

SAMPLE : VALUE ADDITION MATERIAL

TOPIC-WISE and QUESTION-WISE

Power is not a zero-sum game (Variable Sum)

Sociologist's views -

1. **Conflict theory of Power (Marx, Weber)** → Power is a Zero sum or constant sum
2. **Talcott Parson** → Power is Variable Sum or (not zero sum)

Sociologists describe **POWER** as the ability of an individual or group to fulfill its desires and implement its decisions and ideas. It involves the ability to influence and/ or control the behavior of others even against their will.

You can visit following link for a better understanding **GOVT website**:

[-https://www.idsa.in/idsanews/is-power-a-zero-sum-or-variable-game-in-international-relations](https://www.idsa.in/idsanews/is-power-a-zero-sum-or-variable-game-in-international-relations)

For understanding purpose -

- Power X + Power Y is either [> 0 or < 0 , *In our case its > 0*]
- Sum (X + Y) is not equal to **zero/ constant**
- For example, the Govt decision to merge the different banks → thereby increasing productivity of the **banking system**.
- International Collaboration or Alliance by India (**QUADS, BRICS, SOLAR ALLIANCE**) → this power can further be increased by adding members or expanding alliance

Parsons regards power as something possessed by society as a whole. As such power is a generalized facility or resource in the society. It is the **capacity to mobilize the resources** of the society for the attainment of goals for which a general public commitment has been made.

In this sense the amount of power in society is measured by the **degree to which collective goals are realized**. Thus, the greater the efficiency of a social system for achieving the goals defined by its members, the **more power exists in society**. This view is known as a **variable sum concept** of power (different from Weberian and Marxian constant sum concept of power), since power in society is not seen as fixed as contrasted. Instead it is variable in the sense it can increase or decrease (*Haralambos 1980, Turner 1996*).

The Heroic Struggle of Samsung Workers in Tamil Nadu October, 2024

The **Tamil Nadu** case also illustrates the idea that power is not necessarily zero-sum. Since demands of the workers are met, **improving working conditions and wages**, it could create a more sustainable and cooperative work environment that **benefits both the corporation and the employees**.

The MeToo Movement (Global, 2017-present)

The MeToo movement is a **global social movement** that began in the United States and spread worldwide, focusing on the widespread issue of sexual harassment and abuse, especially in the workplace.

By raising awareness and holding powerful individuals accountable, the **movement shifted power dynamics**, particularly in industries such as entertainment, politics, and business. It illustrates how collective action can empower marginalized voices and challenge the entrenched power of elites who have historically been shielded from accountability.

A Classic case of The Arab Spring (Middle East, 2010-2012)

The **Arab Spring** was a series of **anti-government protests** and uprisings across the **Middle East** and North Africa, sparked by social, political, and economic discontent.

The **movements toppled long-standing dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya**. However, the outcomes varied across countries, with some moving toward democracy and others descending into chaos or civil war, like Syria. This case study shows how mass movements can challenge concentrated power but also underscores the complexities of redistributing power across social and political systems.

Another example is, The **Panchayati Raj System** empowers local self-governance, allowing villages to make decisions tailored to their specific needs. This decentralization increases the political power of local leaders and communities, facilitating collaborative governance

Another example is, **Women's Empowerment Initiatives**→ Programs like **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao** aim to empower girls and women, increasing their participation in education and the workforce. This shift enhances women's social power without diminishing the status of men

Parsons' view of power is developed from his general theory of the nature of society. He believes that order, stability and cooperation in society are based on value concerns, that is a general agreement by members of society concerning what is good and worthwhile.

He assumes that this **value consensus** is essential for the survival of the social system. From shared values desire the collective goals, that is goals shared by members of society.

- For example if materialism is a major value of the Western Industrial society, collective goals such as economic expansion and higher living standards can be seen to stem from this value. The more able Western societies are also to realize these goals, the greater the power that resides in the social system. Steadily rising living standards and economic growth are therefore the indications of an increase of power for the society as a whole

Power Differential in Society (Parsons)

Parsons' view of power differentials within society also derives from his general theory of the social system. He argues since **goals are shared by all members of society**, power will generally be used in the furtherance of collective goals.

Thus, for Parsons, **power is an integrative face in the social system** just as social stratification. Parsons argues that as value consensus is an essential component of all societies, it follows that some form of stratification results from the ranking of individuals in terms of common values.

Thus those who perform successfully in terms of society, values will be ranked highly and accorded high prestige and power since they exemplify and personify common values. And **Parsons, a functionalist**, believes that this differential distribution of power and prestige among the different strata of society is just, right and proper since they are basically an expression of shared values.

In conclusion, Key Aspects of Parsons' View are-

1. **Power as a Resource for Collective Goals:** For example, governments use power to provide public services, maintain law and order, and promote social welfare. In this sense, power grows as it is used to benefit the collective good.
2. **Legitimacy and Authority:** Parsons emphasized that power is legitimate when it is accepted by society and used in line with the social norms and values of the system.
3. **Expanding Power:** Unlike the zero-sum perspective, where one group's gain in power leads to another's loss, Parsons viewed power as something that can **expand**. As more individuals or groups work together toward common objectives, the overall capacity to achieve societal goals increases, meaning power is shared and amplified.

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Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Social Research

Research methods are categorized into qualitative and quantitative methods

Quantitative Methods: Quantitative methods include data structures, mathematical formulas, postulates, analysis by pie charts, graphical representations, Correlation, Regression, etc.

Qualitative Methods: Qualitative methods are those methods which depend on the theories of Interactionism. It gives importance to **context and meaning**.

Key concepts

Types of Data:

Primary data – Any data that a researcher gathers firsthand is primary data.

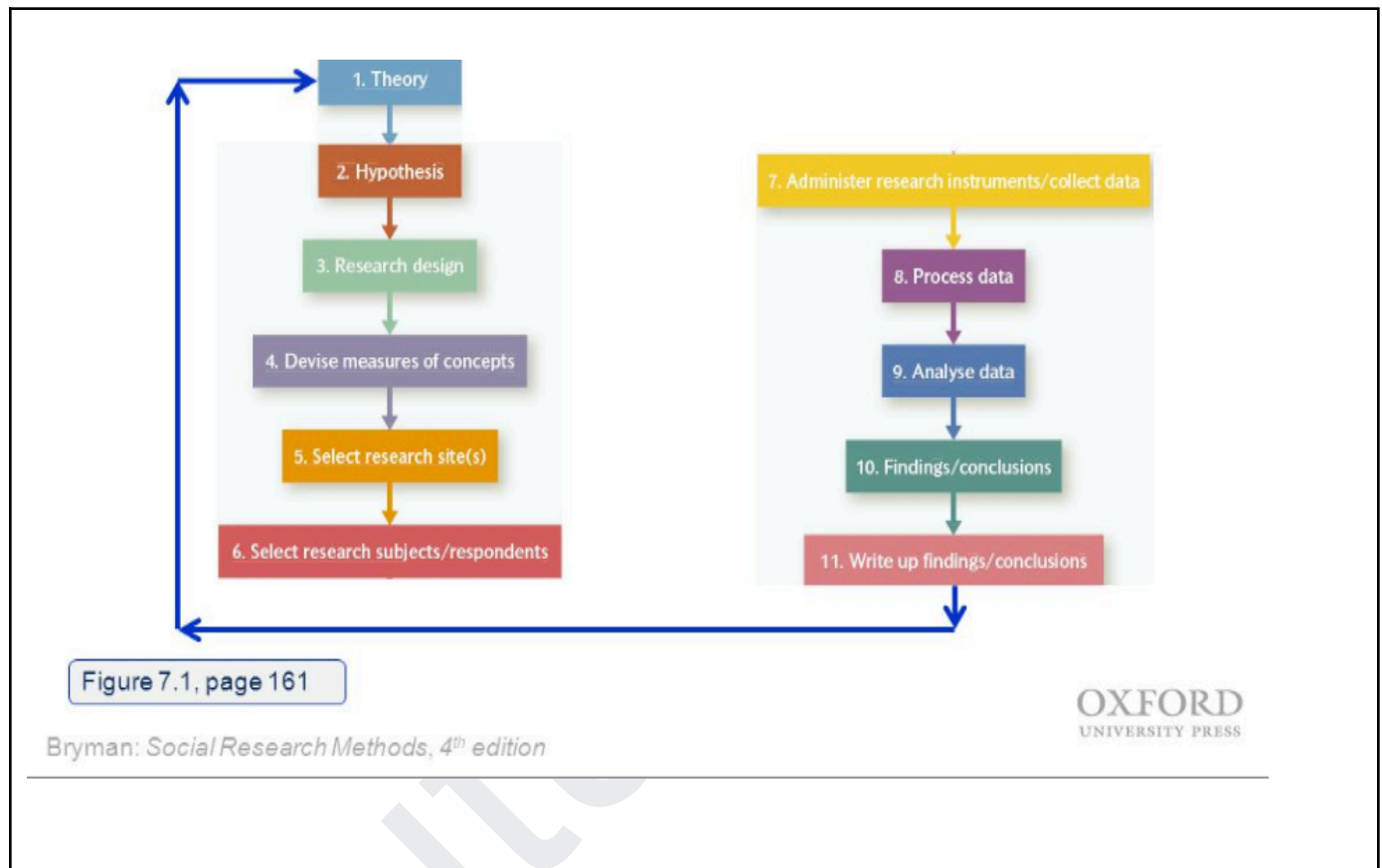
Secondary data – Any data collected by a previous sociologist or institution is secondary data

Quantitative Methods

Quantitative methods in sociology involve the use of **numerical data and statistical analysis** to study social phenomena. These methods aim to identify patterns, relationships, and trends within large groups by using structured techniques like **surveys, questionnaires, and official statistics**.

