



## Analysis of Theories of Social Change

Dr. Emmanuel I. Ogbenjuwa; PhD; FCNA; FCTI<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Friday E. Akpan; PhD; FCNA; ACTI<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Director, Center for Entrepreneurship Studies, Federal University of Health Science, Otuipo, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Director-General, Nigerian College of Accountancy, Jos, Nigeria

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.68050/JAMS.2026.445>

Received: 10 Sept 2026; Accepted: 11 Sept 2026; Published: 15 September 2026

### ABSTRACT

The study is an integrated, and comparative analysis of theory of social change, social movement and modernity. Works of scholars such as Haferkamp and Smelser (1992), Smelser and Munich (1993), Haferkamp (1992), Achebe (1958), and Achebe (1964) were analyzed to identify common and emerging patterns. The analysis of the theory of social change and modernity provided explanation for the winds of change which blew across Africa, leading to the breakdown of culture, the value systems and the unavoidable, inevitable conflict of culture and modernity. The comparative analysis revealed a common denominator of radical transformation, conflict and social cultural evolution that resulted from modernity social movement, westernization and social change. The study adopts a qualitative triangulation method of narrative essay and phenomenological approaches. This is in tandem with Creswell (2009) who posited that narrative essay tells the story in in-depth form while phenomenological studies analyzes settings and events. Triangulation of methods blends varying degrees of benefits inherent in divergent approaches. The selection of theories follows a purposeful sampling consistent with qualitative studies in order to draw information-rich samples. Purposeful sampling is a peculiar feature of a qualitative design as opposed to randomization in quantitative approaches.

**Keywords:** Cultural ascription; Cultural evolution; Modernity and Modernization;; Social change;

### INTRODUCTION

#### Theories of social change: Cultural evolution in Sub-Saharan Africa

Social change as an ongoing concept, has caught the attention of classical and contemporary scholars in the field of psychology, sociology, and economy. According to Haferkamp and Smelser (1992), change is such an evident feature of social reality that any social scientist must sooner or later address it (P.1). Analysis of social change is at the heart of any meaningful study in sociology/psychology and humanities. In this study, I critically analyzed theories of social change in compendium of associated theories that provide cradle explanations of the concept. I compared and contrasted: The theory of social change and modernity by Haferkamp and Smelser (1992), theory of culture Smelser and Munich (1993), theory of modernity and ascription by Haferkamp (1992), cultural conflict (Things fall apart ) by Achebe (1958), and cultural change in Africa (Arrow of God) by Achebe (1964), with a view to addressing any conflict or gaps in their approaches and explanations and to note them for their academic relevance and socio-cultural usefulness. The analysis of the general theme of social change theories and modernity will help me advance deductive explanation for the cultural misadventure that was the product of modernity and the destruction of traditions and values in Sub-Saharan Africa. The outcome of this analytical exercise will lead to identifying certain positive values inherent in ancient African states with the aim of reinventing them in policy formulation. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) identified three elements of change as: -structural determinants change, such as population changes, dislocation occasioned by war, strains and contradiction; process and mechanism of social change, which include precipitating mechanism, social movement, political conflict, accommodation and entrepreneur activity; and the direction of social change, including structural change effects and consequences (P.2).



Social change and modernity” as edited by Hans Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) is a product of intellectual conference sponsored by the theory sections of the American sociological Association and the German sociological Association held in Berkeley on 26-28 August, 1986. The contributions are multifaceted and are organized into three main headings for ease of reading and comprehension: “Evolutionary approaches”, “Theories of modernity and social movement”, and “Theory of modernity and social inequality” (P.29), under the general theme of “social change and modernity” more from its general inclusiveness and wider usage in contemporary sociology (Haferkamp and Smelser 1992:1). The theory of culture is a product of intellectual conference sponsored by American sociological association and the regent of the University of California in 1993. Neil J. Smelser is joined in anchoring the conference by Richard Munich after the death of his erstwhile intellectual partner Hans Haferkamp, who co-authored the theory of social change and modernity in 1992, due to a fatal drowning accident. The conference leading to the codification of the theory of culture was therefore held in Haferkamp’s hometown of Bremen in his honor.

### **Descriptive Analysis of theories/theorists on social change**

This is a descriptive analysis of social change theories, delineating the concept of modernity as it collided with cultural practices in Africa, leaving behind dislocated and a crumbling society. The social change that resulted, are multifaceted, manifested in pains, sorrows, agony, relief, freedom and radical evolution of the people’s cultural values. The theories of social change and modernity, culture, modernity and ascription creates general interface upon which the analysis of cultural change and cultural conflict rests its assumptions. Haferkamp (1992), Haferkamp and Smelser (1992), Smelser and Munich (1993), provided more general framework for the understanding and analysis of Achebe (1958, 1964).

### **African cultural values**

Achebe (1958) eulogized the tenets of African cultural values as; hard-work, A man would work hard to earn his first seed yams if he had nothing to inherit from his father, through share-cropping. “People laughed at him because he was a loafer and they swore never to lend him any more money” (Achebe 1958:4). Achebe (1958) informed that a man was judged according to the degree his worth (P.6). Okonkwo, the main character in Achebe (1958)’s prose, was presented as a man of strong character and tradition personified. Achebe (1958) advertized him to have brought home five human heads at tender age of eighteen (P.8). Male born were brought up by their fathers to be manly and brave, as failure was frowned at Achebe (1958). The elders never spoke plainly as their conversation were laden with proverbs, as according to Achebe (1958), proverbs were the palm-oil with which words were eaten (P.5). The Ibo nation of South-eastern Nigeria, typified the cultural and traditional values of the people of Africa. Values of hard-work, hospitality, adherence to societal norms, communal life and extended family system underlines their every existence.

