What Is Social Change?
What Is Social Change?

- **Social Change** – the transformation of culture and social institutions over time
- Can be positive or negative.
- Rate of change has never been faster than it is today.
- Change in one place often causes change in others.
  - Globally & Locally

- Static vs. Dynamic Social Patterns
  - Static: status, role, stratification, social institutions
  - Dynamic: technology, bureaucracy, urbanization
    - These dynamic social patterns are all dimensions of social change.
What Is Social Change?

4 Major Characteristics of Social Change:

1. Happens all the time.
   - Everything is subject to the twists and turns of change.
   - Some societies change faster than others.
   - Some cultural elements change faster than others.
   - Ex: Death & Taxes → Allegedly constant, but have changed!

2. Sometimes intentional but often unplanned.
   - Ex: Impact of Automobiles → Travel Time, Environment, Built Env’t

3. Controversial.
   - Ex: Interracial Patterns of Interaction

4. Some changes matter more than others.
   - Ex: Clothing Fads vs. Invention of the PC
Causes of Social Change
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National population</td>
<td>76 million</td>
<td>281 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share living in cities</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy</td>
<td>46 years (men), 48 years (women)</td>
<td>74 years (men), 79 years (women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age</td>
<td>22.9 years</td>
<td>35.3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household income</td>
<td>$8,000 (in 2000 dollars)</td>
<td>$40,000 (in 2000 dollars)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of income spent on food</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of homes with flush toilets</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of cars</td>
<td>1 car for every 2,000 households</td>
<td>1.3 cars for every household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce rate</td>
<td>about 1 in 20 marriages</td>
<td>about 8 in 20 marriages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average gallons of petroleum products consumed</td>
<td>34 per person per year</td>
<td>1,100 per person per year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Illustrations of Social Change

- Rich and Richer, Dumb and Dumber
- Luxury or Necessity
- Ideal Family Size
- Job Segregation by Sex
- Evolution of Cosmo
- Shifts in Social Mores
- Confidence in Social Institutions
Causes of Social Change

Culture & Change – 3 Sources of Cultural Change?

1. **Invention** – producing new objects, ideas, and social patterns
   - Ex: Rocket Propulsion in the 1940s

2. **Discovery** – taking note of existing elements of the world
   - Ex: Medical Advances

3. **Diffusion** – creating change as products, people, and info spread
   - Ex: Cloth from Asia, Coins from Turkey
   - Material things diffuse more easily than cultural ideas.

Demographic Change

- Population patterns also play a part in social change.
  - Ex: Household Size, Aging Population, Migration Patterns
Causes of Social Change

- **Conflict & Change**
  - Marx: Class conflict is the engine that drives change; capitalistic struggles push society toward socialism.
  - This hasn’t happened, but Marx was correct that conflict arising from inequality (class, gender, race, etc.) would force changes in every society.

- **Ideas & Change**
  - Weber traced the roots of most social change to ideas.
    - Ex: Tradition → Rationality
    - Ex: Protestantism & The Spirit of Capitalism - the religious beliefs of early Protestants set the stage for the spread of industrial capitalism.
  - People with charisma can carry a message that sometimes changes the world. (Ex: MLK, Obama)
  - Ideas also direct social movements and change occurs when people join together in the pursuit of a common goal.
    - Ex: Cleaning Up the Environment
Causes of Social Change

- Ideas & Change (Continued)
  - Social Movement – an organized activity that encourages or discourages social change
  - Examples: Colonial Drive for Independence, Women’s Movement, Civil Rights Movement, Pro-Choice Movement, Gay Rights Movement
  - Social movements can be classified according to the type of change they seek (Figure on Next Slide)
    - Alterative – Limited Change, Specific Individuals (Ex: Promise Keepers)
    - Redemptive – Radical Change, Specific Individuals (Ex: AA)
    - Reformative – Limited Change, Everyone (Ex: Environmentalism)
    - Revolutionary – Radical Change, Everyone (Ex: Communism)
Modernity
Modernity

- Modernity – social patterns resulting from industrialization
- Modernization – the process of social change begun by industrialization