Quantitative research is **often deductive**, testing theories and hypotheses through measurable variables. These methods **complement qualitative approaches**, offering a broad perspective on social trends.

Note: Data collection tools/method in quantitative search → **surveys, questionnaires, and official statistics** (Details in latter part this chapter)



How data is collected in quantitative research:

- **Surveys and Questionnaires** – Structured forms with close-ended questions for large populations.
- **Structured Interviews** – Pre-determined, close-ended questions asked consistently across participants.
- **Secondary Data Analysis** – Using existing data (e.g., census, government reports).
- **Experiments** – Controlled environments to test cause-and-effect relationships.
- **Longitudinal Studies** – Data collected over time from the same group to track changes.

- **Systematic Observation** – Structured observation of behavior using standardized coding

Quantitative research can be done using **primary or secondary data**. Primary data is gathered by a researcher directly from the respondents in a research study. Secondary data is data collected by someone other than the researcher who is using it at that point of time. It is also available in macro data sets such as the **Census and national databases**

Quantitative methods is described as entailing the collection of numerical data, as exhibiting a view of the relationship between theory and research **as deductive** and a predilection for a natural science approach (and of **positivism** in particular), and as having an **objectivist conception of social reality**.

Statistics is the most widely used branch of mathematics in quantitative research outside of the physical sciences, and also finds applications within the physical sciences, such as in statistical mechanics. Quantitative research using statistical methods starts with the collection of data, based on the hypothesis or theory. Usually a big sample of data is collected – this would require verification, validation and recording before the analysis can take place. **Software packages such as SPSS and R** are typically used for this purpose

Example:

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) in his work → *Suicide* (1897)

Durkheim conducted one of the earliest and most famous quantitative studies in sociology, examining suicide rates across different social groups. He used **official statistics** and found that social factors such as religion, marital status, and social integration influenced suicide rates. This study helped establish sociology as a science rooted in empirical data.

Ashish Bose ; Demographic studies (*Population in India*)

Quantitative Aspect: Bose was a pioneer in demographic studies in India and conducted large-scale quantitative studies on population growth, fertility rates, and migration patterns. His work used statistical methods to inform government policies on population control and urbanization.

He is best known for coining the term **BIMARU** (in a paper presented to then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi) to refer to the four grossly under-developed states of (undivided) **Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh** in the 1980s; later, Odisha was also included, to expand it to BIMAROU. Bose's contention was if the government wants to control population, it should stress on these state

Key Terms & concepts related to quantitative research

Concepts: they are the building blocks of theory. It is a label that we give to elements of the social world.

As **Bulmer** (1984: 43) succinctly puts it, concepts 'are categories for the organization of ideas and observations'. For example, **Social stratification, Social mobility**. they are useful for providing an explanation of a certain aspect of social world

Why to measure concepts? Quantitative research requires that the variables under consideration can be measured. It helps in producing precise estimates of the degree of the relationship between concepts. It provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships.

Construct: is a combination of concepts that are difficult to observe directly, but can be inferred from related behavior patterns. For example, in Gender Studies, '**patriarchy**'. Patriarchy cannot be seen but its presence can be determined by a questionnaire or standardized test.

Reliability: measurements should be reliable so that we can trust the values or scores. A measurement is reliable if it consistently gives the same answer at different points in time

Validity refers to the issue of whether an indicator (or set of indicators) that is devised to gauge a concept really measures that concept. Several ways of establishing validity are explored in the text: face validity; concurrent validity; predictive validity; construct validity; and convergent validity.

Causality: It is used to explain why things are the way they are and to find influence in relationship between dependent and independent variables

Generalization: it is to find whether findings can be generalized from sample to population? Can findings be used beyond the particular contexts? For example, does Family have same characteristic in cross national, cross cultural context.

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Question: Do you think Talcott Parsons gave an adequate theory of social change? Justify your answer. (2021)

DEMAND OF THE QUESTION

1. Key concept → **Functional perspective vs conflict Theory** on Social change
2. Ques Type → To test **Critical thinking** of student
3. Core demand → The question demands a critical evaluation of **Talcott Parsons' theory** of social change, assessing its adequacy in explaining societal transformations. This involves outlining the theory, highlighting its strengths (e.g., **integration, equilibrium**) and limitations (e.g., **neglect of conflict, rigidity**), Criticism of **Evolutionary universals** (Cuba/North Korea)

Talcott Parsons emphasized that shared values and functional processes maintain social stability. However, he acknowledged the potential for **social change driven by external and internal factors**.

- **External factors** include environmental conditions, resources, and historical influences like cultural diffusion, as seen when colonial rule brought Western education to India, inspiring reform movements.
- **Internal factors** involve people's motives and values, which can create harmony or strain, such as the growing demand for gender equality in families.

Parsons views social change as a process of ‘**social evolution**’ from a simple to more complex form of society. Social evolution involves a process of social differentiation. The institutions and roles which form the social system become increasingly **differentiated and specialized** in terms of their function. As the parts of society become more and more specialized and distinct, it increases the **problem of integration** of parts which in turn sets forth the process of social change and social equilibrium.

Parsons viewed **social change at two levels-**

1. Changes **within a system** (internal adjustments) and
2. **Changes of the system** itself (shifts in its overall structure and function).

Additional information on Functionalism & Social Changes

Functionalism’ (ASR, 1963), P. Van den Berghe states that according to functional theory **change may come from three main sources:**

1. Adjustment to external disturbances such as a recession in world trade.
2. Structural differentiation in response to problems within the system, e.g., electoral reforms in response to political unrest.
3. Creative innovations within the system, e.g., scientific discoveries or technological advances.

Do you remember?

Parsons Functionalism concept

In Parsons’ view the stability of a social system is maintained not only through the **rules and regulations** that society imposed upon its members or through other measures of **social control that state enforces upon its citizens** but in a more enduring manner, by the internalization of socially approved values, expected behavior patterns and codes of social existence. This internalization takes place in society through the process of socialization of its members

Talcott Parsons explained that for any **society to survive and function**, it needs to meet four

basic needs, called functional prerequisites:

1. **Adaptation:** Adjusting to the environment and providing resources (e.g., the economy).
2. **Goal Attainment:** Setting and achieving collective goals (e.g., government).
3. **Integration:** Maintaining harmony and coordination among parts (e.g., laws and norms).
4. **Latency:** Preserving cultural values and motivating individuals (e.g., family and education).

These processes ensure a **society's stability and continuity**. Parsons believed institutions like families, schools, and governments play key roles in fulfilling these needs to keep society running smoothly.

CHANGES WITHIN SOCIAL SYSTEMS

Parsons explained social change through functionalism, drawing an **analogy with biological life cycles**. Like biological systems, social systems undergo processes of **growth, differentiation, and self-maintenance**.

However, unlike biological systems, social systems are primarily influenced by **cultural factors**, which go beyond biology. Social change occurs due to internal factors, such as **cultural innovations**, and external factors, like contact with other cultures and the diffusion of new values and lifestyles.

- For example, globalization has introduced new cultural ideas, leading to societal modernization. Parsons highlighted that these processes enable societies to adapt and evolve while maintaining their functional stability.

Case Study: Panchayati Raj System as Social Change Within the System (Local Governance)

The **Panchayati Raj System** in India exemplifies social change within an existing system. It reformed local governance by empowering **grassroots democratic institutions** without disrupting traditional rural structures like caste and kinship networks. This change strengthened **village-level self-governance**, enabling local communities to address issues such as water management, sanitation, and infrastructure development. The system aligned with national development goals while maintaining social cohesion. Additionally, the reservation of seats for women and marginalized groups promoted inclusivity, subtly altering gender and social dynamics. This case highlights **Parsons' idea of internal change**, where societies evolve while preserving their structural stability.