A great man is thus considered a man who could feed his family from one harvest to another. A great man according to Achebe (1958) was acknowledged as a man who brought fames to his community through organized wrestling and communal wars which happened often (P.6). There was the sense of communal life which held the people together, as people called on their neighbors and drank palm wine together during marriage feasts and burial ceremonies (P.23). The people were bounded together by common heritage and traditional practices, as neighbor joined hands to do cooking and other chores, sense of communal responsibility, respect for elders, sexual morality among adolescents, and strength of character among men. A man was expected to rule his family with iron hand Achebe (1958). The people were ruled by strict adherence to cultural norms and violation attracts heavy sanctions and penalty (P. 23). Achebe (1958) illustrated how the people, were governed through the tilled elders, with the highest authority resting with the gods who spoke through the priests of Ani (the soil goddess) & Amadioha (the god of thunder). In the eyes of the west the people were considered as fetish, ritualistic and barbaric in their beliefs and practices. Achebe (1958) however eulogized the positive side of the traditional worship system, as it served as the cradle of moral instruction and enforcement, and provided rallying point for deviant behaviors. Arrow of god by Achebe (1964) underscored the firm belief the people had in their gods and their willingness to be only used as the gods so deem fit in their battles against the western onslaught. It is a supplementary account to Achebe (1958), on African cultural values demented by the advent of western missionaries. The arrival of the missionaries



triggered off a major socio-cultural change leading to a total collapse of the values of the people. Smelser and Munich (1993) argued that culture should not be treated as a mere explanatory variable, hence there is the tendency to embrace values, ideas, beliefs, customs, usages, institutions, technology and material artifacts. In his contributions Eugene Halton (1993) emphasized that academic sociology has finally seemed to acknowledge the importance of culture, evidenced by the creation of the German and American sociological Association. In collaboration with inputs from Halton (1993), Smelser and Munich (1993) identified the inner social aspect of culture as aesthetic qualities of arts, which is a shared experience and spontaneous combination of new ways of feeling, doing, and conceiving (P. 30). Smelser and Munich (1993) argued that culture remains the defining phenomenon of human living and experience, and has been the force behind the wheel of social change evolutions. According to Smelser and Munich (1993) modern capitalism emerged out of medieval catholic culture, giving credence to the claim that cultural theory itself is by and large part of a progressive externalization of meaning in cultural life generally (P. 41).

The features of the cultural ways of life of Africans displayed elegantly by Achebe (1964) included the worship of deity-‘Ulu’, dignified as the protector and defender of the people, who brought sacrifice continually to Ulu through its priest, the Eze-Ulu (P.15). The Community was ruled by loosed democratic representatives of elders, as key decisions must be taken at the general meeting of the six communities in the public meeting square Achebe (1964:12). Superstition underscored the peoples’ relationship with the venerated land of the dead, for example, “until the alusi, ( a deity) who owned the stream and whose name it bore had been placated no one would go near it to fetch water it” (Achebe 1964:7) , and as ezeulu would say that “the dead father of Umuaron looking at the world from ani-mmo (land of the dead) must be utterly confused by the ways of the new age” (Achebe 1964.14). The use of proverb, according to Achebe (1964), is common in communication among the African people, as simple discussions are prolonged and seasoned by prolonged use of proverbs: e.g. “the fly that has no one to advise it, follows the corpse to the grave” (P. 27), “the man who has never submitted to anything will soon submit to the burial mat” (P.11), “when a hand shake goes beyond the elbow, we know it has turned to another thing” (P.13), “when a man of cunning dies, a man of cunning buries him (P.20), “a toad does not run in the day unless something is after it” (P. 21). The beauty of African culture was displayed elegantly by Achebe (1958), amidst contradictory vices of ritual belief system, ancestral worship, and extreme gender inequalities. The people lived in firm obedience to the voice of the gods, superstitions and strict adherence to social norms like observation of week of peace when no violence is tolerated; whistling in the night is abominable and prohibited (P.14).

Smelser and Munich (1993) argued that culture is a way of living not just a domain of knowledge (P. 33), and frowned at the cultural theories that associate culture with ape-like life, derogatory, some life of outer space or antiquities. Smelser and Munich (1993), argued that “internalization of culture in individual through socialization and institutionalization of culture into the social structure are the main vehicles of social change in our contemporary world” (P.14). Smelser and Munich (1993) drew liberally from the works: of Durkheim (1956) on cultural internalization through socialization; Freud (1930) on process of incorporation of cultural prohibition and renunciations, and Parsons (1955) of socialization through family mechanism; culture of Protestantism and individualism, all leading to freedom and creating of liberal space within the society (P.8). Offering bi-explanation on institutionalization of culture into the social structure, Smelser and Munich (1993) leaned on Durkheim (1956)’s position of the supremacy of society’s collective conscience, the dictum of “culture above individual” in the society and the role of culture as a common language, rules, and other cultural ingredients (P.17). Smelser and Munich (1993) further leaned on the Marxian, Thompson (1963) concepts of cultural incoherence and conflicts, leading to emerging counter cultures (P.12). All these lead to evident social changes within the sphere of the society. Culture as a social construct is an instrument of addressing deviants within the society. Smelser and Munich (1993) posited that re-socialization, rehabilitation and psychotherapy, are the process of social control, through which culture reasserts itself by bringing the deviant individual back into line for a better understanding. Smelser and Munich (1993) opined that the concept of culture be disaggregated into desecrate parts of values, beliefs ideologies, preference, not to be treated as a global entity, as the concept cannot be studied as a homogenous construct in a culturally dichotomized world (P.17).

