SOCIAL CHANGE

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Overview

• Introduction
• What changes and how
• Causes of social change
• Forecasting of social change
• Sustainable societal development – improvement of social institutions
Introduction

• Change for the better or for the worse. Growth and development vs. deteriotation and decay.

• Gradual (evolutionary) vs. abrupt (revolutionary), disruptive changes, emergent vs. planned change.

• Slow and fast change.
What change and how

- Religion, beliefs, roles, expectations, groups, norms, values, attitudes, conflicts, family relationships, economic conditions, communities, politics and government, social welfare measures, educational opportunities, transport conditions, customs, language, material objects, residential pattern, art
- Time series. Decomposition in main trend, relatively long term fluctuations, seasonal variations, small irregularities.
Causes of social change

Research methods

• Study of time series: why change at specific points?
• One method: Correlated times series, possibly with a time lag. NB! Spurious correlations may occur.
Correlated time series
Causes of social change

• Individuals
• Contact between cultures
• Purposefully induced change
• Scientific and technological change
• Disasters
• Resistance against change
Individuals

• Innovative and charismatic individuals. Pioners and Heroes. (Thomas Carlyle: On heroes, 1841.)
• Unconscious knowledge and attitudes become conscious.
• Dictatores.
• (Minority influences majority.)
Contact between cultures

• Cultural influences from other societies. Culture = everyday and mostly common beliefs, expectations, social norms, values, customs and traditions, material objects.
• Subculture and counterculture.
• Transmission of culture to individuals: the socialization process,
• Selective assimilation, reconstruction and re-creation of cultural elements.
Cultural influence
Purposefully induced change

- Social reforms and societal planning. Politically motivated.
- Evaluation. Result and process. Intended and unintended consequences. Advantage to some, disadvantage to others. Ethics.
- "NAV har ødelagt livene for mange" (Jørgen Kosmo 2010). (NAV = Ny arbeids- og velferdsforvaltning = Sosialtjenesten + Aetat + Trygdeetaten 2006- )
Scientific and technological development

- Development of science and technology. Economic growth.
- Innovation: new products, new production processes, new suppliers, new markets, new organizational forms.
The industrial revolution
Information technology, and the internet revolution
Disasters

- Catastrophes. Natural disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes, etc.). Epidemic diseases, pandemics. Wars etc. Unique events.
- Consequences: migration, economic crises,
Berlin 1945
Resistance against change

• Based on that change constitutes threat to advantages that one has. Fear of the unknown. Etc.

• Obstructions that impede change from occurring.
Forecasting of social change

• «It is difficult to predict, especially about the future» (Anon.)

• Important socio-political events. (Difficult to predict; they often come as a surprise.)

• Trends. Time series analysis. ARIMA (Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average).
Forecasting, cont’d

- Plans.
- Self-fulfilling prophecies (Robert Merton, 1948).
- Utopia.
Outlook: Sustainable societal development

• An end in itself or just a means for something?
• If just a means: what is the goal?
• Greatest happiness of the greatest number? Social justice? Well-being? Eudaimonia?
Improvement of social institutions

- Marriage and family
- School, education and culture
- Economics and working
- Politics and government
- Religion
- Communities
Social causes of well-being (1)

• Social relations and networks are important (in that they give social support).
• Married people are happier than the widowed, divorced, or separated.
• Education add slightly to well-being.
• Job prestige and relatively good economy add slightly to well-being.
Social causes of well-being (2)

• Political democracy, peace, not ethnical conflicts, may be important.
• Religious people tend to report greater happiness than nonreligious people.
• Communities should provide diverse, interesting and stimulating experiences, let people be free to be themselves, accept members as significant members, and give possibility for optimal functioning.
Thank You for Your Attention