Case Study: The Green Revolution in India

The Green Revolution (1960s) illustrates social change within the system. It introduced agricultural innovations like high-yield crop varieties, chemical fertilizers, and modern irrigation, revolutionizing rural India's agrarian economy. These changes were **integrated into the traditional village structure without dismantling it**.

The system adapted to address food security (**economic adaptation**), improved resource allocation (**goal attainment**), and maintained social order (**integration**). The Green Revolution brought functional improvements without altering the fundamental socio-economic system, reflecting internal change while preserving equilibrium.

Case Study: Digital India Initiative

The Digital India Initiative **launched in 2015** is an example of **social change within the system**. It **modernized governance and public service delivery** through digital platforms like Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker. While introducing technological advancements, it retained India's democratic and bureaucratic framework. These changes **enhanced efficiency (adaptation)**, aligned with developmental goals (**goal attainment**), and integrated diverse regions into a unified digital network (integration). The initiative transformed public service accessibility without overhauling the core structure of governance.

Each of these cases shows how internal changes can improve functionality while preserving overall societal stability, aligning with Parsons' framework of change within systems.

One important factor driving change within social systems is the **increase in population, its density, and concentration**. Historically, large communities, cities, and organized political systems emerged near river valleys and fertile lands where food production could be abundant. The rise in food production led to population growth and several other changes within social systems, such as the division of labor, the development of urban centers, and the formation of complex social structures like the caste system in India and guilds in Europe.

However, Parsons argued that these changes did not happen smoothly. Instead, they often **required a re-establishment of equilibrium within the system due to strains between old and new social patterns, values, and interests**. He stated, “Change is never just alteration of pattern but alteration by overcoming resistance.” This means that **social change occurs when conflicts or tensions within the system are resolved, leading to a new balance**.

According to Parsons, every social system develops vested interests over time as it adapts to its functional needs (like **adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency**). However, new ideas, technological advancements, or external pressures—such as changes in climate, ecology, or pestilence—force societies to move away from old interests and adopt new ways of thinking. This includes changes in technology, work patterns, and the division of labor. These shifts create disturbances in the existing equilibrium and lead to the establishment of a new equilibrium within the social system.

Between two points in time, social systems undergo a long process of adaptation where new ideas and ways of doing things are made acceptable. Parsons refers to this as **institutionalization**. During this process, new roles, organizations, and cultural changes—like advancements in science or new religious ideas—create strain on the existing equilibrium of the social system. The introduction of these new elements causes conflicts with established vested interests. Parsons does not attribute social strain to a single cause; there is no one factor responsible for change. Instead, social strain marks a point where the old balance of interactions and institutions is disrupted, and a new equilibrium starts to emerge.

Parsons identified several factors that contribute to the buildup of strain in social systems, leading to the need for a new equilibrium. These factors include:

- **Demographic Changes:** Migration, racial intermarriage, and shifts in birth and death rates can alter the social structure.
- **Environmental Changes:** The depletion of natural resources (e.g., soil, water, climate changes) can create strain and force changes in the social system.
- **Increased Productivity:** Growth in food production and resource availability can change the population and impact the social system.
- **Technological Advancements:** New technologies and scientific discoveries can push society toward change.
- **Cultural Changes:** The development of new religious ideas or the integration of religion with science and technology can also trigger social change.

Parsons emphasized that these factors **do not work in isolation**. They are interdependent and interact to bring about changes within the social system, and the list is not exhaustive.

Cultural factors lead to changes within the social system through a continuous cycle of **rationalization** and **traditionalization** of values and beliefs.

- **Rationalization:** This process, similar to Weber's idea, refers to the growth of rational, individualistic, and innovative attitudes towards work, personal commitments, and social institutions. It includes replacing customs or traditions with more legal and formal methods of decision-making (e.g., moving away from the arbitrary decisions of kings or priests).
- **Traditionalization:** While rationalization occurs, social systems also tend to stabilize their values over time, institutionalizing them. This creates vested interests, where people or groups want to preserve these values, even when circumstances change. As a result, rational values can become traditionalized.
- **Cyclical Process:** Cultural values in society continuously go through cycles of rationalization and traditionalization. One process leads to the other, creating a repetitive cycle of change and stabilization

Cultural Factor: Change in Pattern of Marriage

In India, the **shift from arranged marriages to love marriages** exemplifies the cultural processes of **rationalization and traditionalization**. The rise of love marriages reflects a **rational, individualistic** approach where personal choice is prioritized over traditional family decisions.

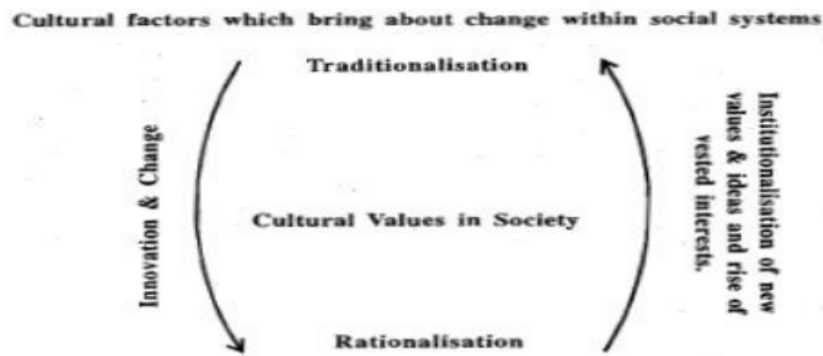


Figure 28.1 Changes within Social Systems: An Example

However, **traditional practices like dowry and astrological compatibility continue** to persist, despite changes in marriage practices. These traditions are institutionalized and maintained over time, creating vested interests that resist change. This **cyclical process of rationalization and traditionalization**, where new values coexist with old traditions, reflects Parsons' view of cultural factors driving social change within the system.

Caste and Process of Traditionalization

Caste System in India: The caste system **initially had functional purposes**, such as organizing labor and society in ancient times. **Over centuries, it became deeply ingrained in social structure and culture**, to the point where it became seen as a natural part of society. Despite modern efforts to challenge it, the caste system continues to influence social interactions and relationships in many parts of India, reflecting how a practice or belief

becomes institutionalized and **accepted as a tradition.**

Parsons' View on Social Change: Two Levels

Talcott Parsons discussed social change within the social system at two distinct levels:

Gradual, Adaptive Social Change: At this level, Parsons analyzed how social change occurs slowly and continuously through processes like role differentiation, socialization, and institutionalization, which generate strains within the system. This type of change is adaptive and happens gradually over time. The sequence involved includes:

- **Innovation or Rationalization:** The introduction of new ideas or practices.
- **Institutionalization of Innovation:** The acceptance and formalization of these new ideas within society.
- **Development of Vested Interests:** New institutions generate vested interests that aim to protect and preserve these innovations.
- **Traditionalization of Innovation:** Over time, these innovations become traditional practices that are ingrained in the social system. This ongoing process reflects adaptive social change that is gradual and linked to stability.

Revolutionary Social Change: The second level of social change involves revolutionary movements, which bring **sudden, significant alterations in the social system's equilibrium.** These movements disrupt the existing social balance and create radical change. Parsons used examples such as the Communist and Nazi movements to illustrate this kind of change. According to Parsons, **four conditions** must be present for such **revolutionary movements** to spread widely and gain supremacy:

- **Alienative Motivations:** A large section of the population must feel disenchanting with the existing social system, leading to widespread dissatisfaction.
- **Emergence of a Deviant Subculture:** A counter-ideology or alternative belief system must develop, which radically challenges the existing one. This helps people evade or openly resist the sanctions of the current system.

- **Development of a Legitimate Ideology:** The revolutionary movement must establish a coherent ideology, a set of beliefs that can claim legitimacy and gain acceptance for its values, symbols, and institutional structures.
- **Organization of a Power System:** The movement needs a power structure, particularly a state apparatus, to support, legitimize, and operationalize the new ideology, ensuring its practical implementation.

Revolutionary social movements lead to **adaptive changes** in the social system, according to Talcott Parsons. These movements often have **idealistic goals**, but when these values are put into practice, they require adjustments and compromises. The more **radical the ideology, the harder it is to create these adaptive changes**, often leading to a return to traditional beliefs.

- For example, in the Communist movement, ideas like eliminating the family or private property were seen as necessary, but actually removing them proved difficult.