Smelse r and Munich (1993) presented culture as a social science concept, and argued that t he concept is in



large part, a construct about the society or group under study, rather than a simple empirical attributes to be apprehended, recorded and described. Smelser and Munich (1993) posited that the coherence and incoherence of a culture or some part it, also vary according to the framework that is used to describe it (P.23). Smelser and Munich (1993), identified the evaluative connotations of culture, as meaning something higher on the part of the individual that possess it, relating culture to values and preference. Smelser and Munich (1993), cautioned simplistic overview in the definition of culture, as there are methodological problem in describing and employment of the cultural concept (p.23). Culture is understood by Smelser and Munich (1993) as an integral part of the game of social control, social conflict, and social change. Cultural integration is aimed at resolving cultural conflicts which may impede social cohesion.

Cultural integration according to Smelser and Munich (1993) is a strain towards consistency among institutions and ideas in society, as a means of achieving cultural and social harmony among diverse and contradictory socio-cultural elements (PP.11-12). Macionis (1997) identified the causes of social change as: culture, conflict, idealistic factors, adaptation, environmental factors, economic and political advantage, demographic change, social movement and change, consumerism, role of values and ethics, religion, technology and information. In the definition of culture by Smelser and Munich (1993) values ethics, religion, environment and conflicts are summed up as all cultural factors. Macionis (1997) argued that culture is a system that constantly loses and gains components through invention, discovery and diffusion (P.10).

### **Westernization and cultural conflict**

Smelser and Munich (1993) related cultural coherence to the concept of social structure which is predicated on two explanatory assumptions that designated and empirically describe structures of: activities (termed institutions), relations among collections, and theories of social structures, which states the reasons, causes, or explanations for the regulation (P.6). Making intellectual contributions Eisenstaedt (1993) offered two dimensions of culture as order-maintaining dimension and order-transforming dimension (P.4). Levi-Strauss (1983) saw culture as regulator of human behavior, of which Smelser and Munich (1993) was in concordant and added that culture as a map of human behavior or paradigm, help to organize and normalize human activity (P. 65). Smelser and Munich (1993) highlighted the challenges of developing a homogenous cultural anthropology, in view of its incoherence and diversity even within a nation's space. The question to address in this regard is. To what degree does a society's population share or have consensus values and other ingredients of culture? This notable conflicts and cultural straining, is constantly exerting itself against the status quo, resulting in dimensions of social change.

The poor and down-trodden in Achebe (1958)'s "things fall apart" found solace in the new social system. Achebe (1958) stated that the status quo of peaceful and robust livelihood in Umuofia was soon to be shattered by the advent of white missionaries. The ground was prepared for the western onslaught when Okonkwo, the arrowhead and the strongman violated the earth by killing a man when his gun exploded accidentally. The only course open to Okonkwo according to Achebe (1958) was to flee the clan who returned from exile years later, to lament the very drastic changes that had occurred. "The Christians had grown in number and were now a small community of men, women and children, self-assured and confident" and were permeating the community with their teachings which were in complete contrast with African values (P.115). Achebe (1958) presented the mild drama that ensued as the struggle to entrench the Christian values met with stiff oppositions, resulting in the elders excommunicating the later, which include being barred from social engagement and markets (P.112). Diabolic helps were employed leading to the death of one over-zealous Christian faithful Achebe (1958:116).

The intruding of the white man's religion and contradictory values, into the communal life of the people, was summed up by Achebe (1958) in the following lamentation: "The white man has brought of lunatic religion" (P.128). Achebe (1958) caught the mood in the character named Okonkwo, who was deeply grieved and could not stomach the socio-cultural evolution in his community. He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart and mourned for the war-like men of Umuofia who had so embarrassingly become soft like women (P.131). Achebe (1958) presented the climax of the confrontation between African culture and western values when the Christians met and fought the 'egwugwu' masquerades on a Sunday afternoon. The



culture forbids the women from seeing the masquerade. The de-robbing of the masquerade ignited a total war leading to the burning of the white man's church. (P.134). The arrest, detention and sanction of the community leaders by the white man's court according to Achebe (1958) was the worst humiliation contemplated by Okonkwo who openly bared his disappointment in their unwillingness to engage the white man in open war. He wept: \_“-worthy men are no more, there were days when men were men-”\_ (P. 143). Achebe (1958) reeled off the dramatic episode by beheading the white man's messenger and brought the meeting in a tragic end, He expected a follow up actions of solidarity from his kin and kiths (P.146). Achebe (1958), informed that Okonkwo the arrowhead of the struggle, hanged himself having been disappointed by the unwillingness of Umuofia to go to war in order to save the community from shame and prevent the total collapse of the cultural life of the people (P.146). Achebe (1958), released the valedictory tears for the collapse of African culture in the following words: “All our gods are weeping, idemili ( *one of the deities*) is weeping, egwugwu is weeping, agbala is weeping ( *egwugwu and agbala are other deities*). Our dead fathers are weeping, because of the shameful sacrilege; they are suffering and the abomination we have all seen with our eyes” (P.147).

