

The Sociological Research Process

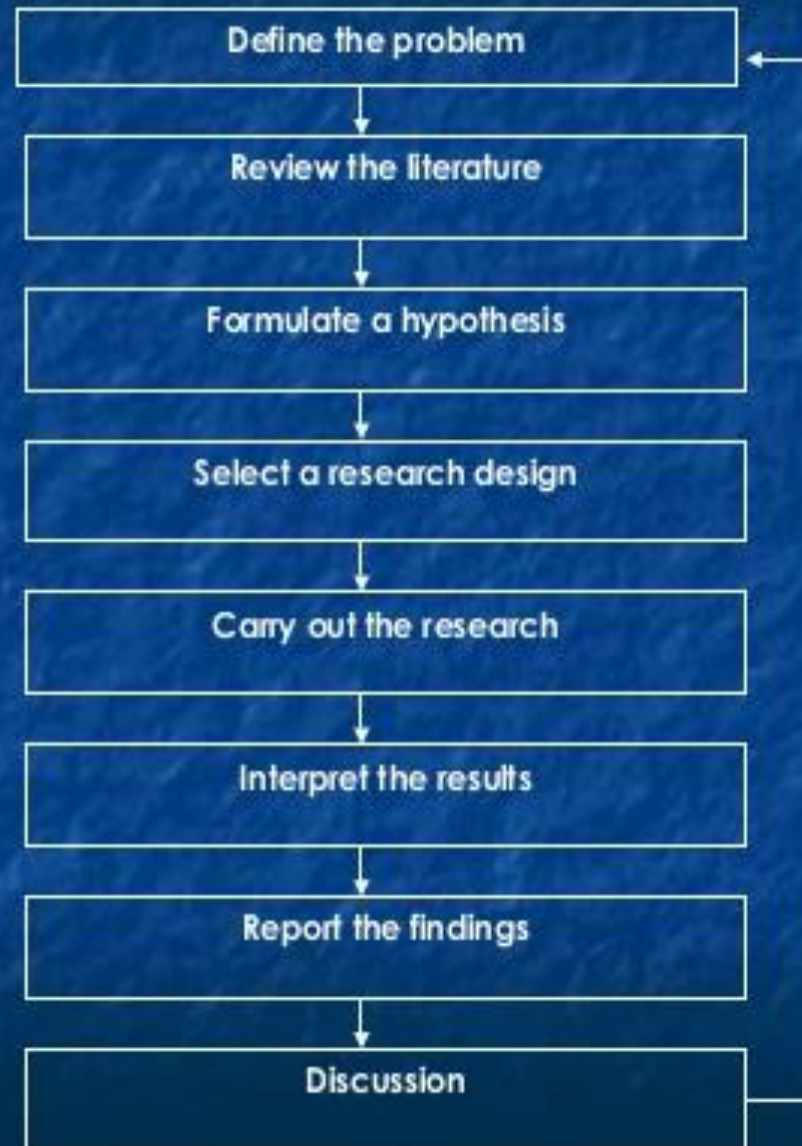
Ideal type model paradigm



Sociological questions:

- Factual
 - what happened?
- Comparative
 - did this happen everywhere?
- Developmental
 - has this happened over time?
- Theoretical
 - what underlies this phenomenon?

Stages of research process



The Sociological Research Process

There are 2 types of sociological research:

- 1) Quantitative** – *the goal of this research is scientific objectivity, and the focus is on data that can be measured numerically*
- 2) Qualitative** – *the goal of this research is to provide interpretive description (words) rather than statistics, and to analyze underlying meanings and patterns of social relationships*

Cause and effect

- Need to distinguish correlation from causation between variables
- Working out a causal mechanism (not just why but exactly how?)
- Isolate independent and dependent variables
- Hold some variables constant – using ‘controls’
- Need background information to identify correct mechanism

Hypotheses

- Simple descriptive (distribution of a variable);
- Correlation descriptive (guess about the simultaneous distributions of 2 or more variables);
- Causal (change in the value of one variable causes a change in the value of another variable) .