Parsons also notes that revolutionary movements often have conflicting ideas, like the balance between class structures and equality in Communism. Over time, followers of these movements may focus on personal satisfaction and self-gratification as they gain control, which can weaken the movement's radical nature. Eventually, movements that begin with revolutionary ideals tend to evolve into more orthodox systems, emphasizing stability and conformity. This shows that even revolutionary movements ultimately adapt to the system's need for stability, just like any other established social system

CHANGES OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS: EVOLUTIONARY UNIVERSALS

In his later writings, particularly in *Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives* (1966), *The Sociological Theory and Modern Sociology* (1967), *The System of Modern Societies* (1971), and *The Evolution of Societies* (1977), Talcott Parsons made significant contributions to an evolutionary theory of social change. Although his approach remained fundamentally functional, emphasizing that all processes of change stem from strains towards differentiation and adaptation, he introduced two important concepts.

1. **Evolutionary Universals:** First, he proposed the idea of "evolutionary universals". This concept suggests that despite the unique historical and cultural contexts of each society, there are certain **general patterns or directions of evolution that societies tend to follow over a long period**. These common pathways of social evolution, according to Parsons, are what he termed "**evolutionary universals**."
2. **Historical & Comparative Analysis:** Second, Parsons shifted his focus to the historical and comparative analysis of social systems at a global level. This approach allowed him

to study and **compare the evolutionary stages of various societies**, ranging from **primitive to modern** industrial societies. Through this comparative exercise, Parsons aimed to provide a broader understanding of how different societies evolve over time.

Primitive Societies → Intermediaries → Modern Societies

Talcott Parsons provided a framework for understanding the evolution of societies from primitive to modern stages, focusing on how social systems evolve over time. According to Parsons, social systems move through different stages of complexity, differentiation, and integration. This process is marked by increasing specialization, greater differentiation of roles, and the development of more complex institutions.

1. **Primitive Societies:** In primitive societies, social systems are relatively simple and undifferentiated. These societies are typically small, with little division of labor, and social roles are often determined by **kinship and communal relationships**. Parsons used **early tribal societies** as an example, where roles were not specialized and authority was typically centralized in the hands of a few elders or tribal leaders. The social structure was **homogeneous**, with little differentiation between institutions like family, religion, and economy.
2. **Transitional Societies:** As societies grow, there is an increasing need for differentiation. *For instance*, in the ancient civilizations like those in **Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India**, the division of labor began to expand, and different sectors like agriculture, trade, governance, and religion started to emerge as separate spheres. These societies develop more **complex institutions**, such as **formalized legal systems** and state structures, as they adapt to the pressures of managing larger populations and more advanced economies. Parsons saw these changes as part of a larger process of social evolution, where the social system begins to differentiate into more specialized functions.
3. **Modern Societies:** In modern industrial societies, such as those that developed in **Europe and North America**, social systems become **highly differentiated**, with specialized roles in government, economy, education, healthcare, and other institutions. These systems are **more complex and interconnected**. The differentiation of roles and institutions leads to a **higher degree of functional interdependence**.
 - *For example*, in modern societies, **the family**, the economy, and the state each function according to specific roles and rules, which were not as distinct in

earlier forms of society. Modernity also brings a higher degree of **rationalization**, where decision-making becomes more legal and bureaucratic rather than based on traditional or personal authority.

Parsons' analysis of social change from primitive to modern societies emphasizes how these transitions occur gradually and systematically, with each stage laying the foundation for the next. The increasing complexity and differentiation of social systems are driven by internal pressures and external factors, such as technological advancements, population growth, and the need for more efficient governance.

Thus, Parsons saw social change as an evolutionary process where societies evolve from simple, undifferentiated systems to complex, specialized ones, driven by adaptation and the need for greater functionality in handling societal demands.

LPG Reform (1991): From State controlled Economy to Market based Economy (Structural Change in Economy)

In 1991, India underwent significant economic restructuring through the Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization (LPG) reforms. This shift from a state-controlled to a market-oriented economy aligns with Talcott Parsons' theory of social change, particularly his concept of gradual adaptation and evolution. Parsons believed that social systems evolve through processes of role differentiation and institutionalization, where innovations are integrated over time. The LPG reforms exemplify this by introducing market-driven policies, leading to changes in economic roles, social structures, and values. The transition towards a more globalized economy illustrates Parsons' idea of systemic adaptation to external and internal pressures, ensuring stability while allowing for gradual change.

Change of System: South Africa: Apartheid to Democracy (1994)

South Africa underwent a profound transformation with the end of apartheid in 1994. The country transitioned from a racially segregated system under white minority rule to a democratic

government with universal suffrage. This social system change was marked by the end of institutionalized racism and the establishment of a new social contract, leading to the election of Nelson Mandela as president.

Change of System: France: Monarchy to Republic (1789)

The French Revolution of 1789 is one of the most famous examples of a social system change. The overthrow of the monarchy led to the establishment of the First French Republic. The revolution brought profound changes in French society, including the abolition of feudal privileges, the **rise of secularism**, and the establishment of democratic principles like **equality, Liberty, freedom and citizenship**.

Criticism of parsons theory

First his emphasis on stability and the **maintenance of equilibrium** has been critiqued for neglecting the role of conflict in social change. Parsons' theory suggests that **social systems are always striving for equilibrium**, but this ignores the tensions and conflicts that often drive change, as seen in movements like civil rights struggles in the U.S. or the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. These conflicts often highlight how deeply ingrained social systems need to be challenged, not simply adapted.

Second, Parsons' theory tends to **idealize social systems**, assuming that changes within them are always beneficial or necessary for the system's survival. In reality, not all changes lead to progress; some may worsen **inequalities or create instability**.

- For example, neoliberal economic reforms in post-1991 India led to increased inequality, which highlights that not all change is positive.

Return of Taliban: Not Adaptive shift

A notable example of Parsons' theory failing to explain social change is the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2021. After years of progress, especially in women's rights and education, the sudden return to a Taliban-controlled regime represented a regressive shift

rather than an adaptive equilibrium. The country regressed socially, politically, and economically, which challenges Parsons' idea that social systems always evolve towards greater stability and progress. This backward movement of equilibrium shows that not all changes are beneficial or lead to positive outcomes.

ISOLATED NORTH KOREA

While Parsons believed that societies tend to evolve toward **greater integration and modernization**, North Korea's **rigid totalitarian system** defies this pattern. Despite the global trend toward democratization and market economies, North Korea has remained isolated, with the regime maintaining strict control over all aspects of life. This **state-led, closed system stands** in contrast to the evolutionary universal of progress seen in more liberal societies

Talcott Parsons' concept of **evolutionary universals**, which suggests that all societies evolve in a similar direction over time, has faced **several criticisms**. Critics argue that this approach is too **deterministic and Eurocentric**, assuming that all societies will eventually move toward the same type of social structure or modernization, often modeled on Western, industrialized societies

- The failure of socialist or communist states like the **Soviet Union and Cuba** challenges Parsons' view. These systems were supposed to evolve into mature, classless societies, yet they faced deep social, economic, and political challenges, some of which even led to regression or collapse.

These examples question whether all societies necessarily move toward the same universal form of societal organization

Questions covered-

1. **Question:** Explain the relevance of the idea of '**cultural lag**' in understanding social change. (2015)
2. **Question:** Is the theory of **cultural lag** valid in present times? Discuss.(2017)

DEMAND OF THE QUESTION

1. Key concept: Social change & **Ogburn's theory** of cultural lag
2. Question type → **Critical thinking** based (Relevance of concept in present context)
3. The question **demands an evaluation of Ogburn's theory of cultural lag in the contemporary context.**
 - You need to explain the concept of cultural lag, analyze its relevance in modern society with examples (e.g., **technological advancements vs social norms**), and conclude with its validity while addressing possible limitations or criticisms.

For more reading → visit the link

https://sciencepolicy.colorado.edu/admin/publication_files/resource-2648-2005.80.pdf

The **U.S. sociologist William F. Ogburn** (1886-1959) developed the concept of cultural lag, which occurs when **unequal rates or degrees of change between inter- dependent parts of culture** leads to "maladjustment" (1922).

According to Ogburn, as new inventions are introduced into society, a maladjustment occurs and a period of adjustment is required. Most often these **inventions are technological in nature**, and are part of what he termed "**material culture**."