The value upon which African culture (and Umuofia in particular) was built was changing fast. It was Reeler (2007) who stated that values express human qualities that must underpin human processes (P.17). Reeler (2007), stated further that recognition of social and ecological interdependence and freedom of diverse living beings, is one of the deepest desires of all and as such is a condition of any healthy social change. Reeler (2007), hold that freedom must underpin both diversity and creativity and at the head of developmental change, and equality of persons, recognizing diversity, assenting that no human being is of greater or lesser value. As opposed to Reeler (2007) understanding of values, the African values system entrenched class stratification and discrimination among classes of human being Achebe (1958). In one of the gathering of ‘who is who’ in Achebe (1958)'s “things fall apart” an old man sternly warned thus: \_“-Those whose palm kernels were cracked for them by a benevolent spirit, should not forget to be humbled-”\_ (P.19). Achebe (1958) alleged that the white man (missionary) was teaching his converts different values and ways of life contrary to Africa cultural values (P.20). There were sharp reactions even among the converts who insisted that certain norms must be maintained such as the continued quarantine and discrimination against the out-cast, and observation of other traditional rites considered central to the existence of the community (P.14). Achebe (1958) informed that the killing of a Python snake in Mbanta community drew provocation, protest and mixed feelings among the people, even among some converts of the church. Achebe (1958) lamented that the advent of the white missionary obviously bought many changes to the ways of life of the people, as the very cultural bonds forming the pillar of unification gradually and steadily snapped, leaving a disorganized, dichotomized and confused Umuofia community (P.21). The coming of white missionaries with their bibles and teaching was a confrontation on the culture and traditions of the people. The church of the white man received with open hands the outcast ( Osu ) individuals, the twins (considered as abominable birth and hitherto confined to the evil forest at birth), and those considered as the dreg of the society (P.27).

Reeler (2007) described the diversity of change which has environmental and cultural undertones as: emergent change, as it described the day-to-day unfolding of life, learning from experience, and that change which results from that as transformative change as it happen as a result of crisis, as is being witnessed in some counties in the Middle East and North. Africa (PP. 9-11). Some emergent change can actually be chaotic and revolutionary in response to major cultural dislocation and malfunctioning. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) addressed the effects of mass media as agent of social movement through wide scale news coverage, leading to social mobility. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) informed that social movement is declining and loosing relevance, hence it is a form of counter-cultural movement, an alternative form of collective action or as a protest movement directed against forms of social organization, more than against cultural values. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) anticipated the melting down of social movement, since democratic regimes are rising up to the challenges of providing answers to social demands, with institutional reforms, and because these social movements have often been transformed into instruments of power and repression.

This overreaching impact of culture on social change is glaringly advertized in the definition of social change by Macionis (1997) who said social change is the transformation of culture and social organization /structure over time, hence the society is never static and social, political economic and cultural changes occur constantly (P.10). Social change therefore is a dynamic sociological construct. Achebe (1958) chronicled the socio-



cultural change in south eastern Nigeria summarized in melancholy dirge thus: “Turning and turning in the widening gyre; the falcon cannot hear the falconer, things fall Apart-the centre cannot hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world”. The setting of Achebe (1958)’s social cultural conflict was Umuofia communal settlement comprising nine villages in the south-eastern Nigeria.

Socio-cultural change in Sub-Sahara Africa was a hard pill to swallow by the people as it involved a divorce with much cherished cultures and traditional values. The change brought by the new religion was brutal, coercive and rude, Achebe (1964) described it as follows: “the Whiteman, the new religion, the new road - they are all part of the same thing. The Whiteman has a gun, a ‘matchet’, a bow and carried fire in his mouth, he does not fight with one weapon alone” (P. 85). The youths of Umuaron contemplated fighting the wind of change but saw the folly in fighting the superior power. “Know that many of us want to fight the white man, but only a foolish man can go after a leopard with his bare hands Achebe (1964:85). The arrival of the white man with his strange values is seen by Achebe (1964) as a rude affront on the African cultural value systems. The existing cultural values, traditions and norms according to Achebe (1964) were gradually cracking under the over-bearing influence of the western values. Achebe (1964) stated that the elders could not comprehend how the wave of change so easily swept the youths of Umuaron off their feet, even the son of the chief priest of Ezeulu ( the chief priest) was converted to the new religion Achebe (1974:125). The conversion of the son of Ezeulu, was regarded by Achebe (1964) as the height of tradition invasion and sacrilege of the people’s religious sanctity. What becomes of the much cherished African cultural values, swept away by the western invasion? The imposition of administrative authorities, with judicial power in Umuaron mauled the height of confrontation. Achebe (1964) informed that the Whiteman had established a school where Umuaron youths were taught values strange and opposed to African cultural values (P.15). Ezeulu, the arrow-head of the people’s struggle, the chief priest of Ulu according to Achebe (1964) had mistaking allowed one of his sons to enrolled in the school with the purpose of spying on the Whiteman. This turned tragic as the boy grew resilient of Umuaron cherished culture day by day (P.17). Peasant and the dregs of the society were being empowered as they found employment in the administrative office, as laborers and house helps. Achebe (1964) displayed a bitter confrontation between the white administrative officer and Ezeulu thus: \_“-your name is Ezeulu-”\_ asked the Whiteman through an interpreter. This was abominable to an African who venerated names of elders beyond being called so informally. In anger Ezeulu had retorted \_“-Tell the Whiteman to go and ask his father and his mother their names-”\_ (P.42). Surrounded by internal trouble and the Crack in his family and imprisonment by the white government Ezeulu, Achebe (1964) reported, took his battle to the deities, as he would say, he is only an arrow in the bow of the gods. With such confidence he led his people against the white man, unfortunately his people had found relevance in the administrative benefit of the white government. The defeat of Ezeulu typified the crippling of the cultural strong-hold of Umuaron and a major social cultural change occurred on the African landscape. Achebe (1964)’s ‘arrow of God’ enjoyed similarity in theoretical concept with Achebe (1958)’s ‘things fall apart’.