Quantitative Research

Quantitative research consists of 6 steps

- 1) Select and define the research problem**
– find a “gap” in your knowledge, and set out to fill it

- 2) Review previous research**
– study previous research, refine your search, and plan to avoid the same mistakes

Quantitative Research

3) **Formulate the hypothesis**

– propose a statement linking two concepts (or variables)

For example: Concept #1 – underage drinking
Concept #2 – teen fatalities

Possible hypothesis:

“Teens who use alcohol are more likely to die before the age of 19 than teens who do not.”

Quantitative Research

4) **Develop the research design**

- *consider what (eg. marriage) or whom (eg. Nova Scotians) who are going to study*
- *pick a method to use (eg. Experiment, survey, field research, etc.)*

Quantitative Research

5) **Collect and analyze the data**

– after you collect your data, ensure that it is reliable (ie. It yielded consistent results) and valid (ie. it accurately measured what you set out to measure)

For example:

If you write an IQ test, it will usually yield a consistent result (reliability), but it may not necessarily be an accurate measure of your intelligence (validity)

Types of society

Quantitative Research

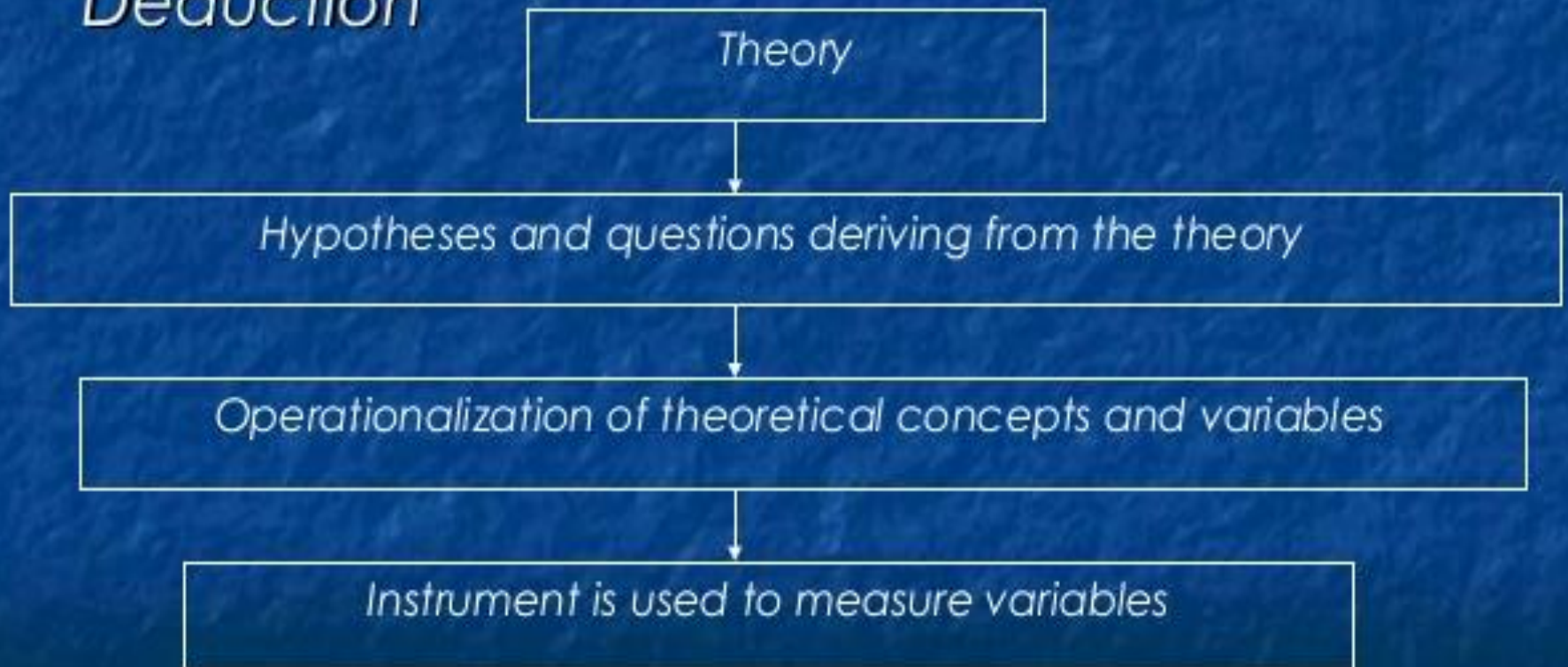
- 6) Draw conclusions and report your findings**
– *state what you discovered and what problems you encountered*