Four Dimensions of Modernization:

1. The decline of small, traditional communities.
   - Ex: Hunter-Gatherer → Post-Industrial
2. The expansion of personal choice.
   - Individualization - as tradition weakens, people see their lives as an unending series of options
   - We commonly believe people should take control of their lives.
3. Increasing social diversity.
   - Pre-Industrial: Family + Religion = Conformity
   - Industrial: Rationality + Bureaucracy + Urbanization = Diversity
4. Orientation toward the future and a growing awareness of time.
   - We are forward-looking and optimistic.
   - Organize routines down to the very minute.
   - Ex: Flight Departure at 11:06 am
Tonnies: The Loss of Community

- **Gemeinschaft** – human community
  - Hard Working
  - Slow Moving
  - United
- **Gesellschaft** – self-interest
  - Live Among Strangers & Ignore Others
  - Lack Trust
  - Mobile
  - Anonymous
  - Separated

Tonnies created a lasting account of modernization as the progressive loss of *Gemeinschaft* in favor of *Gesellschaft*. This shift was spurred by industrialization, which weakened family and tradition by introducing an emphasis on facts, efficiency, and money.
Durkheim: Division of Labor

- Modernization is defined by an increasing division of labor, or specialized economic activity.
- Traditional Societies: Everyone performs more or less the same daily round of activities.
  - **Mechanical Solidarity** – people are linked together by shared moral sentiments due to similarities
- Modern Societies: People perform highly specific roles.
  - **Organic Solidarity** – mutual dependency between people engaged in specialized work
- Feared **anomie**, a condition of normlessness, might occur in modern societies (due to shift from MS to OS).
- Tonnies saw modernity as destroying community, while Durkheim saw modernity ushering in a new form of community.
Weber: Rationalization

- Modernity means replacing a traditional worldview with a rational way of thinking.

Preindustrial Societies:
- Tradition acts as a constant brake on change.
- Truth & Rightness = What has always been.

Industrial and Postindustrial Societies:
- Value efficiency and have little reverence for the past.
- Truth & Rightness = Result of rational calculation.

Weber said modern societies are *disenchanted* because people turn away from the gods and challenge previously unquestioned truths with rational thinking.

Critical of modern society.
- Saw science as turning us away from more basic questions about the meaning and purpose of human existence.
- Feared rationalization would erode the human spirit through bureaucracy.
Marx: Capitalism

- Modern society is synonymous with capitalism.
- Modernity weakened small communities, sharpened the division of labor, and fostered a rational worldview.
  - All of which are necessary for capitalism to flourish!
    - Urbanization $\rightarrow$ Weakening Small Communities
    - Efficiency $\rightarrow$ Division of Labor
    - Pursuit of Profit $\rightarrow$ Rationality
- Believed social conflict would sow seeds of revolutionary change that would lead to socialism and a better world.
## Traditional and Modern Societies: The Big Picture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Society</th>
<th>Traditional Societies</th>
<th>Modern Societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Patterns</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Homogeneous; sacred character; few subcultures and countercultures</td>
<td>Heterogeneous; secular character; many subcultures and countercultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>Great moral significance; little tolerance of diversity</td>
<td>Variable moral significance; high tolerance of diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time orientation</td>
<td>Present linked to past</td>
<td>Present linked to future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Preindustrial; human and animal energy</td>
<td>Industrial; advanced energy sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Structure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status and role</td>
<td>Few statuses, most ascribed; few specialized roles</td>
<td>Many statuses, some ascribed and some achieved; many specialized roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Typically primary; little anonymity or privacy</td>
<td>Typically secondary; much anonymity and privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Face-to-face communication supplemented by mass media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social control</td>
<td>Informal gossip</td>
<td>Formal police and legal system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social stratification</td>
<td>Rigid patterns of social inequality; little mobility</td>
<td>Fluid patterns of social inequality; high mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender patterns</td>
<td>Pronounced patriarchy; women’s lives centered on the home</td>
<td>Declining patriarchy; increasing share of women work in the paid labor force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement patterns</td>
<td>Small-scale; population typically small and widely dispersed in rural villages and small towns</td>
<td>Large-scale; population typically large and concentrated in cities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## SUMMING UP