### **Modernity and social change**

Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) recognized inter-societal relations, structural variations, non-chance occurrence, and exhibition of liberality, as triggering forces for social change (P.5). The underpinning concept in the theory of social change and modernity by Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) is the concept of modernity and social movement. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) associated modernity as a proponent variable for social change (P. 37). The works of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim were cited to support this argument. The concept of modernity is here understood to be a break with tradition, a connotation of a new experience, a new sense of freedom and awareness (P.37-39). Social movement on the other hand is anchored by passions for modern lifestyles. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) traced modernity and social movement to industrialization, urbanization, and political democracy. Quoting from Weber, Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) asserted that modernity means, class conflict and interest. This is validated by the definition of modernity as a process of growing differentiation, of economic, political, and cultural subsystem (P.57). Social movement is understood by Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) as connoting social mobility, involving spontaneous gathering of people, often provoked by a relentless awakening of people, with conscious demand for active participation in the affairs in contending issues such as:



- Personal identify
- Sexuality
- Religious /political independence
- Economic empowerment
- Gender equality.

Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) identified three dynamics of social movement as: State intervention, knowledge industry and the mass media. State intervention into labor market, market planning education and other social spheres is explained as potent causes of social change. Haferkamp (1992) anchored his theoretical discuss of modernity on the premise of internalized contradiction of the concept in contemporary world. This is in tandem with the position of Smelser and Haferkamp (1992) who posited that the modern society is fast declining due to inbuilt contrasting mechanism. The modern society is characterized by developmental excesses and counter-development, which according to Haferkamp (1992) is in consonant with the major sociological topics of “antinomies and hypertrophy” (P. 97). Haferkamp (1992) posited that modern society is laden with negative characteristics and that counter-development is manifested in under-utilization of potential resources in somewhat developed economics, while environmental damage is on the increase. The effect is that there is the gradual loss of western superiority, a status monopoly enjoyed and cherished for nearly a century by Europe and United States.

The main assumption of the theory of modernity /modernization according to Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) is that social structures and systems are crumbling (P.58). The euphemism with which modernity was received is beginning to wane as the principle of the state as a unifying agent, gives way to the idea of capitalism and the accompanying bourgeoisie, leading to what Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) called hyper-modernization which fast-tracked the destruction of societal value (P.58).

Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) posited that social change theory is underdeveloped due to the breakdown of theories when confronted with unexplained unexpected changes, hence such theory could not anticipate certain complex changes that may occur. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) presented a contradiction in modernity in agreement with max Weber, viewing mass movement with trepidation. The explosion of knowledge industry according to Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) have “provided much fuel” for conflict and social movement. A well informed mind (through education) according to Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) is highly responsive to oppression and policy imbalances, and is more likely to react in conjunction with like-minded peers leading to protest movement. In this wise, the central idea of social movement is seen as opposition to state (P.58).

According to Reeler (2007) at some stage in the development of all social beings, it is typical for crisis or ‘stuckness’ to develop, either as a result of natural process of inner development, or as a result of social beings entering into tense or contradictory relationship with their world (P.11). These are the tensions that cause social change in a multi-cultural environment. Reeler (2007) said such need for change rarely reveal themselves up front and that when they are revealed, they can provoke real resistance to change and require the people to let-go deeply held aspects of their identity (P.12). Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) held that mass movements were dangerous, hence individual invariably loses his independence (P.41). Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) saw modernity in political term as class conflict and interest (P.41), and drew a linear relationship between social movement and modernity and because modernity connotes movement and involves new political alliances and allegiances (p.43).

Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) presented the consequences of social change on individual as: sense of freedom, directly associated with modernity as citizens become more aware of themselves, their rights and more opened to new influences. This trend may grow out of dimension leading to new or counterchanges, since the individual breaks with tradition and the rural community, seeks new status symbols and disassociates with established identity. This sense and demonstration of freedom, according to Haferkamp and Smelser



(1992) brings about conflicts between the individuals and collective responsibility, producing a deviant personality (P. 39). Social movement therefore is explained by Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) as a distinct form of collective behavior, composed of group of individuals, gathered with the common purpose of expressing subjectively-felt discontentment in a public way, and changing the perceived social and political base of that discontentment (Haferkamp and Smelser 1992).

Haferkamp (1992) argued that evidences of counter-development and excess development are manifest in: Concentration of educational resources in the lower social strata, increase in health hazards due to pressure in keeping production of goods and services at high levels, diffusion of decision power occasioned by growth in authority and relationship leading to increase in political participation, especially in western European societies, failure of welfare scheme and continual entrenchment of poverty in all modern societies, incoherence of international development programs, which are crafted offshore at the expense of traditional/ religions affinity, with local interest and inability of planners to integrate national planning efforts, high degree of individualism with consequential loss of community commitment, conflict with established arrangements leading to major incoherence and ineffectiveness of developmental projects (PP. 98-99).

Haferkamp (1992) drew graphical contrast between modern and traditional societies and argued that resource mobilization, positive efforts, power relations, consumer welfare, dissemination of self reflection and individualism, are on the increase in modern societies as opposed to traditional societies. These are the visible features of modernity everywhere.

Haferkamp (1992) advanced questions to proffer explanation of modernity as follows:-

“How can development in modern society be explained? Why is change so rapid and intense on the one hand and so slow on the other? How can development of different magnitudes be related to one another? He further suggested the conceptualization of social change in the light of structural interdependence that exerts mutual influence, resulting in ameliorating the inequality in the distribution of economic resources and powers (P. 101). Haferkamp (1992) described social change as a learning process, and generation of series of ramification from altered actions or behavior. Haferkamp (1992) argued that social change is endemic in two strata of micro-social and macro-social levels, with the former occurring within smaller groups where actors are conscious and aware of selves, but the later occurs at a larger scale. He however informed that micro-social change often translate to macro-social change (P.103). Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) drew a line between socio-cultural movement and socio-political movement.

