as a system surrounded by three other systems (personality, the organism, and culture). He considers a society in equilibrium when its boundaries with the other three systems are not breached. Social equilibrium consists of “boundary maintenance”; social change consists of boundary breaking. “If a subboundary is broken, resources within the larger system counteract the implicit tendency to structural change” (Parsons, 1961:71).

Social change considered as boundary destruction and equilibrium restoration has two sources: *endogenous* (that is, affecting boundaries within the system) and *exogenous* (that is, initiated from one of the systems outside the social system). The external (exogenous) forces of social change are internal to the other systems (personality, the organism, culture), which are said to delineate society. “The exogenous sources of social change consist in endogenous tendencies to change in the organisms, personalities, and cultural systems articulated with social systems in question” (Parsons, 1961:71). Many kinds of exogenous changes affect the social system—for example, genetic changes in the population, changes in the technique of exploiting nature, and the impact of other social systems, as in war or in the form of cultural influences. These changes are external to the social system, but they have an impact on it.



Endogenous changes are caused by "strains" within the system itself. In Parsons's (1961:71) words: "The most general, commonly used term for an endogenous tendency to change is a 'strain.' *Strain* here refers to a condition in the relation between two or more structured units (i.e., subsystems of the system) that constitute a tendency or pressure toward changing that relation to one incompatible with the equilibrium of the relevant parts of the system." In other words, these strains result from certain disequilibria between inputs and outputs across the boundaries of subsystems. Several things can happen to these stresses and strains; they can be resolved, they can be arrested, they can be isolated, or they can be compensated for by changes in the structure of the system.

There are two main types of changes, depending on the source (exogenous or endogenous) of the model for reequilibrium once the forces to repair boundary destruction are underway. "The first . . . is the one where the principal model component comes from outside the society. This has been true of the contemporary underdeveloped societies. . . . The second . . . is that occurring when the cultural model cannot be supplied from a socially exogenous source, but must . . . be evolved from within the society" (Parsons, 1961:78).

Adjustments within the system will generally be associated with the reorganization of roles. This can take several forms, involving the disappearance, the creation, or the modification of roles. Changes of this kind tend to be more complex and continuous than changes where roles are not affected. Based on Parsons's theoretical framework, Neil J. Smelser (1959) recognizes a sevenfold sequence in which the reorganization of roles leads to other kinds of *structural differentiation* within the social system. In his famous study of the British cotton industry, Smelser characterized advanced societies as differing from underdeveloped or traditional societies in their degree of complexity and structural differentiation of basic institutional roles.

The process of structural differentiation is seen as a sequence of steps or stages, including the following:

1. Dissatisfaction with the goal-achievement of the social system or subsystem in question and a sense of opportunity for change in terms of the potential availability of facilities.
2. Symptoms of disturbance in the form of "unjustified" negative emotional reactions and "unrealistic" aspirations on the part of various elements in the social system.
3. A covert handling of these tensions and mobilization of motivational resources for new attempts to realize the implications of the existing value system.
4. Encouragement of the resulting proliferation of "new ideas" without imposing specific responsibility for their implementation or for "taking the consequences."
5. Positive attempts to reach specification of the new ideas and institutional patterns which will become the objects of commitments.

6. Responsible implementation of innovations carried out by persons or collectives which are either rewarded or punished, depending on their acceptability or responsibility in terms of existing value systems.
7. If the implementations of Step 6 are received favorably, they are gradually routinized into the usual patterns of performance and sanction; their extraordinary character thereby diminishes. (Smelser, 1959:15-16)

William F. Ogburn

William F. Ogburn's (1886–1959) cultural lag theory may be considered a kind of equilibrium theory. As Appelbaum (1970:73) notes, however, this is the case only "With respect to nonmaterial culture. With respect to material culture—that is, technology—*cultural lag theory* is closer to evolutionary theory in positing smooth, cumulative change in the direction of ever increasing complexity." Ogburn's theory reasons that societies operate as homeostatic mechanisms, in that changes that upset equilibrium in one part tend to produce compensating changes to restore that equilibrium. In this situation, however, the new equilibrium condition differs from the old one and there is a lag between the two equilibrium states. The unequal rates of change produce a strain or maladjustment, which in turn produces a lag, until the more slowly changing, usually nonmaterial, culture catches up. For example, if technology changes, the curriculum may be out of date, and students will be less able to get jobs. Unemployment may then be a problem until education is modernized. In Ogburn's words (1964:86): "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."