### Traditional and Modern Societies: The Big Picture

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Institutions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>Based on agriculture; much manufacturing in the home; little white-collar work</td>
<td>Based on industrial mass production; factories become centers of production; increasing white-collar work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Small-scale government; little state intervention in society</td>
<td>Large-scale government; much state intervention in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Extended family as the primary means of socialization and economic production</td>
<td>Nuclear family still has some socialization functions but is more a unit of consumption than of production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Religion guides worldview; little religious pluralism</td>
<td>Religion weakens with the rise of science; extensive religious pluralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Formal schooling limited to elites</td>
<td>Basic schooling becomes universal, with growing share of people receiving advanced education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>High birth and death rates; short life expectancy because of low standard of living and simple medical technology</td>
<td>Low birth and death rates; longer life expectancy because of higher standard of living and sophisticated medical technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Change</strong></td>
<td>Slow; change evident over many generations</td>
<td>Rapid; change evident within a single generation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theoretical Analysis of Modernity
S-F Theory: Modernity as Mass Society

- **Mass Society** – a society in which prosperity and bureaucracy have weakened traditional social ties
  - Material Plenty
    - Highly Productive
    - Lots of Income
    - But…
  - Spiritual Weakness & Moral Uncertainty
  - Weak Kinship & Impersonal Neighborhoods
  - Feelings of Social Isolation

- Theory of Mass Society (2 Parts):
  - 1. The scale of modern life has greatly increased.
  - 2. The state (and other large bureaucracies) is ever-expanding.
1. The Mass Scale of Modern Life

Pre-IR: Tight Communities in Rural Villages & Small Towns

- *Gemischta*: Surrounded By Kin, Guided by Shared Heritage, Gossip Ensured Conformity

Mechanical Solidarity

- Strong Moral Values
- Low Tolerance for Social Diversity

IR & Beyond: Large Cities (↑ Population, Urbanization, & Division of Labor)

- *Gesellschaf*: Weakened Traditional Values

Organic Solidarity

- Specialized Economic Activity → People Known by Job vs. Kinship Group or Hometown

F2F Communication Replaced by Mass Media

- Which gives rise to a national culture that washes over the traditional differences between towns and regions.

Geographic Mobility + Mass Communication + Exposure to Diverse Ways of Life → Tolerance
2. The Ever-Expanding State

- Pre-IR: Government = Local Noble + Distant Monarchy
  - Rulers and leaders had little power compared to today.

- IR & Beyond: Government = Large and Important
  - Technological Innovation $\rightarrow$ Government Expands $\rightarrow$ Centralized State Grows in Size & Importance
  - Government has assumed the responsibility for more and more areas of social life.
    - National Defense
    - Schooling
    - Controlling Wages & Working Conditions
    - Financial Assistance to Ill & Unemployed

- Large Organizations Become Central – assume responsibility for the daily needs that had previously been fulfilled by family, friends, and neighbors
  - Ex: Public Schools, CJS, Charities

- Thus power resides in large bureaucracies in mass society.
S-C Theory: Modernity as Class Society

- **Class Society** – a capitalist society with pronounced social stratification

- Theory of Class Society: Views the heart of modernization as an (1) expanding capitalist economy, marked by (2) inequality.
S-C Theory: Modernity as Class Society

1. Capitalism

   The increasing scale of social life in modern society results from the growth and greed unleashed by capitalism.

   Capitalism = Profit Seeking →
   - Consumption & Production Rise
   - Self-Centeredness → Weakens Social Ties
   - People = Commodities

   Capitalism = Rationality & Science
   - Modern societies encourage people to view human well-being as a technical puzzle to be solved by experts rather than through the pursuit of social justice.
     - Ex: Health through Science and Medicine vs. Health through Poverty
   - Business also promotes scientific logic by attempting to increase profit through efficiency.
S-C Theory: Modernity as Class Society

2. Persistent Inequality

- Elites persist as capitalist millionaires rather than nobles born to wealth and power.
  - The richest 5% in the US own 60% of all privately held property.
  - Most people are powerless in the face of wealthy elites.