While socio-cultural movement is associated with religious sect and other culturally endemic groups, socio-political movements are defined as more or less organized forms of collective actions aimed at social change (P.60). Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) however noted that in the Islamic world the dividing line between socio-cultural movements and socio-political movements have over the years blurred out, as religious movements often turn political (P.62).

Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) argued that the new social movement resting on the assumption that society and policy are made by people not gods, are more effective in igniting social change, holding that the new social movement expressed concern that are more cultural than economic, targeted at changing norms and values, rather than productive and distributive relations. The new movement is appraised by Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) as having on its front burners issues pertaining to personal identity, neighborhood, individuals' rights and freedom, politics and governance, sexuality and gender, life style and choice (P.102). This new social movements, according to Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) is in transaction from the labor movements of old, to the post-industrial social movements (P.63).

Haferkamp (1992) traced the trend in modernity to the monopolization in power by elites, strong global influence of Britain and France, with Germany and United states following suit. The process of modernization of agriculture, industrial revolution, modernization of commerce and transportation, and the educational revolution, all helped to fast-track the spread of the concepts worldwide (P.103). The class stratification and differentiation brought by modernity is the subject of examination by Haferkamp (1992). He argued that modernity has produced class stratification, elite class, bourgeoisie and economic class, thwarting efforts of the



social economic systems to adjust to uneven distribution of resources. Haferkamp (1992) posited that social change can also occur when individuals take on larger roles, giving example of a church leader who conveyed a crystallizing message (P. 101). Change then can be introduced by personalities or groups acting to exploit social and material situation. Haferkamp (1992) ascribed social changes to actions of micro and macro actors who introduced alterations leading to adjustment in the social spheres (P.101).

Haferkamp (1992) concluded that resources are exploited much more in a modern society than elsewhere. He identified two factors responsible for the change toward individualistic modern society: a contractual action which makes everything including ascription, the object of negotiation and radical values in equality (P. 105). Haferkamp (1992) argued the existence of ascription in modern societies, and queried the dichotomy by sociologist who assumed that there is a change from ascription to achievement principles, which means that few characteristics are ascribed to particular actors. He submitted that more ascriptions do occur in modern societies, and that more achievement and ascription do co-exist, arguing that achievement is to a considerable extent ascribed (P. 107).

Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) found reference in contemporary theorists like Strasser and Randal, in their explanations of attributes of change. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) reechoed such attributes as “magnitude of change, time span, direction, rate of change, amount of violence involved” as underlining characteristics of social change every where (P.2). Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) diagnosed reasons for underdevelopment of social change theories as: inabilities of such theories to withstand unexplained, unexpected disequilibrium (changes) and poor positioning/analysis of underpinning multi-causal determinants into complex models (P. 3). With regard to incidences of social change, Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) took up the evolutionary theory with the following elements notwithstanding identified critique: -“triggering mechanism for change, sustaining mechanism for change, and the end state of change”, that is the duration and the change process (P.4).

### **Cultural evolution in Africa**

Smelser and Munich (1993) undertook the study of culture as underpinning/explanatory concept for social change. Smelser and Munich (1993) identified the rise of interest in artifacts, the rising interest in the intellectual area of cultural analysis, as evidences of the role culture plays as a factorization agent in social movement and social change, stating that cultural anthropologists have regarded culture as the central base for social anthropological analysis (P.3). This according to Smelser and Munich (1993) is a welcome development in contrast with the treatment of culture as an idea or spirit that provided a basis for characterization of a society by philosophers and historians before the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century (P.4). Smelser and Munich (1993) conveyed varied intellectual definitions of culture as: a concept that apply to the whole society (P.5), and admitted that the definition of culture is a subject of much uncertainty and ambiguity. They however offered a much more exhaustive definition of culture as: a product and a guide to actors, for organized categories and interpretations, which provide a meaningful experimental link to rounds of social life (P.6).

Culture could then be understood as that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief and morals. Smelser and Munich (1993) viewed culture and social life as arising from the process of typification and reification emanating from individuals action and interaction, culminating in a system of values and beliefs and providing the world with cognitive structure as a basis of defining rights and wrongs thereby bringing sanity in human interactions and forming a transferable link to posterity (P.11).

### **Comparative analysis**

Comparing and contrasting the theory of Social of change and modernity by Haferkamp and Smelser (1992), theory of modernity and ascription by Haferkamp (1992), theory culture by Smelser and Munich (1993), theory of cultural conflicts by Achebe (1958) and theory of cultural change by Achebe (1964), a common denominator is the radical transformation in the local cultural content of the people, consequent on social cultural conflicts and overhauling of existing systems. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992), Haferkamp (1992), Smelser and Munich (1993) and Achebe (1958; 1964) undertook social cultural analysis of social change as it impacted on cultural norms and entrenchment of western values.



All the theorists addressed common concepts of westernization, cultural incoherence and social change. While Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) discussed the impact of modernity and its socio-cultural implications, Haferkamp (1992) discussed the visible features of modernity and its characteristics, Smelser and Munich (1993) concerned selves more with the study of culture as a social construct, Achebe (1958 & 1964) presented the demise of culture leading to the establishment of western cultures across Africa. All theorists advanced analytical antagonism of cultural values that defined the essence of living. The concept of modernity was conspicuous in the theories of Smelser and Haferkamp (1992), Haferkamp (1992), and Smelser and Munich (1993) but was only present as a transforming force, impacting on the cultural space of Sub-Saharan African in Achebe (1958, 1964). The central idea in Smelser and Haferkamp (1992) is that of analytical description of social movement as opposition to state and the status quo of social living, where as cultural change and cultural conflict, by Achebe (1958, 1964) identified cultural decline and extinction.