In essence, Ogburn argues that material culture and nonmaterial culture change in different ways. Change in material culture is considered to have a marked directional or progressive character. This is because there are generally agreed-upon standards of efficiency that are used to evaluate material inventions. To use airplanes as an example, designers keep working to develop planes that will fly higher and faster and carry more payload at a lower unit cost; and because airplanes can be measured against these standards, inventions in this area appear both rapidly and predictably.

In the area of nonmaterial culture (knowledge and beliefs, norms and values), on the other hand, there are often no generally accepted standards. The obvious directional character of change in material culture is lacking in many areas of nonmaterial cultures.

In addition to the differences in the directional character of change, Ogburn believes that material culture tends to change faster than nonmaterial culture. This difference in rate of culture change gives the basis for the concept of cultural lag. Material inventions bring changes that require adjustments to be made in various areas of nonmaterial culture. The inven-

tion of the automobile, for instance, freed young, unmarried men and women from direct parental observation, made it possible for people to work at great distances from their homes, and, among other things, facilitated crime by making escape easier.

In sum, the structural-functional approach and its ramifications really became dominant in American sociology in the second half of the twentieth century. Indeed, as Kingsley Davis (1959) pointed out, functionalism became almost synonymous with sociological theory. Almost from the beginning, however, the functionalist approach was attacked both for alleged theoretical shortcomings and on ideological grounds. Questions such as "Functional for whom?" were raised—valid questions in that the interests and needs of different groups in society are often in conflict, and what may be functional for one group may be dysfunctional for another. Thus, the model is unable to explain social conflicts and social change because it assumes consensus on basic societal values and goals, and it minimizes the importance of power and coercion as a mechanism of social integration (Eisenstadt, 1985:13).

Others argue that functional analysis deals far more adequately with the problem of social order than with the problem of social change. They argue that it is a static, antihistorical mode of analysis with a bias toward conservatism and that the theory cannot adequately account for social change. Some sociologists even suggest that there is an implicit teleology in functional analysis, in that this mode of analysis inappropriately attributes purposes to social institutions as if they were conscious beings. As expected, a sizable literature in the field has been devoted to both making and refuting these charges (Turner & Maryanski, 1995:55–58).

SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

In a changing society it is important to remember that it is, after all, people who change. It is not surprising, therefore, that the social-psychological approach gained much attention in recent years due primarily to the contributions of David McClelland and Everett E. Hagen to the study of change and, in particular, development. The underlying assumption is that societies develop as a result of the workings of certain psychological factors. Where such factors are present, change will take place; where they are absent, stagnation will prevail. Instead of concentrating on technological and environmental factors, ideas, structural conditions, or social conflict, this approach focuses on individuals with unique personality attributes. It deals with psychological determinants that drive people to act, to push forward, to invent, to discover, create, acquire, build, or expand. The German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920), who had a stronger influence on Western sociology than any other single individual, was among the first to use

this approach in his study of the Protestant ethic and capitalism. Hagen's theory of status withdrawal and McClelland's theory on achievement motivation are examples of the modern social-psychological approach to change and development.

