

Forces of Social Change





"Everyone over the age of forty is an immigrant"

- Margaret Mead



What is Social Change?

- ◆ Changes in the way society is organized, and the beliefs and practices of the people who believe in it
- ◆ All societies are involved in a process of social change, however this change may be so subtle and slow that society is hardly aware of it
- ◆ *Example – the development of housing in Markham*



Aspects of Social Change

- ◆ The opposite of social change is social continuity
- ◆ Social continuity is not the absence of change because change is always happening
- ◆ **Social continuity** means that there are structures within society which are built to resist change
- ◆ Example - *the Catholic Church*



Natural Forces of Social Change

GEOGRAPHY

- ◆ This is when the natural lay of the land has affected the way societies have developed
- ◆ Things like bodies of water, mountains, inlets, flat lands all affect the way a society develops
- ◆ Geography can also prevent social change
- ◆ Natural disasters can also drastically change a society (floods, earthquakes, volcanoes)



Examples

- ◆ China's geographical layout forced the nation to develop a large scale irrigation system which required a strong centralized government
- ◆ North American coasts have small inlets which led to the development of small, separate colonies, able to be independent of each other



External Events

Definition

- ◆ External events are events that have occurred on a large scale affecting an entire nation or several nations
- ◆ These events have a large and immediate impact on social change

Examples

Any civil or world wars

- ◆ American Civil War – abolished slavery
- ◆ WWII – forced women into the workforce and they never returned home
- ◆ September 11/2001 – a change of thought regarding national threat and security





Technology

- ◆ Technology has strongly affected the way societies are designed and how they keep changing
- ◆ People receive their information more quickly now, can communicate in different ways
- ◆ Technology also affects architecture and the development of land

Examples

- ◆ The Plow
- ◆ The Train
- ◆ The Wheel
- ◆ The Internet
- ◆ Computers





Force	Definition	Example
Geography		
External Events		
Technology		
Charismatic Leadership		
Modernizing Elites		
Population wanting Change		
Tradition		
Expense		



Alienation

- ◆ Durkheim coined the word "anomie" to describe the conditions of the factory workers who had no roots norms as they struggled in their lives
- ◆ Marx took this term and expanded it mean anyone who does not share the major values of society and feels like an outsider
- ◆ Alienation can create anarchists – people who act violently against society because they were alienated

Columbine shootings

Theodore Kaczynski, also known as the **Unabomber** is an American terrorist who attempted to fight against what he perceived as the evils of technological progress by sending mail bombs to various people

Conformity

- ◆ **Conformity** is the act of maintaining a certain degree of similarity (in clothing, manners, behaviors, etc.) to those in your general social circles, to those in authority, or to the general status quo. Usually, conformity implies a tendency to submit to others in thought and behavior other than simply clothing choice



Conformity

- ◆ **Informational influence** – is the human desire to accept information that another admired person tells us is valid
- ◆ **Normative influence** – is the pressure to conform to the to the positive expectations of others





Affecting Social Change

Alienation

- ◆ Has both positive and negative effects
- ◆ It can create reformers or people who create outstanding ideas
- ◆ Or people who are angry about being outcasts and express their frustration violently

Conformity

- ◆ Conforming to others tends stifle social change because everyone is behaving the same
- ◆ Pressure to conform can result in negative behaviours such as increased racism, bullying, sexism