The main assumption of all the theories is the crumbling of existing social structural system and cultures in the face of the inevitable wind of change. Achebe (1958; 1974) stood in the place of prejudice against the cultural reforms that came with westernization, aligning himself with and shared the people's pains from the crumbling values and the destruction of the tradition, therefore he wrote from a perspective of bias, but Smelser and Munich (1993) took a holistic overview of cultural anthropology as valid contribution to sociological themes.

Achebe (1958) did not celebrate the social change that took place in Umuofia cultural space but presented a tragic episode of tears, fears, pains agony, suicide and defeat, as evidenced by the rendering of the dirge. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) carried out a more detailed analysis of social change theories than Smelser and Munich (1993) but both advanced more clearly theoretical framework (of modernity, cultural coherence modernization, etc) than Achebe (1958) and Achebe (1964). Haferkamp and Smelser (1992), Smelser and Munich (1993), and Haferkamp (1992) presented a more academic theoretical approach than Achebe (1958 & 1964) whose works were fictitious characterization of cultural evolution. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) placed limitation in their explanation of determination of change, as other powerful determinants such as population changes, dislocation occasioned by war or strains and contradiction technology, education, religion and globalization were not accommodated in their explanations. The study of social change and modernity by Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) opened more space for the study of cultural changes and cultural evolution in the third world countries in other to avail a more holistic explanation of global social change.

Theory of social change as it applied to cultural evolution in Sub-Sahara Africa is anything but dialectical, emanating from strains and contradiction in the socio-cultural structure. The conflict ended in the defeat of the established system of social cohesion and destruction of the value systems of the people. The annihilation of positive African cultural values is like throwing away the dirty bathing water with the baby, as the socio-economic implication of the loss is enormous, impacting negatively on morality, social lives, loss of the fabric of social cohesion, given birth to cosmopolitanism and individualism, lack of respect for elders and decorum in relationship and communication. The break down in moral values is consequent on the demise of African cultural values that had in its entrenchment certain strict norms and taboos.

The world watch helplessly as there is the wide spread break-down in communal cohesion, growing differentiation, individualism, and absorption of abominable indecent behavior all around the world, consequent on western values which guarantees 'strange' individual rights. This view is upheld by the growth in social theories with emphasize on critique of modernity, holding that modernity have eroded traditional life and culture, replaced local community with bureaucratic depersonalization with weaker and impersonal ties of functional inter dependence.

The conflict theory perspectives held that conflicts helped to bring benefits to individuals, produce social reforms, and gain entry into the established structures of the society. The advent of the Whiteman into the African space has brought both benefits and pains to the people. The Cultural Revolution that it provoked brought challenge to social change theorists to find balance between the desired ends.

## **CONCLUSION**

Social change is a global undeniable reality which sometimes happens within scales of paradigm, the world is



witnessing in some parts of Middle East and North Africa. I have in this component under taken a descriptive analysis of these theories, their historical perspectives, when were the theories propounded, their today relevance, their key variables, characteristic, properties, scope, reliability and importance to practice. The main change criteria of social change by Macaronis (1997) are that it happens everywhere, with variety in the rate of change from place to place. It may be planned or unplanned, and often generate controversies.

The causes of social change according to Macionis (1997) are culture, conflict, idealistic factors such as material growth and security, freedom and self-determination, nationalism, capitalism, the need for adaptation, environmental factors, economic and political advantage, demographic change, social movement and change, consumerism, vales and ethics are the key factors to social change.

I have herein carried a detailed and critical analysis/appraisal of theories of social change and modernity by Smelser and Haferkamp (1992) because this concept impacts directly on the cultural values of the people, theory of culture by Smelser and Munich (1993) as it formed the very fulcrum of the breadth correspondent and provide a build up to the article critique and annotation in the depth component and would form the main input ingredient for the application project. Cultures are crumbling yet are reasserting itself in parts of the world leading to upheaval undermining the application of classical theories. The concept of culture has become elusive of clear cut definition by scholars. This underscores the need for refinement of current thinking in cultural anthropology as the world integrate, externalize and internalizing cultures, and at the same time in a hetro-homogenized cultural environment.

The synergy of theories of social change, and modernity by Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) theory of culture by Smelser and Munich (1993) and theory of modernity and ascription by Haferkamp (1992) all crafted offshore Africa, are complemented by the locally grown theory of cultural change and cultural conflict by Achebe (1958 &1964 ).

## REFERENCE

1. Abrahams, P. (1946). *Mine Boy*. Ibadan: Heinemann educational books Ltd, Nigeria.
2. Achebe, C. (1958). *Things fall apart*. England: Heinemann educational Books, U.K.
3. Achebe, C. (1964). *Arrow of God*. England: Heinemann educational Books, U.K.
4. Amadi, E. (1966). *The concubine*. Ibadan: Heinemann educational books, Nigeria.
5. Berg, A. (2009). The need for an appraisal of psychoanalytical thinking, within South African social-cultural contexts. *Psychoanalytical psychotherapy in South African Journal*, 17, 2;101-105.Retrieved [http://www.sabinet.co.za/abstracts/ppsa/ppsa\\_v17\\_n2\\_a7.html](http://www.sabinet.co.za/abstracts/ppsa/ppsa_v17_n2_a7.html)
6. Berger, R. A. (2010). Decolonizing African autobiography. *Research in African literatures*, 41, 2, 33-54.Retrieved <http://www.jstor.org/pss/10.2979/RAL.2010.41.2.32>
7. Bodley, J. H. "Culture." Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.
8. Carlisle, S., Henderson, G., & Hanlon, P.W. (2009). Well being as a socio-cultural construction of Western individualism. *Journal of Social Science and Medicine* 69, 10, 1556-1560. [doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.08.029](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.08.029).
9. De Maria, W. (2008). Cross cultural Trespass: Assessing African Anti-corruption capacity. *International Journal of Cross cultural management*, 8, 317-341. DOI: 10.1177/1470595808096672.
10. Dewey, J. (1907). *The school and social process*. Chicago: University of Chicago press
11. Emecheta, B. (1994). *The joys of motherhood*. England: Heinemann/ Pearson education limited, U.K.
12. Fagan, M. (2008). "Archaeology." Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.
13. Fuse, K. ; Land, M. , & Lambiase, J.J. (2010). Expanding the philosophical base for ethical Public Relation Practice: Cross-Cultural Case Application of non-western ethical philosophies. *Western Journal of Communication*, 74, 4: 436-455, DOI: 10.1080/10570314.2010.492823.
14. Gambahaya, Z. , & Muhwati, H. ( 2010). Tonga Orature, as a Historical Records: An Afro- centric Exegesis of the dialectics between African human factor agency and the European enslavement of the place. *Journal of Black Studies*, 41, 2: 320-337. DOI: 10.1177/0021934709351661