Max Weber

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber's theme is that the development of modern industrial capitalism was possible because of specific psychological states that occurred after the sixteenth century in western Europe, prompted by the spread of the Protestant ethic. He pays much attention to the spirit of capitalism, stating that "development of the spirit of capitalism is best understood as part of the development of rationalism as a whole, and could be deduced from the fundamental position of rationalism on the basic problems of life" (Weber, 1958:76). The spirit of capitalism is characteristic of situations in which people are preoccupied by the idea of making money, and the acquisition of goods becomes the ultimate purpose in life. Idleness, wastefulness, or continuous enjoyment of life are not tolerated. Life is to be devoted to achieving. In the relentless pursuit of acquisitions, greater efficiency is advocated because this leads to more results. We are under a constant pressure to rationalize our activities and to organize our lives so that credibility, punctuality, honesty, inventiveness, and adaptability to new circumstances become integral parts of our behavior. Because such qualities are instrumental in efforts of achieving, "Capitalism is identical with the pursuit of profit and forever renewed profit by means of continuous rational capitalistic enterprise" (Weber, 1958:17).

Weber emphatically argues that people, dominated by the capitalist spirit, have little regard for traditions that would impede their climb to greater and greater wealth. "The most important opponent with which the spirit of capitalism . . . has had to struggle was the type of attitude and reaction to new situations which we may designate as traditionalism" (Weber, 1958:58-59). Therefore, the capitalist, the acquisition seeker, is an innovator by nature. Acquisition and profit making become a preoccupation. But greed is not the motivation. The capitalist spirit requires that both the acquisition and the spending of money be strictly rational, calculated, and directed toward the goal of progressive, optimal accumulation.

Weber asserts that modern Western civilization is a product of the Protestant ethic. There is a strong attitude of respect for work in the Protestant ethic. Weber points out that "the god of Calvinism demanded of his believers not single good works, but a life of good works combined into a unified system" (Weber, 1958:117). From this perspective, instead of being punishment for sin, work was worshipful activity through which man glorified God. Rationality and calculation were means to salvation in the next world as well as to success in this one. The world was a place of sin, and the



individual must not be trapped by its pleasures. These beliefs constitute the core of what Weber called the doctrine of worldly asceticism, a crucial prerequisite of capitalism.

When people work hard, they may accumulate wealth. When they are prohibited from indulging in worldly pleasures, they do not spend it. They save, and savings are one of the foundations of capitalism. Simply by embracing the Protestant ethic, postfeudal citizens began acting in ways that made them more successful members of the rising capitalistic economy. Merchants and manufacturers, ill at ease with the conflict between their traditional beliefs and business behavior, found comfort and reinforcement in the Protestant ethic. The Protestant ethic, as a way of life, was one of piety, frugality, prudence, discipline, devotion to work which became one's calling, and postponement of gratification. It also generated the right atmosphere for the spread of the spirit of capitalism. But Weber assumed that although the impulse to profit and gain is present in all societies, only in the West did capitalism, as a rational organization of production and the calculable balance sheet of costs, emerge (Bell, 1996).

Max Weber, as most great and provocative thinkers usually are, is challenged, questioned, and criticized on a number of grounds (see, for example, Weinert, 1997). A number of questions centered around the alleged direct causal connection between the Protestant ethic on the one hand and the development of capitalism on the other. "Others have cast doubt on the specific 'mechanism' through which, according to Weber, Calvinist belief became transformed into or linked to motivation for this—worldly economic activities, namely, the psychological derivatives of the idea of predestination, the great anxiety which this idea created among believers, urging them to undertake in a compulsive way this-worldly activities to prove their being of the elect" (Eisenstadt, 1973:215).

There are also arguments suggesting that Weber's linking of capitalism to the Protestant work ethics fails to explain the success of Confucian ethics-based Asian countries such as Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong and the great economic success of overseas Chinese. Confucius, who lived in the sixth century, denounced the profit motive as unworthy of an ethical citizen. He states in one of his more famous aphorisms that "The gentleman understands what is moral. The small man understands what is profitable." Confucius was a stern moralist who advocated filial piety, reverence for the ancestral customs, and emperor worship. His main concern was that people fulfill their "heavenly decree" and learn to live honorably within a static and hierarchical society. The virtues he recommended were magnanimity, propriety, moderation, persistent striving, respect for one's superiors, and honest dealings with one's inferiors. He said nothing about competition, risk taking, and trade. But Francis Fukuyama (1995) argues in his provocative book, *Trust*, that something very interesting happens when Confucian values are transplanted into a free market environment. Fukuyama points

out that many of the virtues of Confucianism, such as close-knit family structure, frugality, and striving for excellence, are not premodern, but are precisely those values that are best adopted to modern capitalist success. He concludes that when the Chinese migrate to other parts of the world that have competitive and free markets, their Confucian values help them to outperform the natives.