However, Ogburn noted that "**non-material culture**" can also drive change. For example, he cites India in the early years of Buddhism as a case where religion was driving change in other areas of culture (1964). When Buddhism challenged existing caste-based norms (non-material culture), society took time to adapt fully to these ideas

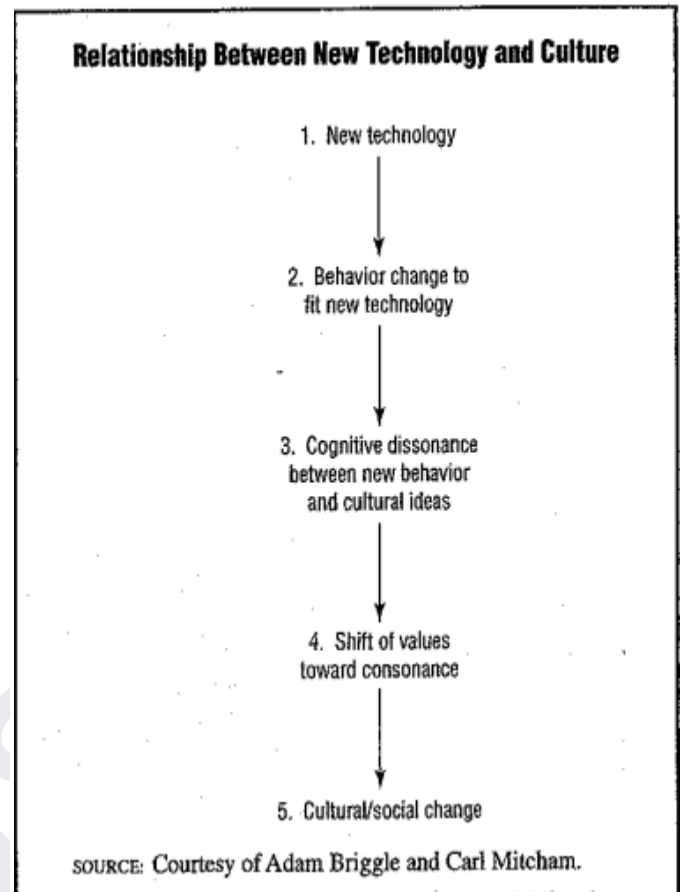
Ogburn's classic description of technologically-driven cultural lag was the period required for society to adapt to the speed of the automobile (1964). It took some time for the social institutions and customs of road building to adapt to the ability of new cars to travel much faster than horses and older car models.

- A more pressing example is provided by the **advent of nuclear weapons**, which represent an enormous leap in scientific knowledge without a complimentary advance in political institutions capable of regulating and using that knowledge wisely.
- Another example is provided by the rapid advances in **biomedical technologies and the ability of institutionalized ethics committees**, such as Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and Institutional Biosafety Committees (IBCs), to adapt to those changes and make wise decisions.
- **The depletion of natural resources**, especially oil, represents a broader interpretation of cultural lag, where changes in the **material environment may outpace the cultural response to those changes.**

Numerous other cases exist where science and technology have advanced more rapidly than the spiritual, social, or political aspects of culture.

Indeed, the anthropological studies collected by Edward H. Spicer (1952) and H. Russell Bernard and Pertti J. Pelto (1987) document examples of a relationship that Bernard and Pelto simplify as **shown in Figure 1**. Such maladjustment can prove socially harmful.

FIGURE 1



Social norms & Cultural Lag

Changes in social norms and values are often slow to catch up with advancements or shifts in society. New behaviors or practices may be in conflict with existing cultural norms, causing a "lag" in acceptance and integration.

- For example → The acceptance of same-sex marriage and LGBTQ+ rights took time due to cultural and traditional beliefs that needed to adjust to evolving societal values.

Cultural Lag → FUTURE SHOCK

(explained below)

FUTURE SHOCK

Alvin Toffler builds on Ogburn's idea of **cultural lag** by introducing **future shock**, which refers to the overwhelming stress people feel when societal changes happen too quickly for them to adapt. He argues that this imbalance—**between rapid changes in the environment (technology, culture) and humans' slower ability to adjust—creates confusion and disorientation.**

Toffler says society needs balance between change and human adaptability. For example:

- The rise of smartphones brought rapid changes in communication, but older generations struggled to adapt, feeling disconnected or left behind (**future shock**).
- Similarly, climate change policies often move slower than technological innovations, creating cultural lag. However, when changes like **banning single-use plastics** are implemented abruptly, people may experience future shock as they struggle to adjust their behaviors.

Toffler emphasizes that society needs a balance between the speed of change and the time people need to respond.

Cultural Diffusion

(Revision or New Concept ?)

Cultural diffusion is a process by which the elements of culture spread from one society to another or it is the **spread of cultural traits from one group to the other**. Due to the development in transportation and communication and the movement of people from one place to another without restriction there is spread of culture in the form of food, dress, lifestyle, education etc

Cultural diffusion happens at two levels:

- diffusion of **material culture** and
- diffusion of **non material culture**.

According to *William F. Ogburn (1966)* the elements of nonmaterial culture are more resistant to change than the material culture. He refers to the term '**cultural lag**' to refer to the maladjustment in which non material culture fails to adjust to the rapidly changing material conditions.

For example, it is more difficult to adapt to a Western culture and accept foreign ideas than to accept foreign technology. We accept technology much faster as it makes our lives much easier but we are unable to change our ways of life accordingly. In a fast changing society, cultural lag is very prominent as a change in one aspect will **bring stress and strains in other parts**, there is a **time lag** before the other part of the culture catches up and restores the equilibrium in society.

This sometimes disturbs the balance of society and brings 'anomie'. Anomie is a concept coined by *Emile Durkheim* which refers to a condition in which the normative order of society is broken down. In this situation, there may be slight contradiction and confusion or a serious deterioration and disintegration in society.

Criticisms of Cultural Lag Theory

(Understand how we can connect different perspectives to counter cultural lag theory)

Oversimplification of Change (Horton and Hunt) :Critics argue that cultural lag theory oversimplifies the complex relationship between material and non-material culture. Horton and Hunt highlight that changes in non-material culture can also lead to technological or material advances, not always the reverse.

- The feminist movement (non-material culture) spurred the development of workplace policies and technologies like maternity benefits and flexible working tools.

Neglects Multi-Directional Change (Parsons):Talcott Parsons criticized the theory for assuming a unidirectional relationship, where material culture drives change in non-material culture. Parsons' Structural-Functionalism suggests that **changes often occur simultaneously in different parts of society, driven by a need to maintain equilibrium.**

- Urbanization brought material changes like better infrastructure while simultaneously reshaping family structures (non-material culture).

Ignores Agency and Resistance (Gramsci): Antonio Gramsci pointed out that cultural change involves active human agency and resistance, not merely passive lag. People resist changes if they perceive them as threatening to their identity or values.

- Despite technological advances in **agriculture**, traditional farmers in India resist genetically modified seeds due to cultural and ecological concerns.

Does Not Address Power Dynamics (Marx): Marxist scholars argue that cultural lag theory fails to consider how power dynamics and class struggle influence cultural adaptation. Material changes often benefit **dominant classes**, creating resistance or slower adoption by marginalized groups.

- Industrialization in colonial India benefited British rulers but disrupted traditional artisans, causing resentment and slow acceptance of factory systems.

Lacks Global Perspective (Wallerstein): Immanuel Wallerstein's World-Systems Theory suggests that cultural lag theory often focuses on isolated societies, ignoring global inequalities. Peripheral societies experience lag differently due to exploitation by core nations.

- Developing countries often face delays in adapting Western technologies due to economic dependence and cultural conflicts.

Fails to Account for Rapid Adaptation (Giddens): Anthony Giddens, through his theory of structuration, argued that modern societies adapt more quickly than cultural lag theory assumes due to globalization and reflexivity.

- The rapid global spread of smartphones and digital media shows how societies can adapt quickly to material innovations.

Conclusion

While cultural lag theory provides a useful lens to analyze societal change, it often underestimates the complexity, resistance, and multi-dimensional nature of cultural adaptation.

BOOK: Sapien & Homo-Deus

(Idea of Cultural lag in present context, Implicit)

(You can use this in Different papers of Mains → ESSAY TO GS TO SOCIOLOGY)

Yuval Noah Harari, in works like **Sapiens and Homo Deus**, explores themes closely related to cultural lag, even if he doesn't explicitly use the term. He critiques the **growing mismatch between rapid technological advancements and the slower pace of societal, ethical, and cultural adaptation**, emphasizing the risks this dissonance poses to humanity.

Technological Advancements vs. Human Evolution

Harari highlights that while technology evolves rapidly, **human biology and psychology remain deeply rooted in evolutionary traits from thousands of years ago**. This creates a lag in how people adapt to modern challenges.

- For example, Humans are still wired to prioritize short-term rewards (a legacy of hunter-gatherer instincts), which conflicts with the long-term thinking needed to address problems like climate change.

Ethics and Biotechnology

Biotechnology and genetic engineering are **advancing faster than ethical and regulatory** frameworks can keep up. Harari warns that this cultural lag creates a vacuum where these powerful technologies could be misused.

- For Example→ Tools like **CRISPR** enable genetic modifications, but societies lack global ethical guidelines to regulate their use, leading to potential misuse or inequality.

Artificial Intelligence and Employment

The rapid rise of AI and automation has outpaced the ability of governments and societies to adapt, resulting in economic and social disruptions. Harari notes this **lag in re-skilling workers** and reforming systems to match the technological shift.