For example:

"This research concludes that teens who use alcohol are in fact more likely to die before the age of 19 than teens who do not."

Quantitative methodology

Deduction



Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is more likely to be used when the research question does not easily lend itself to numbers and statistics.

- 1st step)** **Problem formation**
– *clarify your research question*
- 2nd step)** **collect and analyze your data**

Qualitative Research

There are 3 unique features to qualitative research:

- A) The researcher begins with a flexible, general approach rather than a highly detailed plan*
- B) The researcher has to decide when the literature review and theory application should take place*
- C) The study presents a detailed view of the topic*

Qualitative methodology

- *Symbolic interactionism;*
- *Verstehen method;*
- *Goffman's dramaturgy;*
- *Garfinkel's ethnomethodology.*

"If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences."

W.I.Thomas

Quantitative vs Qualitative Research

- **Quantitative research – few concepts (variables), many cases**

Example: study 100 different incidents of teen deaths, then report statistics of those who drank underage

- **Qualitative research – few cases, many concepts (variables)**

Example: study 2 teen deaths, then examine their respective family life, school performance, after-school hobbies, childhood experiences, peer interaction, etc.

Research methods

- *Surveys (interview),*
- *Experiments,*
- *Document analysis,*
- *Participant observation.*



Surveys

- Questionnaires administered to large population
- Questions standardized and/or open-ended (scales)
- Key issue is sampling to ensure representative (random, quotas)
- Efficient data collection, answers are strictly comparable between respondents
- May not access 'real' beliefs, and may in general be superficial if over-standardized

Analysis of documents

- *Primary / secondary;*
- *Public / privat;*
- *Purposive or not.*

Text analysis - content analysis

"Who says, what, to whom, how and with what effect?"