On the other hand, in the past three decades or so, with the surge of the great interest in development and modernization, interest in his thesis has arisen once more. Inspired by Weber's contentions, for example, Robert N. Bellah (1975) found that the Japanese religion's promotion of diligence and frugality was instrumental in generating the spirit of entrepreneurship and the fruitful activity that were essential elements in Japan's industrialization.

Everett E. Hagen

Everett E. Hagen (1962, 1991) became interested in economic growth when he wrote a paper on the panic of 1907 for a graduate course. After working for the National Resources Planning Board during World War II, he chaired the economics department at University of Illinois at Urbana, and then went to Burma as an advisor to the government. Subsequently, he became a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His theory is concerned, just like that of Weber's, with the *beginnings* of economic development. He asserts that change from traditional to modern society will not come about without a change in personalities. He develops his ideas within a framework of contrast between traditional and modern societies, positing that each of these societies is a product of a different type of personality.

In Hagen's view, traditional societies are characterized by fixed status levels (such as peasants and elites) and the personalities in such social groupings are authoritarian, uncreative, and *noninnovational*. A member of a traditional society is uncreative because he or she sees the world as an arbitrary place rather than one that is subject to analysis and control. A person's unconscious processes are both inaccessible and uncreative. Interpersonal relations are solved on the basis of "ascriptive authority," and people avoid anxiety by resorting to authority. Such type of society has a great degree of stability in its institutions and there may be no social change for centuries, for "the interrelationships between personality and social structure are such as to make it clear that social change will not occur without change in personalities" (Hagen, 1962:86).

Modern society is a product of what Hagen calls *innovational* personality. This personality type is characterized by attributes such as creativity, curiosity, and openness to experience. A person with this type of personality persistently looks for new solutions and does not take generally accepted evaluations for granted. Such a person sees the world as having a logical and coherent order that can be understood and explained. In spite of sporadic doubts, individuals



such as these are confident that they can evaluate the order of things by themselves and solve the problems they are confronted with. Such people are not necessarily happy and may be driven to creativity by a continual anxiety that causes them to feel satisfaction only when they are striving and achieving and when their accomplishments are acknowledged and favorably evaluated.

Following this discussion of the two personality types, Hagen poses the key question. How can a stable traditional society dominated by authoritarian personalities be transformed into a modern society characterized by innovational personalities? Hagen's answer is that change comes about if and when members of one particular social group perceive that their purposes and values are not respected by other groups in the society whom they respect and whose esteem they value. The phrase he uses for this is *withdrawal of status respect* (Hagen, 1962:185). He considers several situations of status withdrawal; for example, when a traditional elite group is replaced by another group, when symbols and beliefs that a subordinate group considers vital are depreciated or even prohibited by a superior group, inconsistency of economic and other statuses, nonacceptance of a migrant group in a new place of residence, and the delegation of institutional activity without change in the power structure.

Status withdrawal, for Hagen, means disregard for one's role in society or for one's beliefs and aspirations. He argues that it is painful to be disregarded. People without a role in society become alienated and frustrated. Groups with a low status, or groups that are forced to accept a lower status, become disenchanted with the established order. Their accumulated resentment is then transferred to their children. As a result, frustration and rage continue to be accumulated from one generation to another. Following Merton's typology of modes of individual adaptation, retreatism, he believes, is the typical reaction to withdrawal of status. The retreatist person, he says, "is not free of rage." On the contrary, the rage is intense, but held in leash, with occasional outbursts. But

retreatism is not a dead end. As retreatism deepens in successive generations, it creates circumstances of home life and social environment that are conducive to the development of innovational personality. The historical sequence seems to be: authoritarianism, withdrawal of status respect, retreatism, creativity. (Hagen, 1962:217)