M-S vs. C-S Theory on Inequality

- M-S: The state works to increase equality and combat social problems.
- C-S: State can only accomplish minor reforms because the real power lies in the hands of capitalists who control the economy.
  - Progress is the result of political struggle, NOT gov’t goodwill.
Problems of Identity in Modern (Mass) Society

- Modernity freed individuals from the small, tightly knit communities of the past.
- People now have the privacy and freedom to express their individuality.
- But... social diversity + widespread isolation + rapid social change → difficulty establishing a coherent identity.
  - Pre-IR: Small, Homogenous, Slowly Changing Societies → Firm, Narrow Foundation for Building a Personal Identity
  - IR & Beyond: Bewildering array of options! People shuttle from one identity to another in search of their “true self.”
  - Major Question of Today: “Who am I?”
Modernity & The Individual

- Problems of Powerlessness in Modern (Class) Society
  - Persistent social inequality undermines modern society’s promise of individual freedom.
    - For many, everyday life means coping with economic uncertainty and a growing sense of powerlessness.
    - Thus many people are still denied full participation in our social life.
    - Worse for minorities (e.g., racial/ethnic, women).
Modernity & Progress

- Modernity is linked to the idea of **progress**, a state of continual improvement.
  - Stability = Stagnation

- So we view traditional cultures as backward.

- But change is a mixed blessing.
  - Example: Being Rich (Affluence)
    - +: Longer LE, More Comfortable Existence
    - --: Stressful Routines → Less Happiness
  - Example: Automobiles (Technology)
    - +: Rapid Transportation
    - --: Weakened Traditional Attachments to Hometowns & Families

- Try to come up with your own example(s).
Postmodernity
Postmodernity  (Read about this!)

- Industrial Revolution → Modernity
- Information Revolution → Postmodernity – social patterns characteristic of postindustrial societies

5 Themes of Postmodern Thinking:

1. In important respects, modernity has failed.
   - Modernity has not solved our SPs, largely due to a widespread lack of financial security.

2. The bright light of “progress” is fading.
   - People are unsure what the future holds and stark pessimism reigns.

3. Science no longer holds the answers.
   - Science has not solved our SPs and has created many new SPs.
   - Science ≠ Truth: There is no one truth and objective reality does not exist, rather many socially constructed realities exist.

4. Cultural debates are intensifying,
   - With less material want, ideas are taking on more importance.

5. Social institutions are changing.
   - Ex: Changing Families (Refer to Family lecture for details.)
Postmodernity (Read about this!)

- Critical Review
  - P-M criticizes modernity for not meeting human needs.
  - Fails to recognize the positive outcomes of modernity like longer LE and higher standards of living.
Modernization &
Our Global Future
Modernization & Our Global Future

- The world is in desperate need of change, as evidenced by the plight of the world’s poor. *What can we do?*

  - **Modernization Theory** – in the past, the entire world was poor and technological change enhanced human productivity and raised living standards in many nations
    - Solution to Poverty = Promote Technological Development
    - Major Barrier = Traditionalism
    - But modernization is a trade-off…
      - May gain wealth through economic development.
      - But could lose cultural identity and values.

  - **Dependency Theory** – today’s poor societies have little ability to modernize, even if they want to
    - Major Barrier = Global Domination of Rich Capitalist Societies
      - Who don’t really WANT other societies to modernize, as they prefer to have those nations *dependent* on them.
Looking Ahead
Conclusion

- The last century witnessed unprecedented human achievement.
- But solutions to many problems of human existence – including finding meaning in life, resolving conflicts between nations, and eliminating poverty – have eluded us.
- New problems have also emerged like controlling population growth and establishing an environmentally sustainable society.
- In the next 100 years, we must be prepared to tackle such problems with imagination, compassion, and determination.
- Our growing understanding of human society gives us reason to be hopeful that we can make positive changes.

Questions?