Sociological research

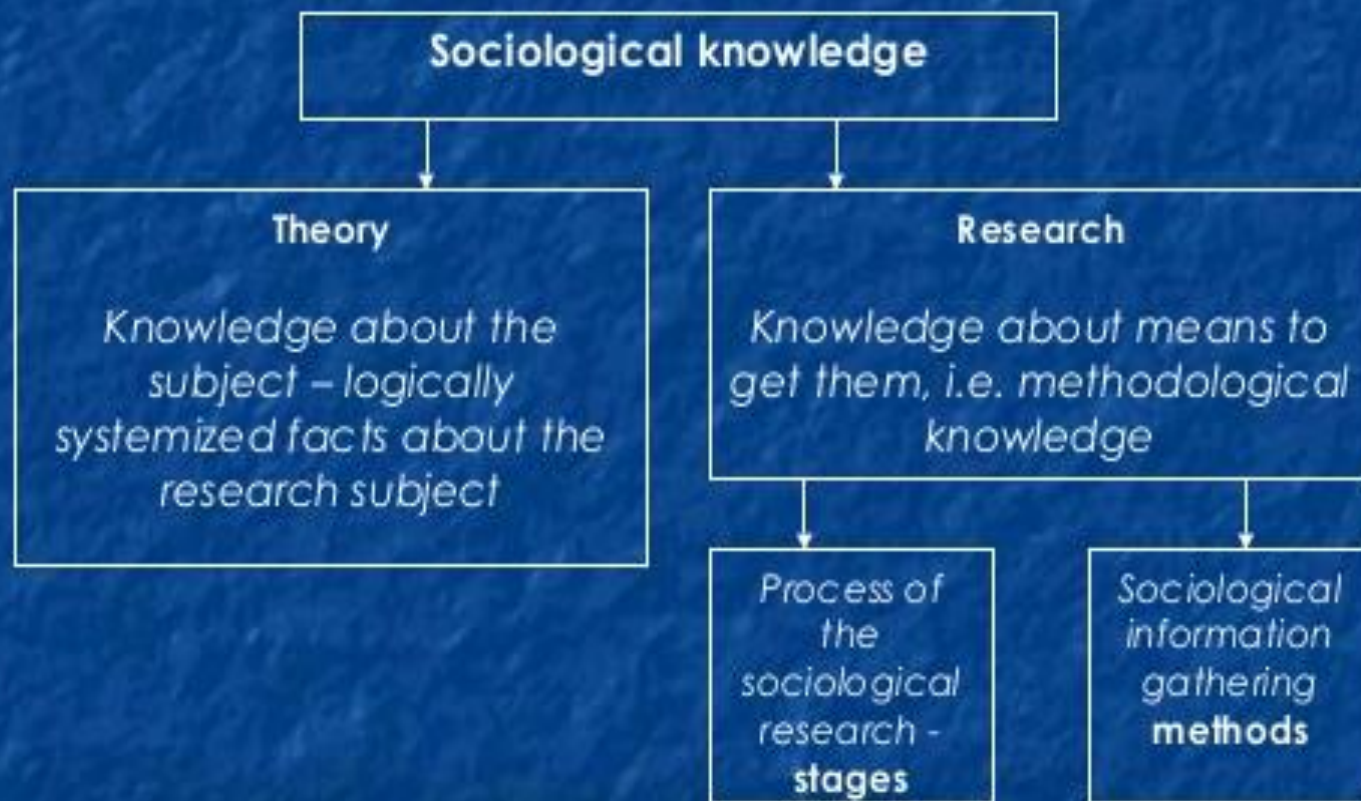
- *Onetime*

Cross-sectional: different characteristics of population (age, education, income etc.)

- *Repeated*

Longitude: the same respondents interviewed few times; methods remain the same.

Theory – research connection



Ethical problems

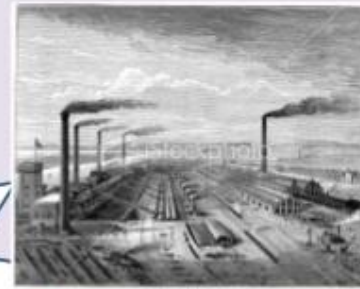
- *Balance of price / benefit (knowledge v. privacy);*
- *Informed agreement: competence, voluntarism, full information;*
- *Privacy (sensitivity of information, environment, publishing);*
- *Anonymity, confidentiality (deleting identifiers, broader categories, micro-aggregation, introducing errors);*
- *Researchers relationships.*