Hagen considers child-rearing practices in developing countries a decisive factor in the transformation of societies. Following Freud, he assumes that childhood determines what people will become and how they will react to values and events. Values inculcated in a person's mind in early childhood remain for life. Assuming that, he argues, there is reason to expect that the men in a group suffer more from loss of status than do women. Thus, because of loss of status, men will despair, become weak, and adopt an attitude of

retreatism. Women, on the other hand, resenting the weakness of their husbands, will do everything to instill in the minds of their sons a desire to be better off than their parents. Hagen posits that the mothers will bring up their sons in a spirit of self-reliance in a yearning for achievement and ardent aspiration to prove their worth to others. The innovational personality characterized by creative imagination is likely to come into being if the boy's

experiences of infancy and early childhood give him a firm and satisfying impression of the loving nurturance of his mother, but that repeatedly he is unable to achieve as she seems to wish him to. He may then feel that the fault must lie in him, and there may become built into him anxiety that he may not accomplish enough, anxiety that drives him all his life to achieve in order to regain fleetingly that temporary feeling of security conveyed by his mother's praise and caresses. In this case, little rage and hatred may be provoked in him, and his unconscious processes will remain accessible to him. (Hagen, 1962:94)

Hagen assumes that the home environment and the lessons of the mothers should, in due time, inspire their sons to become innovators and reformers. They will acquire and establish new roles challenging the actual elite. This will come about, in Hagen's view (1962:242), when two conditions are fulfilled: "a requisite for economic growth in a traditional society is not merely that upward social mobility by new means is possible, but also that upward social mobility by traditional channels is not possible."

He illustrates his theory with case studies of Japan, Burma, and Colombia, with sporadic reference to the situation of the blacks in the United States. His attempts to account for the importance of personality in development are ambitious and revealing. There are, nevertheless, problems with his theory.

Some of the criticisms deal with the fact that he paid little attention to social structure features that changed the fashion in which socialization impinges upon different members of the same society. Others question his appraisal of the authoritarian personality in traditional society and the innovational personality in modern society. His description of authoritarian personality could easily fit any Prussian Army officer, members of the pre-war Japanese military, or any typical bureaucrat who avoids the anxiety of independent, creative, innovative thinking. Still, in spite of some of these criticisms, Hagen is right in telling us that psychological factors and the rearing of a new generation, in general, are important elements in promoting change and development.

David C. McClelland

David C. McClelland is a renowned and controversial psychologist who spent long periods at Wesleyan and Harvard and currently teaches at Boston University (Lemann, 1994). His grandfather was the presiding judge



of the U.S. Court of Customs, and his father, a minister, was the president of a small Methodist women's college in Jacksonville, Illinois. He did not start school until the third grade because of illness, but by the time he finished high school, he spoke four languages. He was inspired by Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, which posits, as noted earlier, that a change in social psychological orientation (the Reformation) was the cause of an economic change—the birth of industrial capitalism. Like Hagen, he has been primarily concerned with a specific kind of change—economic development. He focused his interest on the investigation of what he called *achievement motivation*, which subsequently was changed to *need for achievement* (symbolized by *n* Achievement). He asserts that economic development, both in historical and contemporary societies, results from a preceding development of *n* Achievement. And, the greater the development of the *n* Achievement, the more likely that economic development will be intense. He and his colleagues developed several methods of analyzing and measuring the *n* Achievement in historical societies and for cross-cultural purposes in existing societies. His results led him to suggest that "a society with a generally high level of *n* Achievement will produce more rapid economic development" (McClelland, 1961:205). The lesson is obvious, for rapid economic growth helps to "... encourage and develop those ... who have a vigorous entrepreneurial spirit or a strong drive for achievement. In other words: *invest in a man, not just in a plan*" (McClelland, 1973:16).

