I. Classical Theory: Assumptions

A. Laws of nature

1. universal

2. include human societies

3. discoverable through science

B. Method: positivism

1. empiricism

2. human social world

C. History

1. social evolutionism

2. progress

II. Social Evolutionism

A. Assumptions

1. all societies follow a sequence of stages

2. human society was naturally progressing

3. European countries progressed furthest

B. Characteristics

1. linear and irreversible

2. movement: simple to complex (often smaller to

larger)

3. teleological: perfection as end state

4. analogous to stages of growth in an organism

a. stability

b. change

D. social evolutionism: scientifc theory or ideology

1. evidence

a. all societies

b. end state

2. unexamined assumptions: ethnocentrism

3. colonialism and White Man’s Burden

4. biological determinism and idea of race

5. social evolution = progress