Types of society



Traditional rural
society



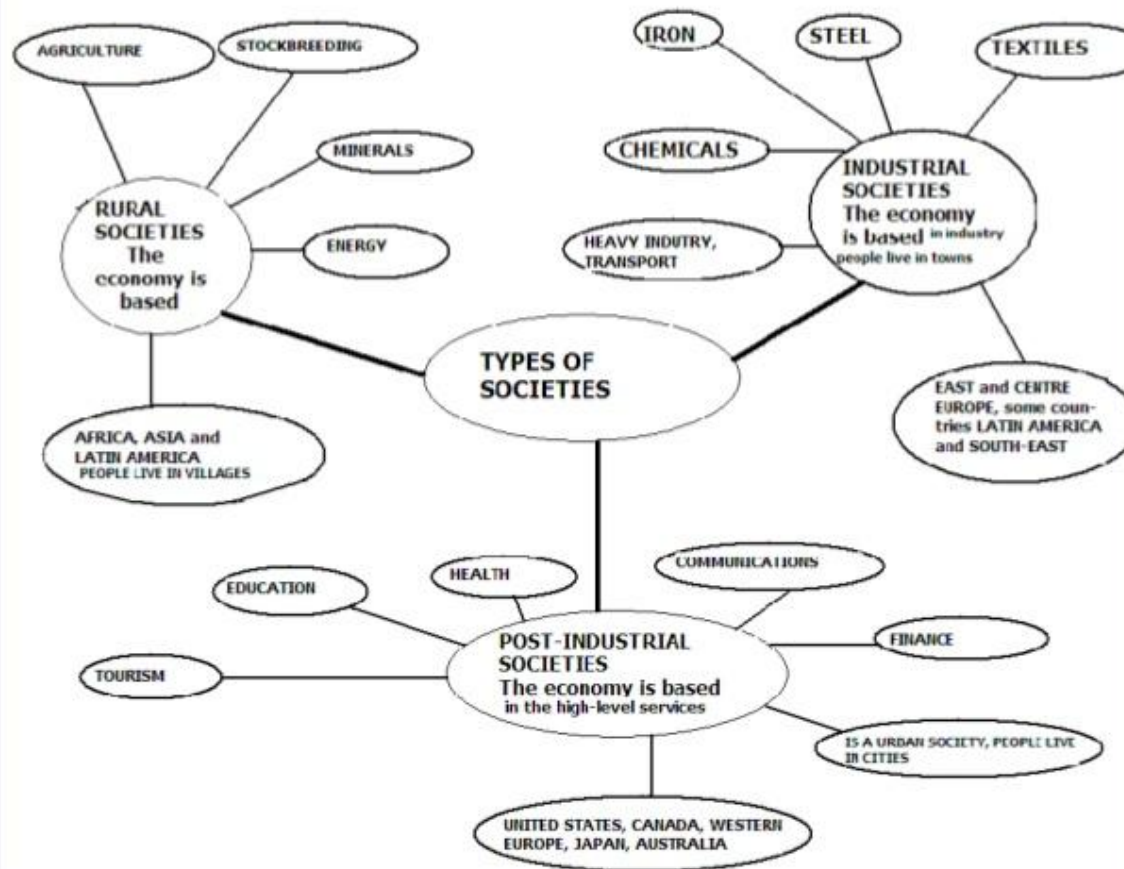


Modern
industrial
society





Post industrial
society



How have societies changed?

**9th millennium
BC
Neolithic
Revolution**

Tribes lived in villages with specialised jobs due to development of agriculture

**9th – 15th C
Middle Ages**
Feudal society
'Estates'

Class based on birth. Social mobility impossible

**18th – 19th C
Social
Revolutions**

Eg. French Revolution

Class based on wealth & education.
Social mobility possible
Everyone equal in law

**20th – 21st C
Technological
Revolution**

Class based on enterprise, wealth & education
Post industrial, multi-cultural society

STATIC/CLOSED

DYNAMIC/OPEN

Introduction

- ▶ Macro sociology - It refers to the study of large scale social systems, which makes comparative analysis of societies.
- ▶ The classical sociologists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries made great efforts in developing “MASTER SOCIAL TYPES”.

Classification System

- ▶ Comte's Classification

French philosopher Auguste Comte assumption was that “ all societies passed through distinct stages of belief or ideology, evolving from the lower to the higher stages.”

His scheme consisted of types of societies namely,

- (i) Military society
- (ii) Legal Society
- (iii) Industrial Society

Classification System

- ▶ Spencer's Classification

Herbert Spencer also constructed two extremely dissimilar types to classify societies into two categories namely:

- (i) Militant Societies
- (ii) Industrial Societies

According to him, in the 1st the regulating system was dominant and in the 2nd the sustaining system was emphasised.