- For example Automation is displacing workers in industries like manufacturing, yet education systems remain outdated and fail to equip people with digital economy skills.

Political Systems and Technology

Harari also critiques how political systems, designed during the Industrial Age, are unprepared to address the unique challenges of the digital and information era. This gap exacerbates issues like **inequality, data misuse, and fake news**.

- For example, Governments struggle to regulate the dominance of Big Tech or manage ethical questions about artificial intelligence and data privacy.

Connection to Cultural Lag

Harari's insights strongly resonate with Ogburn's concept of cultural lag. He emphasizes how the rapid pace of technological change leaves societal structures struggling to catch up. However, Harari takes this further by warning that the consequences of this lag are more profound today, as modern technologies can fundamentally alter humanity's future.

This perspective underscores the urgent need for societies to address cultural lag through proactive governance, ethical debates, and adaptive education systems to avoid crises arising from unchecked technological growth.

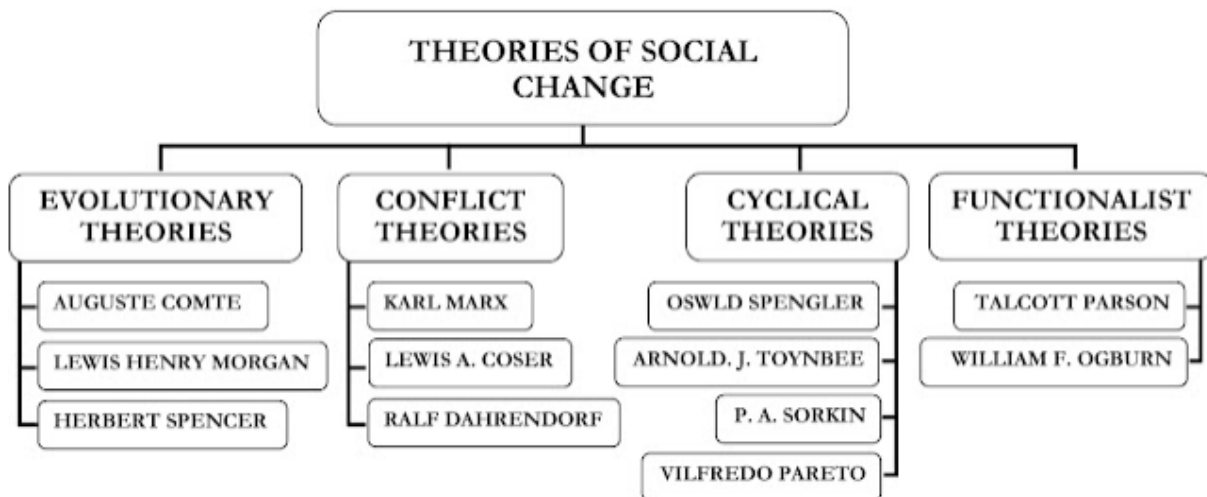
Question: Examine any two theories of social change in detail (2017)

Sociologists have been trying to answer and explain, in main, **three basic questions** of social change.

- First, the question of whether **social change is good or bad**;
- Second, the **causal factors** of social change: and
- Third, the **impact of social change** on society.

Modern sociology helps us understand and provide with explanation the complex set of changes that societies experience in the process of human history.

THEORIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE



Theory	Thinkers	Core idea	Examples
Evolutionary Theory	Spencer and Comte	Society evolves from simple to complex stages (like biological evolution). - They largely draw an analogy of the progress of animal life from the	Transition from hunter-gatherer societies to industrial.

		simple organisms to the most uni-celled complex animal- the <u>human being</u>	
Conflict Theory	Karl Marx	Social change arises from class struggles and contradictions in society.	Industrial revolution fueled by worker exploitation.
Cultural Lag Theory	William Ogburn	Material culture changes faster than non-material culture, causing lag	AI advancements vs outdated labor laws.
Cyclical Theory	Oswald Spengler, SOROKIN	Rise → Growth → Decline	Roman Empire's rise and fall.
Diffusion Theory	Everett Rogers	Social change occurs as innovations spread between societies.	Adoption of smartphones globally (iPhone culture)
Functionalist Theory	Talcott Parsons	Change occurs to restore balance in society when disrupted.	Industrialization required new education systems
World-Systems Theory	Immanuel Wallerstein	Global inequalities result from exploitation by core nations of periphery	Colonialism and unequal trade in the Global South.
Technological Determinism/ Evolutionism	Thorstein Veblen	Technology is the primary driver of social change.	Internet revolution reshaping communication.

Evolution from Lower to Higher

Evolutionary theories of how societies change are of two types-

1. **Unilinear**
2. **Multilinear.**

Basic Assumptions-

1. That change is **inevitable and natural**.
2. That change is **gradual and continuous**.
3. That change is sequential and in certain stages→ That all successive stages of change are higher over preceding stages, i.e., evolution is progressive.
4. That stages of change are **non-reversible**.
5. That forces of change are inherent in the object
6. That the **direction of change** is from simple to complex, from homogeneity to heterogeneity, from undifferentiated to the differentiated in form and function.
7. That all societies pass through the **same stages of development. (Universality)**

Unilinear theories assume that **all societies follow the same path**: Each evolves from simpler to more complex forms. This journey takes each society through uniform sequences (Barnes 1935). Of the many versions of this theory, the one proposed by Lewis Morgan (1877) once dominated Western thought. Morgan said that all societies go through **three stages: savagery, barbarism, and civilization**. In Morgan's eyes, England, his own society, was the epitome of civilization. All other societies were destined to follow the same path.

Multilinear views of evolution replaced unilinear theories. Instead of assuming that all societies follow the same sequence, **multilinear theorists proposed that different routes lead to the same stage of development**. Although the paths **all lead to industrialization**, societies need not pass through the same sequence of stages on their journey (Sahlins and Service 1960; Lenski and Lenski 1987).

.....Enroll for COMPLETE DOCUMENT

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory emerged as a response to **structural functionalism**, which viewed society as a stable system where each part functions to maintain equilibrium. **Conflict theorists**, such as **Karl Marx**, argued that society is inherently divided into competing groups with different interests, particularly between the **haves** and **have-nots**. Conflict, rather than being disruptive or abnormal, is seen as a **necessary force** for **socio-cultural change**.

According to conflict theory, **conflict** is a normal and even **essential** part of society. It challenges the existing social order and creates pressure for change. Conflict is seen as the driving force behind **social progress** because it exposes inequalities and forces society to address these issues.

Long before Toynbee, **Karl Marx** identified a **recurring process of social change**. He said that each thesis (a current arrangement of power) contains its own antithesis (contradiction or opposition). A **struggle develops between the thesis and its antithesis**, leading to a synthesis (a new arrangement of power). This new social order, in turn, becomes a thesis that will be challenged by its own antithesis, and so on. **Figure 15.1** (*given below*) gives a visual summary of this process.

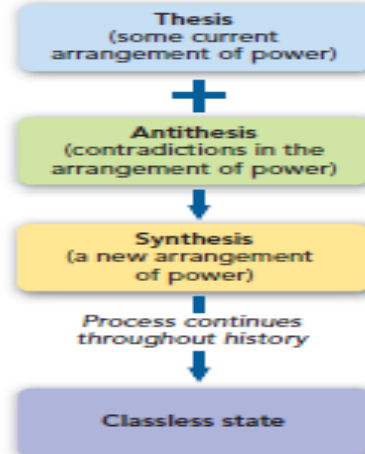
Karl Marx was the first to introduce the dialectical pattern of change to sociological analysis of change which concept had already been analyzed by the German philosopher **G.W.F.Hegel**.

A dialectical pattern of change is neither linear nor cyclical. It assumes that new social forms emerge out of the old social forms through opposition and conflict.

Karl Marx and his followers propound that a social form (**the thesis**) gives rise to new social form (**the synthesis**) due to oppositional forces and conflict (the anti-thesis) within the existing old social form.

It would mean that thesis generates anti-thesis, and anti-thesis generates **synthesis**.

FIGURE 15.1 Marx's Model of Historical Change



For Example → According to **Marx's view** (called a dialectical process of history), **each ruling group sows the seeds of its own destruction**. Consider capitalism. Marx said that capitalism (the thesis) is built on the exploitation of workers (an antithesis, or built-in opposition). With workers and owners on a collision course, the dialectical process will not stop until workers establish a classless state (the synthesis).

G8's current **division of the globe's resources** and markets is a thesis. **Resentment** on the part of **have-not nations** is an **antithesis**. The demand to redistribute power and resources will come from any Least Industrialized or Industrializing Nation that gains military power. With their nuclear weapons, China, India, Pakistan, Russia, North Korea, and, soon, Iran fit this scenario. So do the efforts of al-Qaeda to change the balance of power between the Middle East and the industrialized West.