McClelland's *n* Achievement means individual economic achievement that produces economic growth. It is similar to what Max Weber emphasized many times. It is not greed for riches, it is action "... on the basis of rigorous calculation, directed with foresight and caution toward the economic success which is in sharp contrast to the hand-to-mouth existence of the peasant, and to the privileged traditionalism of the guild craftsman and too of the adventurers' capitalism, oriented to the exploitation of political opportunities and irrational speculation" (Weber, 1958:76). Similarly, McClelland is talking about accumulation of money, but not about money for its own sake. Accumulation of money is but one measure of success for the *n* Achievement seekers: "... it is not profit per se that makes the businessman tick but a strong desire for achievement, for doing a good job. Profit is simply one measure among several of how well the job has been done, but it is not necessarily the goal itself" (McClelland, 1973:162). More specifically, the *n* Achievement is manifested in behavior characterized by preferences for tasks with moderate difficulties for moderate calculated risks, and energetic innovative activity, especially when it results in personal achievement. Also exhibited are a degree of individualism, manifested in a high degree of responsibility and a tendency for prospective planning of individual actions, combined with a better performance if there is a knowledge of the results of the action and an evident probability of success.



Most of McClelland's work and that of his associates was devoted to the analysis of ethnographic accounts of numerous cultures in an attempt to determine the percentage of adult males engaged in entrepreneurial activity. They analyzed the content of folktales and children's stories of twenty-three nations for content and conditions of n Achievement and correlated them with subsequent indicators of economic growth. Ancient Greek literature in different periods was analyzed. The findings suggested that such literature written before periods considered prosperous in Greece, as a rule, contained stimulation toward entrepreneurial activity. They also established that persons with a high n Achievement have a tendency to doodle in multiple or diagonal waves and "S" shapes. Thus, the ceramic patterns of different cultures at different times were compared from that angle. A number of other examinations were made, special psychological tests were constructed to evaluate n Achievement, and people in various countries were tested.

Having established the pattern of n Achievement, the question is raised: How can achievement motivation be induced? The answer is simple: by *learning*. In the classic Freudian tradition, McClelland and his colleagues believed that motives are learned in reference to both external and internal stimuli. Because most of the motivations are learned in early childhood, the kind of motivations learned at that time and the stimuli experienced in childhood are of crucial importance for subsequent behavior. In other words, the desired motives may be elicited by properly selected stimuli. Achievement motivation could be inculcated in training of self-reliance, high praise for hard work, persistence in goal attainment, and interest in excellence for its own sake. Education and child-rearing practices that emphasize such values are instrumental in creating a foundation for a strong n Achievement. "Studies of the family have shown, for instance, that for a boy three factors are important in producing high n Achievement—parents' high standards of achievement, warmth and encouragement, and a father who is not dominating and authoritarian" (McClelland, 1973:172).

In another publication, *Motivating Economic Achievement* (McClelland, Winter, & Winter 1969), however, he reiterates his belief that achievement motivation is the major stimulant of economic growth. He provides evidence that even adults who were educated in a traditional setting can acquire a strong desire for modernity and can achieve in economic undertakings if they are properly induced in the direction by external agencies. The key is to change their attitude. This can be accomplished when they are put under special training that rewards their prowess and stimulates their desire for acquisition. McClelland argues that they soon start to behave as modern entrepreneurs—that is, they promote economic activities that cumulatively will produce the effect of economic growth, creating more jobs, and, subsequently, raising the general standard of living. The book deals with activities and the results of special courses in raising achievement motivation orga-





nized in India. In his conclusion, he repeats his earlier advice: "sow achievement motivation to harvest economic development."