Classification Of Societies Based On The Mode Of Subsistence Or The Types Of Technology

- ▶ Hunting & Gathering Societies
- ▶ Pastoral Societies
- ▶ Horticultural Societies
- ▶ Agricultural Societies
- ▶ Industrial Societies

Hunting And Gathering Societies

► Introduction

Gerhard Lenski pointed out in his “Human Societies”, that it is the oldest and the simplest type of society is the Hunting and Gathering Society.

Hunting gathering society relies heavily on hunting wild animals and gathering food for its survival.

Example:-

- (i) San people of Kalahari desert in Southern Africa
- (ii) Bushmen of Southwestern Africa



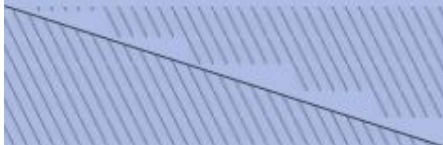
Hunting & Gathering (Characteristics)

- ▶ 1- Small in Size

These societies consist of very small but scattered groups. The environment in which they live cannot support a large number of people. So, their numbers do not exceed 40-50 members.

- ▶ 2- Nomadic In Nature

These people are constantly on the move because they have to leave one area as soon as they have exhausted its food resources.



Hunting & Gathering (Characteristics)

- ▶ 3- Not Desire To Acquire Wealth

For two reasons, firstly, no individual can acquire because there is no wealth.

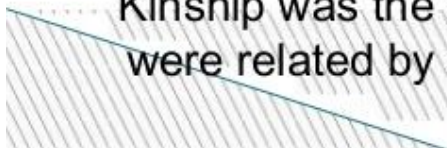
Secondly, there basic norm was sharing.

- ▶ 4- Family And Kinship Are The Only Defined Institutions

The only 2 interconnected social institutions which were family and kinship.

Family is all and all for them.

Kinship was the basis of these groups as they were related by ancestry and marriage.



Hunting & Gathering (Characteristics)

- ▶ Absence Of Political Institution

Statuses in these societies are essentially equal and hence the difference between the leader and followers is not there. Most decisions are made through group discussion. Warfare is unknown to these people.

- ▶ Limited Or No Division Of Labor

There is gender-based division of Labour but there is no gender inequality as such.



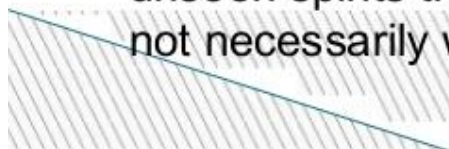
Hunting & Gathering (Characteristics)

- ▶ Constant Need To Face Danger

Some hunters and gatherers constantly face the danger of extinction in a struggle against adverse environments. Among the Itibamute Eskimos, for example a family's fate rests in the hands of the father, who must find and catch the game, build the house and maintain the family.

- ▶ Simple Religious Belief

Religion is not developed among these people into unseen spirits that must be taken into account but not necessarily worshipped.



Herding Or Pastoral Societies

- ▶ Introduction

Herding society refers to any form of society whose main subsistence comes from tending flocks and herds of domesticated animals. In practice, subsistence needs are often met by a combination of herding with hunting and gathering and other forms of agriculture.



Characteristics

- ▶ Relatively Larger In Size

In comparison with the hunting and gathering societies, herding, societies, are larger in size and due to their technological “invention” of the domesticated animal which can be used for human food.

- ▶ Pastoralism As A Better Productive Strategy

Pastoralism has proved to be a better productive strategy than hunting and gathering for it provides an assured food supply and permits the accumulation of surplus resources.



Herding Or Pastoral Societies

- ▶ Beginning Of Inequality

Since pastoralism contributes to the accumulation of surplus resources, some individuals who have better access to surplus, become more powerful than others.

- ▶ Nomadism Coupled With Trading

Herding people, like the hunters and gathers, are nomadic because of their seasonal need to find sufficient grazing areas for their herds. Their nomadic way of life often brings pastoralists into contact with their groups. This helps them to develop trading.



