



İSTANBUL  
**GELİŞİM**  
**ÜNİVERSİTESİ**

# INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

WEEK 4

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- Society is described as a group sharing a common culture, settled in a given land and defining itself as a united and original being. (Marshall (1999) *Sosyoloji Sözlüğü*, s. 272.)
- Macionis: people who interact in a defined territory and share a culture. (*Sociology*, p.80)
- Every sociological approach define the elements which are influential on social life differently:



- Society is defined by:
- Durkheim: by the types of solidarity and division of labor,
- Karl Marx: by the types of social conflict;
- Weber: by ideas and mode of thinking.

Macionis:

analyzes the society by referring Gerhard Lenski's society types defined by their **technology**.



- Why technology is an important factor to classify societies?



- It has the same reason with why we divide the eras according to the materials used by the technology of the time.
  - Stone Age
  - Copper Age
  - Bronze Age
  - Iron Age



## Gerard Lenski (1924-2015) – Ecological Evolutionist Theory

- Human populations are subject to environmental and biological influences just as animal populations are.
- Human societies are part of the global ecosystem and cannot be understood unless this factor is taken fully into account.
- Human populations cope with the changes in the external environment and adapt to them by evolving culture instead of relying on genetic change as animal societies do.
  - So: Human societies adapt to biological, cultural and social environment through socio-cultural systems.



- Society is an imperfect system.
- According to Lenski:
  - Societies have two basic goals:
    - The maintenance of the political status quo within the society.
    - The maximization of production.
  - Highly stratified societies with powerful elites tend to emphasize political stability,
  - Less stratified societies favor maximizing production.



## Gerard Lenski (1924-2015) – Ecological Evolutionist Theory

- Goods and services within societies are distributed on the basis of need (subsistence goods) and power (surplus goods).
  - **Socio-cultural change:** happens over innovation and extinction.
    - **innovation:** involves adding new elements such as technologies, social practices, institutions, or beliefs to the system.
    - **extinction:** involves the elimination of old elements in the system.
  - Changes in technologies transform the values, cultural beliefs and organization of people in society.
  - The more the technology advances the more the sur-plus value increases which increases the inequality.
- In this respect Lenski combines the concepts of stratification, culture, progress and technological development under one theory.





- Societies change by using the new technology.
- This change is defined by SOCIO-CULTURAL EVOLUTION.
- Societies having a simple technology have a limited control on the nature. That is why these societies can bring together a limited number of people.
- Societies which are developed in terms of technology support a greater number of specified people.



## Types of Societies

- Hunter and Gatherer Societies
- Horticultural and Pastoral Societies
- Agrarian (Agricultural) Societies
- Industrial Societies
- Post-Industrial (Information) Societies





## Hunter and Gatherer Societies

- Hunter and gatherer societies live hunting animals and gathering edible plants and use simple gadgets for them.
- They have a limited control over their environment. They have a limited ability to control the nature.
- Hunter and gatherer societies are nomadic and they never passed to the settled life.



- They depend on the family to do many things. The family must get and distribute food, protect its members, and teach their way of life to the children.
- They have an egalitarian structure.
- There is a division of labor between man and woman that bases on gender roles.
- They use simple weapons—the spear, bow and arrow, and stone knife—but rarely do they use them to wage war.
- They cannot protect themselves from illnesses.
- They are vulnerable to natural disasters.



## Horticultural and Pastoral Societies

- They increased their domination on soil by using simple grow land and they started to raise animals.
- Growing plants and raising animals greatly increased food production, so populations expanded from dozens to hundreds of people.
- Pastoralists remained nomadic, following the nature's changes to feed their herds.
- Horticulturalists formed settlements, moving only to reach more fertile soil. They started trade, these settlements formed extended societies with populations reaching into the thousands.
- Ps: **Horticulture**: the use of hand tools to raise crops.



## Horticultural and Pastoral Societies

“Once a society is capable of producing a material surplus—more resources than are needed to feed the population—not everyone has to work at providing food. Greater specialization results: Some make crafts, while others engage in trade, cut hair, apply tattoos, or serve as priests. Compared to hunting and gathering societies, horticultural and pastoral societies are more socially diverse.”

Macdonald, *Sociology*, p. 82

- Developments in technology lead to social inequality.
- If a family grows some food, their position and power in society increases.



## Agrarian Societies (Agricultural Societies)

- **The dawn of civilization:** the invention of the **animal-drawn plow**, along with irrigation, the wheel, writing, numbers brought human societies to a more developed state.
- **The invention of the animal-drawn plow:** enabled farmers to cultivate fields far bigger than the garden-sized plots planted by horticulturalists
- Brought specialization.
- Distinct occupations were developed.
- With the growth of a surplus of food; they started to transport goods using animal-powered wagons and so agrarian societies greatly expanded in size and population.
- The inventions and the growth of population led to the invention of **money** as a common standard of exchange.
- Slavery started: Pyramids are outcomes of this period.
- Ps. **Agriculture:** large-scale cultivation using plows harnessed to animals or more powerful energy sources.



# Industrial Societies

- Large machinery took their place in production as a result of the use of advanced technological resources.
- Until the age of industry, the resource has been human and animal power.
- During 19th century railways, steamboats and trains increased transportation.
- “The development of automobiles allowed people to move quickly almost anywhere, and electricity powered homes full of modern “conveniences” such as refrigerators, washing machines, air conditioners, and entertainment centers. Electronic communication, beginning with the telegraph and the telephone and followed by radio, television, and computers, gave people the ability to reach others instantly, all over the world.” (Macionis, *Sociology*, p.84)
- Accessing and storing information became easier.
- Ps. **Industrialism**: is the production of goods using advanced sources of energy to drive large machinery.





## Post-Industrial (Information) Societies

- This type of society varies from the industrial society with its many features investing on computer and information technologies.
- The production is not based on only to raw materials and it covers also sectors such as micro-technology.
- Post-industrial societies are also referred as information society.
- Information: The sum of the means supporting the distribution of information and news in a given place and society.
- **Post-industrialism:** *the production of information using computer technology.*



## Post-Industrial (Information) Societies

- In this type of society, the developments in the domain of electronics enable people to gather information from all over the world.
- Some social scientists refer this society as Society of Consumption since they think consumption symbolizes this society rather than production that defines industrial society.
- The individual does not only support the system by labor and thought but with his/her desires and needs. (supply and demand relation)