The work of McClelland and his associates generated much subsequent research on and interest in *n Achievement*, much of it translated into practical and empirical applications (see, for example, Nathawat, Singh, & Singh, 1997). McClelland also carried out further work in a variety of settings. He set up achievement motivation courses in India, trained U.S. Navy personnel in a program to improve leadership and management, and gave achievement-motivation training to workers at the Gdansk shipyard in Poland, including the future leader of Solidarity, Lech Walesa, who was subsequently elected president. The "War on Poverty" and related activities also benefited from his efforts (Lemann, 1994). On the other hand, there have been some concerns raised about his work. One is the question of "who trains the trainer"—that is, what motivates parents or teachers to train children for achievement rather than for something else, such as power of affiliation. Another is the question of explanatory completeness. Can McClelland's thesis account for economic growth in a causal sense (Sztompka, 1994:243)? Others contend that motivational theories in general have fallen into relative disfavor and researchers have turned to other questions concerning the supply of entrepreneurship (Smelser, 1976:128).

SUMMARY

In the history of sociology, few theories have been so passionately pursued as that of social change. These efforts of explaining social change should be seen in the context of the intellectual, political, and social climates of the particular theorists. In each historical epoch, every interpretation of social reality posits certain questions and provides certain answers, thereby effectively excluding the possibility of other questions and other answers. According to S. N. Eisenstadt (1972), tension is inherent in intellectual life because of the tendency to challenge the intellectual construction of social reality. If a theory of society is developed by one group of intellectuals, this will provide an incentive for others to view the matter in another way. Eisenstadt's insight accounts, in part, for the diverse explanations of social change.

Some of the principal theories attempting explanation have been reviewed, and their weaknesses have been noted. Evolutionary theories tried to show that all societies in all spheres of social life pass through similar stages of development, moving from less complex, less differentiated stages to more complex and differentiated stages—culminating in the modern industrial, secular society.

Conflict theorists view change as the outgrowth of inescapable competition for scarce resources among groups in society. Conflict is considered

inevitable in social systems and is seen by some as a creative source of change and by others as the only possible means of change.

The structural-functional theorists have sought in various ways to account for change within the overall framework of their theory that society consists of interrelated parts that work together for the purpose of maintaining internal balance.

Social-psychological theories posit that activities of people constitute the essence of change in society and modifications in the behavior can facilitate change and play an essential role in societal development.

Although the study of social change has been the focus of attention of sociologists since the beginning of the discipline, agreement on a general theory is not yet in sight. A satisfactory theory of social change should indicate what elements are changing, what direction the change is taking, and how and why it is occurring. Such a theory should also provide an explanation for both the internal dynamics of society and the relationship between the society and its external environment. In the literature on social change, no theory realizes these objectives.

The quest for such comprehensive theory may well be futile. A concentration on narrower theories of change that seek to explain transformations in particular domains, such as economic or family life, may be more productive in the future.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS

- APPELBAUM, RICHARD P. *Theories of Social Change*. Chicago: Markham, 1970. A concise review of evolutionary, equilibrium, conflict, and rise-and-fall theories of social change.
- COSER, LEWIS. *The Functions of Social Conflict*. New York: Free Press, 1956. Building on the earlier work of Georg Simmel, Coser elaborates the many ways in which conflict strengthens rather than weakens group life.
- JANOS, ANDREW C. *Politics and Paradigms: Changing Theories of Social Change in Social Science*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986. A critical evaluation of the major theoretical perspectives on social change with special emphasis on the controversial Marxist model.
- MCQUARIE, DONALD (ed.). *Readings in Contemporary Sociological Theory: From Modernity to Post-Modernity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995. A collection of important articles on, among other topics, functionalism, conflict theory, Marxism, and neo-Marxism.
- NISBET, ROBERT A. *Social Change and History*. New York: Oxford, 1969. A lucid and highly readable analysis of many of the influential theories of social change.
- SHERMAN, HOWARD J. *Reinventing Marxism*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. An attempt to show that Marxism has not been tainted or discredited by the political-institutional practices pursued in its name or on its behalf.



- SZTOMPKA, PIOTR. *The Sociology of Social Change*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994. The author combines theoretical approaches with major issues of social change to demonstrate how change may be analyzed at different levels of society.
- TURNER, JONATHAN H. *The Structure of Sociological Theory*, 5th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991. A good overview of the major classical and contemporary sociological theories with many applications to social change.

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