

Social Change

Authored by
mohammad looti

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Social change refers to an alteration in the social order of a society. It may refer to the notion of social progress or sociocultural evolution, the philosophical idea that society moves forward by dialectical or evolutionary means. It may refer to a paradigmatic change in the socio-economic structure, for instance a shift away from feudalism and towards capitalism. Accordingly it may also refer to social revolution, such as the Socialist revolution presented in Marxism, or to other social movements, such as Women's suffrage or the Civil rights movement or more recently, The Venus Project. Social change may be driven by cultural, religious, economic, scientific or technological forces.

More generally, social change may include changes in nature, social institutions, social behaviours or social relations.

Prominent theories of social change

Hegelian: The classic Hegelian dialectic model of change is based on the interaction of opposing forces. Starting from a point of momentary stasis, Thesis countered by Antithesis first yields conflict, then it subsequently results in a new Synthesis.

Marxist: Marxism presents a dialectical and materialist concept of history; Humankind's history is a fundamental struggle between social classes.

Kuhnian: The philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn argues in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* with respect to the Copernican Revolution that people are unlikely to jettison an unworkable paradigm, despite many indications that the paradigm is not functioning properly, until a better paradigm can be presented.

Heraclitan: The Greek philosopher Heraclitus used the metaphor of a river to speak of change thus, "On those stepping into rivers staying the same other and other waters flow" (DK22B12). What Heraclitus seems to be suggesting here, later interpretations notwithstanding, is that, in order for the river to remain the river, change must constantly be taking place. Thus one may think of the Heraclitan model as parallel to that of a living organism, which, in order to remain alive, must constantly be changing.

Daoist: The Chinese philosophical work *Dao De Jing*, I.8 and II.78 uses the metaphor of water as the ideal agent of change. Water, although soft and yielding, will eventually wear away stone. Change in this model is to be natural, harmonious and steady, albeit imperceptible.

Resource-based economy: Jacque Fresco's concept of a resource-based economy that replaces the need for the current monetary economy, which is "scarcity-oriented" or "scarcity-based". Fresco argues that the world is rich in natural resources and energy and that -- with modern technology and judicious efficiency -- the needs of the global population can be met with abundance, while at the same time removing the current limitations of what is deemed possible due to notions of economic viability.