15. Haferkamp, H., & Smelser, N.J. (Ed.). (1992). *Social change and Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
16. Illich, I. (1970). *Deschooling society*. Boyars Ltd, London: UK
17. Jegede, A.S. (2009). Cultural and Genetic Screening in Africa. *Development World Bioethics journal*, 9, 3:128-137. DOI:10.1111/j.1471-8847.2009.00259.x
18. Konadu, A. (2007). *A woman in her prime*. Ibadan: Rasmed publications LTD, Nigeria.
19. Lassiter, J.E (2009). African Culture and personality: Bad Social Science, Effective Social Activism, or a call to Reinvent Ethnology? *Africa Studies quarterly*, 3, 1, 2000.  
<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v3/v3i3al.pdf>.
20. Li, L.M.W., & Bond, M.H. (2010). Value change: Analyzing national change in citizen secularism across four time periods in the World value surveys. *The Social Science Journal*, 47, 2, 294-306. Retrieved [http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder\\_published/paperseries\\_32](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/paperseries_32).
21. Macionis, J. et al. (1997). Social change theories. Various introductory text on social change. Retrieved from <http://husky1.stmarys.ca/~hadisb/dev3.htm>
22. Marcellus, I.O. (2009). Africa cultural value system, and the dilemma of bureaucratic malfunctioning: implication for development in Africa. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 1,7,149-171. Retrieved from [licrb.webs.com](http://licrb.webs.com)
23. Mayer, B., & Tramsdorff, G. (2010). Adolescents value of children and their intentions to have children. A cross-cultural analysis. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*, 41, 671-689.. DOI: 10.1177/0022022110372195
24. Munch, R. , & Smelser, N.J. (Ed.). (1993). *Computer addiction? Theory Of culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, <http://ark.edlib.org/ark:/13030/ft8q2nb667/>
25. Nsamenang, A.B. (2008). Culture and human development. *International Journal of Psychology* , 43,2,73-77. DOI: 10.1080/00207590701859093
26. Ntibigariwa, S. (2009). Cultural values, economic growth and development. *Journal of business ethics*, 84, 297-311. DOI: 10.1007/s10551-009-0203-0.
27. Onadipe, K. (2006). *The slave boy*. Ibadan: Pilgrim Books Limited, Nigeria.
28. Pence, A.R. , & Marfo, K. ( 2008). Early Childhood Development in Africa: Interrogating Constraints of prevailing knowledge bases. *International Journal of Psychology*, 43, 2: 78-87. DOI: 10.1080/00207590701859143
29. Potts, R. B.(2009). "Human Evolution." Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.
30. Primorac, R. (2010). Cosmopolitanism and social change in a Zambian thriller. *Research in African literatures*, 41,3,49-61. Retrieved [http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/research\\_in\\_african\\_literatures/v041/41.3.primorac.pdf](http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/research_in_african_literatures/v041/41.3.primorac.pdf)
31. Rafiu, A. (1993), Area boys, Area girls. The Guardian Nigerian newspaper, April 8, p.15
32. Reeler, D. (2007). *A threefold theory of Social changes and implication for practice, planning, monitoring and evaluation*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdra.org.2a/articles/a%20Theory%20of%20social%20change%20by%20Doug%20Reeler.pdf>
33. Ryan, A.M. , Boycee, A.S. et al. (2009). Going Global: Cultural Values and perceptions of selection procedures. *Journal of Applied Psychology: An International review*, 58, 4: 520-526. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=9&sid=3fb9f0c-b0c9-468c-85ca-affa5941ae81%40Sessionmgr12&vid=26>
34. Silbereisen, R.K. , & Tomasik, M.J (2010). Human Behavior in Response to social change. *Editorial to European Psychologist*, 15, 4, 243-245 DOI:10.1027/1016-9040/a000059.
35. Serequeberhan, T. (2010). Africa in a changing world: An inventory. *Monthly review Journal*, 61,8,26-37. Retrieved <http://natna.wordpress.com/2010/01/25/africa-in-a-changing-world-an-inventory%E2%80%A8/>
36. Snowball, J.B., Jamal, M., & Willis, K.G. (2010). Cultural consumption pattern in South Africa: An investigation of the Theory of cultural omnivores. *Social indicators research journal*, vol. 97,467-483. DOI:10.1007/s11205-009-9513-y.
37. Stock, R. (2008). "Nigeria." Microsoft Encarta® 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft corporation.
38. Walden University. (2009). 2009 Social Change Conference. Retrieved from <http://www.waldenu.edu/c/media/SocialChangeConference2008/index.htm>