Herding Or Pastoral Societies

- ▶ Pastoralism And Development Of Religious Belief

Pastoral people tend to develop their own religious beliefs. “They commonly believe in a God or Gods who take an active interest in human affairs, and look after the people who worship them. Judaism, Christianity and Islam – originated among pastoral peoples”.



Herding Or Pastoral Societies

- ▶ Herding Technology Leads To Several Changes

Herding Technology has led to several social changes among which the following may be noted.

(i). The herding society tends to place a higher value on their temporary territories than do the hunting and gathering societies. Disputes over grazing rights with other herding societies sometimes result in warfare.

(ii). Slavery, unknown in hunting and gathering societies, make its appearance as captives in war are put to work for their conquerors.

(iii). Since herds can be owned, ideas about private

Horticultural Societies

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ “A horticultural society is a social system based on horticulture, a mode of production in which digging sticks are used to cultivate small gardens”.
- ▶ Came into existence about 4000BC today in sub-Saharan Africa.
- ▶ Examples for horticultural societies: (1) Gururumba Tribe in New Guinea. (ii) Masai people of Kenya



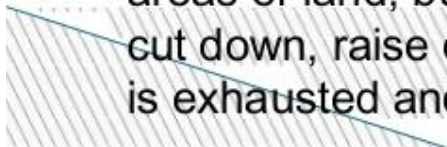
Horticultural Societies

- ▶ Characteristics
- ▶ Domestication Of Plants

Horticulturists specialize in the domestication of plants such as wheat, rice etc. More advanced horticultural societies have metal tools and weapons and not ploughs.

- ▶ Slash And Burn Technology

The subsistence strategy of the horticulturists is “slash and burn” technology. These people clear areas of land, burn the trees and plants they have cut down, raise crops for 2 or 3 years until the soil is exhausted and then repeat the process.



Horticultural Societies

- ▶ Horticulturalists Are Better Settled Than Pastoralists

Unlike the pastoralists, horticulturalists, are relatively better settled. They develop settlements that have larger populations and migrate in search of better conditions

- ▶ Relatively More Complex Division Of Labor

This society assures better food supply of surplus. Existence of surplus leads to specialization of roles. Advanced horticultural societies sometimes consisting of as many as 5000 people support specialists producing and trading with a variety of products

Horticultural Societies

- ▶ Emergence Of Political Institutions

The surplus production allows some wealthy individuals to become more powerful than others. This leads to the emergence of political institutions in the form of chieftainships. Warfare is more common. Horticultural societies are also the first known societies to support the institution of slavery.



Horticultural Societies

- ▶ Creation Of Relatively Elaborate Cultural Artifacts

These people live in comparatively permanent settlements, they can create more elaborate cultural artifacts. For example, houses, thrones, or large stone sculptures

- ▶ Some Rare Practices

Horticulture societies have some rare practices such as cannibalism, headhunting and human sacrifice. Cannibalism is eating enemies' skin as an act of ritual revenge. Headhunting is taken as evidence of courage and skill of warrior. Human sacrifice coincides with a change in the nature of religious beliefs.

Agricultural Societies

- ▶ Introduction

An agricultural society focuses on mode of production primarily on agriculture and production of large fields.

Based on the invention of the plough around 3000B.C., the agrarian revolution marked its beginning. Use of plough increases the productivity of the land.

- ▶ Characteristics Of Agricultural Societies

- ▶ Cultivation Of Land Through Plough

With the use of the plough increased productivity and made the increased yield more reliable.

Agricultural Societies

- ▶ Combining Irrigation Techniques with the use of Plough increased production and ability to renew the soil.
- ▶ Size of the agricultural societies is much greater than that of horticultural and pastoral communities.
- ▶ Appearance of cities: The specialists who engage themselves in non agricultural activities tend to concentrate in some compact places which ultimately led to the birth of the cities.