A Case of G7/8: Dialectical Process of Global Power Redistribution

Stages	Explanation
Thesis (Current Situation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Right now, the world's wealth and markets are <u>controlled by powerful, industrialized nations</u> like the G8 (e.g., the US, UK, Japan).
Antithesis (Challenge to the Current Order):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poorer or less powerful nations (the "have-not nations") resent this imbalance. - As they gain military strength—especially nuclear power—countries like China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and others can challenge this control. - Even non-state groups like al-Qaeda aim to change how power is distributed globally
Synthesis (New Power Arrangement):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over time, these tensions will lead to a new power structure where resources and influence are redistributed. - However, this new arrangement will also have its own problems (antitheses), like ethnic conflicts or leaders feeling excluded.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conclusion → The world order is never static. It's constantly evolving through conflicts and compromises, with <u>new power dynamics replacing the old</u>—but each new system carries its own flaws and challenges.

Structural Functional theory

The structural-functionalists assume that **society, like the human body**, is a balanced system of institutions, each of which performs a function in **maintaining society**. They consider 'change' as a constant that quires no explanation. They hold that **changes disrupt the equilibrium of a society**, until the change has been integrated into the culture.

- Societies accept and adopt those changes that are found useful (*functional*)
- They reject changes that are useless (*dysfunctional*).

They opine that when events within and without the society disrupt the equilibrium, social institutions make adjustments to restore stability. For instance, a natural calamity, a famine, an influx of immigrants or a war may disrupt the social order and compel the social institutions to make adjustments.

A Curious Case of: Post-World War II Reconstruction (Late 1940s - 1950s)

The end of WWII caused widespread devastation—**economic collapse, loss of life, and displaced populations**. Nations had to deal with the destruction of infrastructure, which significantly disrupted social and economic stability.

To restore balance, **Marshall Plan** aid was provided to Europe, and there was a global push for **rebuilding**. The establishment of international institutions like the **United Nations and the World Bank** helped stabilize the world order, and ***new social welfare systems*** were introduced, which fostered long-term economic growth and peace.

A Case of the 9/11 Attacks & Global WAR ON TERROR

The **9/11 attacks** disrupted global peace, leading to **mass casualties**, widespread **fear**, and **international conflict**. This event sparked wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, leading to further instability and loss of life.

In response, new security measures were implemented worldwide, including the establishment of **Homeland Security** in the U.S. and global counter-terrorism initiatives. While controversial, these measures were functional in providing a **sense of security** and were meant to restore balance in societies fearful of future attacks. These adjustments aimed at stabilizing political and social institutions disrupted by terrorism.

For Further detailed *research article (Understanding purpose)*

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371111983> *Social Change in Conflict Theory A Descriptive Study*

Neo-Evolutionary Theory

Reference: <https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/22975/1/Unit-12.pdf>

In the 20th century, **evolutionary theories** were revived by scholars like **V. Gordon Childe**, **Julian Steward**, and **Leslie White**, who are known as **neo-evolutionists**. Their work was based on careful analysis and systematic reasoning, which distinguished them from earlier evolutionary thinkers.

Two important scholars, **Marshall D. Sahlins** and **Elman Service**, combined the theories of **Julian Steward** and **Leslie White** into a concept called **specific and general evolution**. Their main idea was that **evolution** happens in two directions—both **biologically and culturally**—and that these processes are **interconnected**.

- **Specific Evolution:** This refers to **local** cultural or biological changes that happen in **shorter periods**. For example, the development of specific cultural practices or social structures in a **particular society or group**.
- **General Evolution:** This refers to **larger-scale** changes that happen over longer periods and affect many societies or cultures. It involves the **progressive stages** of human development, like moving from **hunting and gathering** to **agriculture**, the **industrial revolution**, and later the **atomic age** or **nuclear age**

.....CONTINUES.....!!!!

Youth Culture and Subculture

<https://www.longdom.org/open-access-pdfs/youth-culture-around-the-world-worldwide-patterns-and-regional-manifestations.pdf>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276224590_Global_Youth_Culture (Researchgate)

No society is completely homogeneous. Instead, each society has within it a dominant culture, as well as subcultures and countercultures.

Youth culture refers to the cultural practice of members of this age group by which they express their identities and demonstrate their sense of belonging to a particular group of young people. (Sciencedirect.com)

Youth culture refers to the unique set of **beliefs, values, behaviors, and practices** that characterize young people as a distinct social group. It encompasses a wide range of expressions, from the latest in style and **music tastes to cultural norms and political attitudes**, and it plays an important role in influencing identities, experiences, and aspirations of young individuals as they manage the shift from teenage years to adulthood. **Youth culture is dynamic and ever-evolving, reflecting the changing social, economic, and cultural contexts** in which young people live and interact.

Sociologists see youth culture as a product of both **social structures** (like class, gender, and education) and **agency** (individual choices and expressions). It often challenges dominant norms, creating unique subcultures.

A **subculture** is —a smaller cultural group within a larger culture; people of a subculture are part of the larger culture but also share a specific identity within a smaller group.

- **Subcultures** share in the overall culture of society but also maintain a distinctive set of values, norms, lifestyles, and traditions and even a distinctive language

One of the defining features of youth culture is its **diversity and plurality**, as young people come from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, bringing with them a wide range of perspectives, interests, and identities. Elements mold youth culture such as **age, gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and geographic location**, which influence individuals' values, attitudes, and behaviors. This diversity is mirrored in the vibrant array of youth subcultures, including punk, hip-hop, raps, skateboarding, and **gaming**, each characterized by unique styles, languages, and values.

From the late 20th century, societal changes extended the youth stage and blurred the lines between youth and adulthood. This, along with the rise of diverse youth cultures, raised questions about what makes **youth culture unique**. These changes also led to debates about whether youth culture is authentic and independent or influenced by mainstream adult practices. Essentially, youth culture has evolved from being seen as a single, unified group to a diverse and complex expression **shaped by social and structural factors**.

Sociological Explanations

Stanley Cohen (Subcultural Theories) and Moral Panic

Stanley Cohen is best known for his work on **subcultures** and the concept of **moral panic**. He explored how certain youth groups, especially those engaging in unconventional behavior, are **labeled as deviant or threatening by society**.

- **Stanley Cohen's theory of subcultures** and moral panic explains how youth subcultures emerge as a response to societal tensions and how they are often misrepresented or exaggerated by society, especially through the media.
- Cohen argued that subcultures arise when **youth feel alienated or dissatisfied** with mainstream values, often due to **social inequality, class struggles, or generational**

differences. These groups develop distinct styles, behaviors, and ideologies that set them apart. For example, groups like the Mods and Rockers in the UK challenged conventional norms by expressing themselves through fashion, music, and lifestyle, which was often seen as rebellious or deviant.

- The **concept of moral panic** describes how society reacts when these subcultures are perceived as a threat to social order or morality. The **media often sensationalizes** the actions of a few individuals, **labeling an entire group as dangerous or delinquent**, which leads to public fear and calls for stricter control. This exaggeration can amplify the significance of these subcultures, even when their behaviors are relatively harmless.
- For example → In the early 2000s, as more young people started visiting pubs and clubs, the older generation and some media outlets began to see this as a threat to traditional values. The idea of young people partying late at night, drinking alcohol, and dressing in modern styles was seen as "unIndian" by some, leading to public outcry. Some believed it was a sign of moral decline and that youth were losing respect for family values and culture

Karl Mannheim (Generational Theory)

- Karl Mannheim's **Generation Theory** focuses on how youth culture and values are shaped by the historical context in which each generation grows up. He argued that **each generation has unique experiences, ideas, and values** based on the social, political, and economic conditions of their time. These shared experiences form a collective identity, making each generation distinct.
- For example → Indian youth of the 1990s were influenced by globalization and liberalization, while today's youth are shaped by technology and social media.
- **Generational Location**- Mannheim believed that individuals who grow up during the same time period are affected by the same historical events. These events shape their worldview, beliefs, and values. For example, young people who grew up during India's **Independence movement** in 1947 would have a very different perspective compared to those growing up in the 1990s during India's economic liberalization.
- **Generation Unit**- This refers to a group of people from the same age group, who collectively experience historical events. These shared experiences help them develop a **common consciousness** and bond, even if their personal backgrounds differ. For example, Indian youth who lived through the **COVID-19 pandemic** share common

experiences that influence their attitudes toward work, socializing, and health.

- **Generation as a Social Force:** Mannheim argued that each generation's ideas are often in conflict with older generations. As young people challenge traditional norms and values, they create **new social and cultural movements**, which can lead to societal change. For instance, the rise of **student protests** or **youth-driven social media movements** in India (like during the **JNU protests** or the **#MeToo movement**) reflects how the current generation's views differ from those of previous generations.

