

# Introduction to Sociology

## Lecture 7 - Human Society

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# Learning Objectives

- What is “Society”?
- Gerhard Lenski's views of different types of human societies
- Social order and social conflict



# Definition of Society

- A group of people who share a common culture, occupy a particular territory, and feel themselves to constitute a unified and distinct entity.
- What are some criticisms of this definition?



# What is “Society”?

- US society
- Japanese society
- Malaysian society
  
- How do these differ in terms of political systems, economic systems, social composition, cultural values?
- How do these differ in terms of social institutions?



# Typology of Human Societies

- Gerhard Lenski's typology of different kinds of societies
  - Hunter-gatherer - nomadic
  - Horticultural - semi-sedentary
  - Pastoral
  - Agricultural
  - Industrial
- Daniel Bell: post-industrial society
- Globalization



# Lenski thesis

- Lenski (1924-2015) saw human society as constantly undergoing change because of innovation, and technological advances. He calls it sociocultural evolution.
- 'Societal survival has been largely a function of a society's level of technological advance relative to the societies with which it has been in competition.' This simply means that a society which uses its technology to further its survival will do so over a society that remains standing still



# Daniel Bell (1919 - 2011)

- Daniel Bell and post-industrialism, a concept that defines a society that has developed to a point where the service sector generates more wealth than the manufacturing sector. The economy refocuses on providing services instead of goods; knowledge becomes a form of capital; the production of new ideas becomes the primary way to grow the economy.

Bell's 1973 book, "The Coming of Post-Industrial Society."



# Social Order and Social Conflict

- Social order - how society is formed and maintained over time, how the peace is kept. Common values? Coercion? False consciousness? (people hold beliefs and ideologies that go against their best interests)
- Social conflict - disagreement over values, competition for power/prestige/wealth, violence between social groups
- Ethnic conflict
- Class conflict
- Regionalism and separatism
- Religious conflict



# Thank you

