

SOCIETY

Society → *people who interact in a defined territory and share a culture.*

Gerhard Lenski → describes how societies have changed over the past 10,000 years. Lenski points to the importance of technology in shaping any society.

SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGY

Lenski uses the term **sociocultural evolution** → changes that occur as a society gains new technology.

Inventing or adopting new technology sends ripples of change throughout a society. (discovery of sail → transportation → expand economy and military power)

Drawing on Lenski's work, we will examine five types of societies defined by their technology.

1- Hunting and Gathering Societies

- In the simplest of all societies, people live by hunting and gathering → ***making use of simple tools to hunt animals and gather vegetation for food.***
- *appeared 3 million years ago until about 12,000 years ago*
- Gender → same importance... most time → to collect food.. Young people do work..
- Depend on the family → get and distribute food, protect its members, and teach their way of life to the children.
- Spiritual leader → socially equal
- Simple weapons → spear, bow, arrow, stone knife..
- Nomadic → moving on to find new sources of vegetation or to follow migrating animals... rarely form permanent settlements.
- Enemy → Natural force → Severe storms and droughts ... serious accident or illness.
- many die in childhood, and no more than half reach the age of twenty.
- Info about human history and our basic ties to the natural world.

2- Horticultural and Pastoral Societies .

- Some 10,000 to 12,000 years ago..
- People developed **horticulture** → *the use of hand tools to raise crops.*
- *digging stick ... grow plants*
- **Pastoralism** → *the domestication of animals.*
- South America, Africa, and Asia.
- Increased food → populations expanded from dozens to hundreds.. Thousands.
- material surplus (more resources than are needed to feed the population → not work for food)
- Greater specialization results → crafts, trade, cut hair, apply tattoos, or serve as priests → more socially diverse.
- Not "better" in every sense → some families become richer and more powerful

- greater inequality→ elites using government power—and military force—to serve their own interests.
- But can control only a small number of people
- Religion → Hunters and gatherers → many spirits inhabit the world.
- Horticultural→ one God ,, Pastoral societies→ God as directly involved in the well-being of the world.

3- Agrarian Societies

- About 5,000 years ago.... middle east
- **Agriculture**→ large-scale cultivation using plows harnessed to animals or more powerful energy sources.
- invention of the animal-drawn plow.. other advances →irrigation,the wheel, writing, numbers,and the use of various metals—that this moment in history is often called the “*dawn of civilization.*”
- farmers could cultivate → fields far bigger ... more fertile→ development of permanent settlements. ...
- ability to grow a surplus of food and to transport goods using animal-powered wagons→ expanded in size and population.
- more specialization→ distinct occupations(farmers to builders to metal workers.)
- invented money →as a common standard of exchange(no barter system)
- extreme social inequality(even more than modern societies such as our own)
- majority→ peasants or slaves,who do most of the work.
- Elites → “refined”activities,including the study of philosophy, art, and literature.(“high culture”)
- In previous societies → women provide most of the food→ gives them social importance. Agriculture→ men ... social dominance. Using heavy metal plows pulled by large animals, agrarian societies put men in charge of food production .Women are left with the support tasks, such as weeding and carrying water to the fields .
- religion reinforces the power of elites by defining both loyalty and hard work as moral obligations.

4- Industrial Societies

- **Industrialism**→ production of goods using advanced sources of energy to drive large machinery.
- Around the year 1750→water power and then steam boilers→ large machines
- new industrial societies changed more in one century than the earlier agrarian societies had changed over the course of the previous thousand years.

- automobiles .. electricity → modern “conveniences.. Electronic communication..
- Work also changed → away from home → weakening close relationships, traditional values...
- occupational specialization became greater than ever.
- Today, the kind of work you do → has a lot to do with your standard of living.
- Rapid change / movement → make social life more anonymous → increase cultural diversity (subculture....)
- changes the family...not center of social life..(single divorce...)
- greatest effect of industrialization → raise living standards(increased fivefold in US) at first few..then.. everyone’s income rises → longer and more comfortable lives.
- social inequality → decreases slightly → extended schooling..greater political rights for everyone.
- South Korea, Taiwan, China, Eastern Europe and in 2011 in Egypt and other nations of the Middle East.

5- Postindustrial Societies

- postindustrialism → *production of information using computer technology* (new phase of technological development)
- Production in industrial societies → factories and machinery generating material goods..
- postindustrial production → relies on computers and other electronic devices → that create, process, store, and apply information.
- (people in industrial societies learn mechanical skills, people in postindustrial societies such as ours develop information-based skills.) less labor force
- more jobs become available for clerical workers, teachers, writers, sales managers, and marketing representatives → common jobs that involve processing information.
- most evident in rich nations → affects people in all countries around the world. (flow of products, people, and information) global culture...the postindustrial society is at the heart of globalization

Karl Marx: Society and Conflict

- At the heart of Marx’s thinking is the idea of **social conflict** → the struggle between segments of society over valued resources.

Capitalists → people who own and operate factories and other businesses in pursuit of profits.

- A capitalist tries to make a profit by selling a product for more than it costs to produce.

Capitalism turns most of the population into industrial workers, whom Marx called **proletarians** → people who sell their labor for wages.

- To Marx, a system of capitalist production always ends up creating conflict between capitalists and workers.
- To keep profits high, capitalists keep wages low. But workers want higher wages. Since profits and wages come from the same pool of funds, the result is conflict.
- As Marx saw it, this conflict could end only with the end of capitalism itself.

➤ All societies are composed of **social institutions** → the major spheres of social life, or societal subsystems, organized to meet human needs.

Examples of social institutions: the economy, the political system, the family, religion, and education.

➤ Marx argued that one institution—**the economy**—*dominates all the others* Social institutions and defines the character of the entire society

class conflict → to refer to conflict between entire classes over the distribution of a society's wealth and power.

- Marx rejected the of thinking → **false consciousness**, *explaining social problems as the shortcomings of individuals rather than as the flaws of society.*
- **class consciousness** → *workers' recognition of themselves as a class unified in opposition to capitalists and ultimately to capitalism itself.*

Max Weber: The Rationalization of Society

Members of preindustrial societies are bound by *tradition*, and people in industrial-capitalist societies are guided by *rationality*.

TRADITION → Weber meant *values and beliefs passed from generation to generation.*

In other words, traditional people are guided by the past, and they feel a strong attachment to long-established ways of life.

People in modern societies, however, favor **RATIONALITY** → *a way of thinking that emphasizes deliberate, matter-of-fact calculation of the most efficient way to accomplish a particular task.*

Rationalization of Society → *the historical change from tradition to rationality as the main type of human thought.*

Emile Durkheim: Society and Function

Durkheim acknowledged the advantages of modern-day freedom, but he warned of increased **ANOMIE** → *a condition in which society provides little moral guidance to individuals.*

MECHANICAL SOLIDARITY → *social bonds, based on common sentiments and shared moral values, that are strong among members of preindustrial societies.*

- In practice, mechanical solidarity is based on *similarity*.
- Modern life creates a new type of solidarity. ...

ORGANIC SOLIDARITY → *social bonds, based on specialization and interdependence, that are strong among members of industrial societies.*

For Durkheim, then, the key to change in a society is an expanding **Division of Labor** → *or specialized economic activity.*