Agricultural Societies

- ▶ Emergence Of Elaborate Political Institutions

Agricultural societies lead to the establishment of more elaborate social institutions. Court system of providing justice also emerges.

- ▶ Evolution Of Distinct Social Classes

Agricultural societies produces relatively greater wealth, which is unequally shared. 1st time, two distinct social classes – those who own the land and those who work on the lands of others- make their appearance.



Agricultural Societies

- ▶ Emergence Of A Clearly Defined Economic Institution

Trade become more elaborate and money is used as a medium of exchange. These developments provide an incentive for the enrichment of systematic writing which is found only in those societies.

- ▶ Religion Becomes A Separate Institution

As societies become more and more complex, religion requires full-time officials such as priests.

- ▶ Warfare And Empire Building

Agricultural societies constantly fight amongst

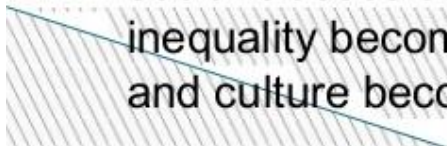
Agricultural Societies

- ▶ Enrichment Of Culture

More food is produced than required for subsistence, these societies are able to support people whose sole purpose is to provide creative ideas to the culture. Hence, poets, writers and artists are encouraged to continue their work.

- ▶ Revolutionary Transition In The Social Structure

The number of statuses multiplies, population size increases, cities appear, new institutions emerge, social classes arise, political and economic inequality becomes built into the social structure, and culture becomes much more diversified.



Industrial Societies

- ▶ Introduction

Industrial mode of production began in England about 250 years ago.

Industry literal meaning is a classification that refers to a group of companies that are related in terms of their primary business activities

An industrial society is a system in which large number of labor and machinery is involved in production of goods and services.

- ▶ Characteristics Of Industrial Societies



Industrial Societies

- ▶ Characteristics Of Industrial Societies
- ▶ Industrial Society Is Associated With Industrial Revolution And Industrialism

Industrial revolution transformed much of the Europe and United States by replacing essentially agriculturally based societies with industrial societies based on the use of machines and non-animal resources to be harnessed. Industrialism is based on the application of scientific knowledge to the technology of production, enabling new energy sources to be harnessed.



Industrial Societies

- ▶ Technology Initiating Vast And Rapid Social Changes

New technologies such as steam engine, atomic energy tend to bring about social changes as the economic and other institutions constantly adjust to altered conditions.

- ▶ Larger Societies With Huge Populations

The high level of productivity of industrial societies further stimulates population growth with increasing members living in cities and metropolitan areas. Populations of these societies often run to tens or hundreds of millions.



Industrial Societies

- ▶ Large Scale Division Of Labor

Industrial society creates thousands of new specialized jobs. In this society statuses of politicians, teachers, doctors etc could be achieved.

- ▶ Losing Importance Of Family And Kinship

Family loses many of its functions, it loses main responsibility of educating the younger ones. Kinship ties are also weakened. It does not play an important role in unifying and controlling people.



Industrial Societies

- ▶ Religion Losing Its Hold Over The People

Religion no longer play an important role in controlling the behavior of people. The world no longer remains as god-centered world for it is looked upon as the man-centered world.

- ▶ Increasing Importance Of Science And Education

Science is looked upon as a promising and an effective means of socio-economic progress. Similarly, education has evolved into an independent and distinct institution.



Industrial Societies

- ▶ Increasing Important Role Of The State

State is increasingly involved in the economic, educational, military and other activities. State as the central power has increased important role in the industrial society.

- ▶ Widening Gap Between The Rich And The Poor

According to Karl Marx, the rich class which is known as the exploiting class, and poor class as exploited class. So, there is a widening gap between the rich and the poor.



Industrial Societies

- ▶ Spread Of Heterogeneous Culture

New lifestyles and values create a much more heterogeneous culture which spreads its influence far and wide.