Fashion plays a significant role in youth culture, serving as a form of self-expression and identity construction for young people. Fashion trends often emerge from youth subcultures and youth-driven movements, reflecting the social, political, and cultural concerns of young people. From streetwear and athleisure to vintage and DIY fashion, young people use clothing and accessories to signal their affiliations, assert their individuality, and challenge mainstream norms and conventions.

- **Fashion in Indian youth culture** reflects identity, social trends, and globalization. Young Indians blend traditional attire like **kurtas and sarees with modern outfits**, showcasing a mix of heritage and contemporary style. Influenced by Bollywood, social media, and global trends, fashion becomes a way for youth to **express individuality** while embracing cultural diversity.

Technology and social media have profoundly transformed youth culture, providing young people with new platforms for **communication, self-expression, and community-building**. Online platforms are to connect with others, share their interests and experiences, and participate in global conversations about issues that matter to them. Technology also facilitates the creation and dissemination of youth-driven content, ranging widely, from memes and viral challenges to online activism and digital art. Political engagement is becoming increasingly significant.

Political involvement is an increasingly important aspect of youth culture, as young people around the world mobilize to address urgent societal and environmental issues such as climate change, ethnic injustice, and economic inequality. Youth-led movements examples include Fridays for future and social justice movement, and March for Our Lives have galvanized young

people to take action, raise awareness, and demand change on a range of issues that affect their lives and futures. Social media and digital technologies play a crucial role in amplifying youth voices and organizing collective action, enabling young activists to connect, collaborate, and mobilize across borders and boundaries.

Counter Culture

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-esc-introsociology/chapter/pop-culture-subculture-and-cultural-change/>

Subcultures share in the overall culture of society but also maintain a distinctive set of values, norms, lifestyles, and traditions and even a distinctive language. **Subcultures differ from the dominant culture**, but they are not at odds with it.

In contrast, **countercultures** are groups whose values, interests, beliefs, and lifestyles conflict with those of the larger culture. In the United States, the counterculture of the 1960s became identified with the **rejection of conventional social norms** of the 1950s. Counterculture youth rejected the cultural standards of their parents, especially with respect to racial segregation and initial widespread support for the **Vietnam War**.

As the 1960s progressed, widespread tensions developed in American society that tended to flow along generational lines regarding the **war in Vietnam, race relations, sexual mores, women's rights, traditional modes of authority**, and a materialistic interpretation of the American Dream. Hippies became the largest countercultural group in the United States. The counterculture also had access to a media eager to present their concerns to a wider public. Demonstrations for social justice created far-reaching changes affecting many aspects of society.



Fig: Hippies at Anti-Vietnam War Demonstration

Related Key concepts

Assimilation is the process through which individuals learn and adopt the values and social practices of the dominant group, more or less giving up their own values in the process.

- For example → A family from India migrates to the United States. Over time, they start adopting American values and practices, such as celebrating Thanksgiving or speaking only English at home. In this process, they may gradually stop celebrating traditional Indian festivals like Diwali or speaking their native language.
- **When tribal** or indigenous communities like the Santhals or Bhils **move to urban areas** for work, they often adopt mainstream cultural practices like wearing modern clothing, speaking Hindi or English, and following urban lifestyles. In doing so, they might gradually lose some aspects of their traditional languages, attire, or rituals.

Multiculturalism is the belief that the different cultural strands within a culture should be valued and nourished.

- In Canada, the government encourages immigrants to maintain their cultural practices while participating in the broader society. For instance, Sikhs wearing turbans in public

spaces or celebrating festivals like Chinese New Year alongside national holidays like Canada Day. Both the dominant and minority cultures are respected and preserved.

- India celebrates its diversity through events like **Republic Day**, where **cultural performances** from various states showcase their traditional dances, music, and attire. In India people of different religions coexist and celebrate their festivals like Diwali, Eid, Christmas, and Gurburab, with **public and governmental recognition**, reflecting respect for all cultures without forcing any group to assimilate.

Case Study: Deafness as Subculture

Most people who can hear consider deafness undesirable, even catastrophic (Dolnick 1993). At best, they see being deaf as a medical condition to be remedied. However, some deaf people maintain that deafness is not a disability but a culture (Dolnick 1993; Padden & Humphries 2006). To these individuals, the essence of deafness is not the inability to hear but a valued culture based on their shared language, American Sign Language (ASL). ASL is not just a way to “speak” English with one’s hands but is a language of its own, complete with its own rules of grammar, puns, and poetry. Furthermore, ASL is learned and shared. Whereas babies who can hear begin to jabber nonsense syllables, deaf babies of parents who sign begin to “babble” nonsense signs with their fingers (Dolnick 1993). This shared language encourages, in turn, shared values and a positive group identity. Studies show, for instance, that many deaf people would not choose to join the “hearing” culture even if they could.

Thinking of deafness as a culture illustrates many of the points made earlier. For instance, culture is problem solving, and deaf culture embodies a way to solve the human problem of communication. Using ASL shapes deaf people’s experiences, reminding them of their common values, norms, and cultural identity. For this reason, many deaf individuals have reacted with outrage to the increasing use of cochlear implants (Arana-Ward 1997). These devices, when surgically implanted in the ear, help some otherwise deaf persons to hear sounds. Hearing sounds, however, is not the same as understanding what they mean: Many implant recipients—especially older children who were born deaf—are frustrated by a cacophony of sounds that they cannot interpret, even after months or years of training. Some deaf activists argue that most children who receive implants waste their formative years in an often futile struggle to fit into the hearing world, when they could instead have become native speakers of ASL and valued members of the deaf community. These activists, therefore, view cochlear implants not as a neutral medical technology but as an example of the ethnocentrism of hearing persons.

Consumer Culture (Consumerism)

Consumerism is a philosophy that says “**buying is good.**” In turn, this philosophy reflects the belief that “we are what we buy,” and that through buying certain goods we can **assert or improve our social status.**

The sociology of consumer culture is a field of study that explores **how consumer goods, advertising, and consumption practices shape societies and individuals.** It examines how consumption is not just about purchasing goods but is also linked to identity formation, social status, and cultural norms.

How did this culture develop?

- **Research suggests** that the most important cause was a change in the comparisons people used in deciding whether to make a purchase (*Schor 1998*).
- **Schor (1998)** explains that, over time, consumers shifted the way they evaluated whether to buy something. Instead of comparing prices only to their past spending or what they could afford based on their income, they started comparing themselves to others—particularly to people in their social circle or the broader society. This created a shift from a focus on **need-based purchasing to a more social, status-based decision-making process.**
- **Advertising** has become an integral part of our daily lives, infiltrating nearly every space we occupy. *Quart (2003)* explains that advertising now appears on billboards on public buses, in sports stadiums, in movie theaters before films, as pop-up ads on popular websites, and even in schools, where television programs sometimes include commercials in the classroom. This **constant exposure to advertisements** has created a widespread belief among both children and adults that **certain products are necessary to attain a specific identity or social status.**
- **For example,** children may feel that wearing the **latest branded clothing** is crucial for being accepted by their peers, while adults may believe they need a luxury car to be seen as successful. According to Quart, this pervasive advertising shapes the way people perceive themselves and their worth, linking the consumption of certain goods with being a certain type of person in society.

Key aspects-

Commodification refers to the process by which goods and services are marketed and consumed not just for their utility, but for the **status and identity** they provide.

- For example, owning a luxury brand like **Gucci or Rolex** may be more about displaying wealth and social status than the actual use of the product.
- **Jean Baudrillard**: He argued that in a consumer society, products are no longer about their practical use, but about their **symbolic value**. For example, owning a car is not just for transportation, but for signaling wealth or success.

Advertising and Media Influence: Advertising plays a significant role in shaping consumer culture by creating **desires** and **aspirations** for product.

- Advertising doesn't just sell products but also **sells lifestyles**, making consumers believe they need certain products to achieve happiness or fulfillment.
- **Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer**: As part of the **Frankfurt School**, they analyzed how consumer culture, driven by mass media and advertising, creates a **culture industry** that manipulates people into consuming products that reinforce the capitalist system

Liquid Modernity- **Zygmunt Bauman** introduced the concept of "liquid modernity," where consumer culture encourages individuals to constantly seek **new desires**, making people feel insecure and never fully satisfied

Globalization and Consumer Culture: Globalization has led to the spread of consumer culture around the world, creating a more **global marketplace**.

- Brands like **Coca-Cola, Nike, and McDonald's** have become symbols of **global consumer culture**, influencing societies worldwide. However, this has also raised concerns about the loss of local cultures and traditions.

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