*"Social development" redirects here. For the concept of*[*human biological development*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_biological_development)*developed by*[*Erik Erikson*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erik_Erikson)*, see*[*psychosocial development*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychosocial_development)*. For social development in children, see*[*Social emotional development*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_emotional_development)*.*

**Social change** involves alteration of the [social order](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_order) of a [society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society). It may include changes in [social institutions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_institution), [social behaviours](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_behaviour) or [social relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_relations)

Social change may refer to the notion of [social progress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_progress) or [sociocultural evolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociocultural_evolution%22%20%5Co%20%22Sociocultural%20evolution), the philosophical idea that society moves forward by evolutionary means. It may refer to a [paradigmatic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradigm) change in the socio-economic structure, for instance a shift away from [feudalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feudalism) and towards [capitalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitalism).

**Social Development** refers to how people develop social and emotional skills across the lifespan, with particular attention to childhood and adolescence. Healthy social development allows us to form positive relationships with family, friends, teachers, and other people in our lives.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_change#cite_note-1)

Accordingly, it may also refer to [social revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_revolution), such as the [Socialist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism) revolution presented in [Marxism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism), or to other [social movements](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_movements), such as [Women's suffrage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage) or the [Civil rights movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_rights_movement). Social change may be driven through cultural, religious, economic, scientific or technological forces.

Change comes from two sources. One source is random or unique factors such as climate, weather, or the presence of specific groups of people. Another source is systematic factors. For example, successful development has the same general requirements, such as a stable and flexible government, enough free and available resources, and a diverse social organization of society. On the whole, social change is usually a combination of systematic factors along with some random or unique factors.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_change#cite_note-2)

There are many theories of social change. Generally, a [theory of change](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_of_change) should include elements such as structural aspects of change (like population shifts), processes and mechanisms of social change, and directions of change.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_change#cite_note-3)

* **Hegelian**: The classic [Hegelian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism) presents a [dialectical and materialist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectical_materialism) concept of history; Humankind's history is a fundamental "struggle between [social classes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_class)".
* **Kuhnian**: The [philosopher of science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher_of_science), [Thomas Kuhn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Kuhn) argues in [*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Structure_of_Scientific_Revolutions) with respect to the [Copernican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copernicus) Revolution that people are likely to continue utilizing an apparently unworkable paradigm until a better paradigm is commonly accepted .
* **Heraclitan**: The Greek philosopher [Heraclitus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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. A contemporary application of this approach is shown in the social change theory [SEED-SCALE](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SEED-SCALE) which builds off of the [complexity theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Complexity_economics) subfield of [Emergence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emergence).
* **Daoist**: The Chinese philosophical work [*Dao De Jing*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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.
* **Four Levels of Action**: Will Grant of the Pachamama Alliance describes "Four Levels of Action" for change:
1. Individual
2. Friends and family
3. Community and institutions
4. Economy and policy

Grant suggests that individuals can have the largest personal impact by focusing on levels 2 and 3.