The idea of economical, social and political progress and inevitable modernization and the historical process that lead to the Industrial Revolution and Colonialism, the building of Empires, Imperialism and to the final development of a global market are closely related. Read this in depth glossary carefully, study the key terms and analyze the process.

Modernization

In sociology modernization refers to the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society. Modern society is industrial society. To modernize a society is, first of all, to industrialize it. Historically, the rise of modern society has been inextricably linked with the emergence of industrial society. All the features that are associated with modernity can be shown to be related to the set of changes that, no more than two centuries ago, brought into being the industrial type of society. This suggests that the terms industrialism and industrial society imply far more than the economic and technological components that make up their core. Industrialism is a way of life that encompasses profound economic, social, political, and cultural changes. It is by undergoing the comprehensive transformation of industrialization that societies become modern.

Modernization is a continuous and open-ended process. Historically, the span of time over which it has occurred must be measured in centuries, although there are examples of accelerated modernization. In either case, modernization is not a once-and-for-all-time achievement. There seems to be a dynamic principle built into the very fabric of
modern societies that does not allow them to settle, or to achieve equilibrium. Their
development is always irregular and uneven. Whatever the level of development, there
are always “backward” regions and “peripheral” groups. This is a persistent source of
strain and conflict in modern societies. Such a condition is not confined to the internal
development of individual states. It can be seen on a global scale, as modernization
extends outward from its original Western base to take in the whole world. The
existence of unevenly and unequally developed nations introduces a fundamental
element of instability into the world system of states.

Modernization seems to have two main phases. Up to a certain point in its course, it
carries the institutions and values of society along with it, in what is generally regarded
as a progressive, upward movement. Initial resistance to modernization may be sharp
and prolonged, but it is generally doomed to failure. Beyond some point, however,
modernization begins to breed discontent on an increasing scale. This is due in part to
rising expectations provoked by the early successes and dynamism of modern society.
Groups tend to make escalating demands on the community, and these demands become
increasingly difficult to meet. More seriously, modernization on an intensified level and
on a world scale brings new social and material strains that may threaten the very
growth and expansion on which modern society is founded. In this second phase,
modern societies find themselves faced with an array of new problems whose solutions
often seem beyond the competence of the traditional nation-state. At the same time, the
world remains dominated by a system of just such sovereign nation-states of unequal
strengths and conflicting interests. Yet challenge and response are the essence of
modern society. In considering its nature and development, what stands out initially at
least is not so much the difficulties and dangers as the extraordinary success with which
modern society has mastered the most profound and far-reaching revolution in human
history

(1) **Industrialization** is the process of converting to a socioeconomic order in which
industry is dominant. How or why some agrarian societies have evolved into industrial
states is not always fully understood. What is certainly known, though, is that the
changes that took place in Britain during the **Industrial Revolution** of the late 18th and
19th centuries provided a prototype for the early industrializing nations of western
Europe and North America. Along with its technological components (e.g., the
**mechanization of labour** and the reliance upon inanimate sources of energy), the
process of industrialization entailed profound social developments.

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/387301/modernization
2. **Modernization** or **Modernisation** refers to a model of an evolutionary transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society. The teleology of modernization is described in social evolutionism theories, existing as a template that has been generally followed by societies that have achieved modernity.[1][2] While it may theoretically be possible for some societies to make the transition in entirely different ways, there have been no counterexamples provided by reliable sources.

Historians link modernization to the processes of urbanization and industrialisation, as well as to the spread of education. In sociological critical theory, modernization is linked to an overarching process of rationalisation. When modernization increases within a society, the individual becomes that much more important, eventually replacing the family or community as the fundamental unit of society. ([http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/387301/modernization](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/387301/modernization))

Modernization theory and history have been explicitly used as guides for countries eager to develop rapidly, such as China. Indeed, modernization has been proposed as the most useful framework for World history in China, because as one of the developing countries that started late, "China's modernization has to be based on the experiences and lessons of other countries." (Qian Chengdan, "Constructing a New Disciplinary Framework of Modern World History Around the Theme of Modernization," *Chinese Studies in History* Spring 2009, Vol. 42#3 pp 7-24; in EBSCO)

Instead of being dominated by tradition, societies undergoing the process of modernization typically arrive at governance dictated by abstract principles. Traditional religious beliefs and cultural traits usually becomes less important as modernization takes hold.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, April 2013

3.

In the 20th Century modernization was seen by the presiding figures of many countries as, amongst others: infrastructural changes such as dams and highways; social changes such as getting rid of the perceived ills of traditional beliefs and practices and revamping educational systems with an emphasis on modern science and rationality; and political changes such as creating an efficient bureaucracy and State apparatus to preside over the decolonised domain.

This three-pronged strategy was underpinned by what came to be known as modernisation theory. The ideas of the modernisation school of economists indirectly informed the choices of 'development’ made by the leaders of many countries.

Modernisation has been a dominant theory in the social sciences in the West since the 1950s. It draws on the biological sciences, which, since the last quarter of the 18th century in Western Europe studied the growth and development of different species. The biological metaphor was transferred to the social sciences: societies, political institutions, economies were deemed to be growing organisms progressing according to an order natural to them. That is, the development of elements of social life was naturalised: made to appear as if development (as opposed to constant change) is directional, following a path of ever-near perfection. In reality this ‘naturalisation’ was Westernisation in disguise: the so-called natural progress closely followed the
Modernisation theory became the foundation stone of this evolutionary prescription for development. The theory is not homogeneous—numerous proponents disagreed on several key features. But in broad outline, the theory focused on deficiencies in the poorer countries and speculated about ways to overcome these deficiencies. It viewed traditional society as a series of negatives: stagnant and unchanging, not innovative, not profit-making, not progressing, not growing.

It argued that about 500 years ago, most people in the world were poor or living in traditional (often subsistence) social arrangements. Scientific innovation existed in many parts of the world (China, India, the Middle East) but for a variety of reasons (not least of them the conquest of the New World and slavery, which modernisation theory bypasses), science and entrepreneurship grew in Western Europe. The engine of this economic growth was capitalism. Innovation and technological growth became self-sustaining in Western Europe because they were embedded in the capitalist system. Entrepreneurs were in competition: profits were pursued by lowering costs and increasing revenues and re-investing in order to make more profits. This ceaseless accumulation and expansion spurred growth.

Some modernisation theorists emphasised the political modernisation that accompanied this economic advance: feudal lords and autocratic monarchies were challenged and representative forms of government were established over hundreds of years. This meant individual freedoms, political parties, elections, rule of law: in short, western-style liberal democracy.
One of the most influential modernisation theorists has been **W W Rostow** of the US. His 1960 book *The Stages of Economic Growth* outlined five stages—much quoted now in critical development literature -- using the metaphor of take-off: from the traditional society to the take-off (old resistances fall, political power accrues to a group interested in promoting economic growth, the country’s savings rate grows, modern technology is applied) to the drive to maturity (economic growth spread, integration into international markets) and the age of high mass consumption (fruits of growth finally transferred to the bulk of the people): airplanes flying smoothly in the sky.

As the countries prepare to launch their airplanes or struggle to keep them flying, they need assistance: funds, technology, new markets. Many modernisation theorists stress correct policies. *So the need for all the consultants and experts in the World Bank, the UN, all constantly advising different governments. All operating according to formula.*


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**Colonialism, Imperialism and the ideas of Progress and Modernization**

(Excerpts from in depth Glossary I)

One of the key issues that distinguished critics from proponents of colonialism and imperialism was their view of the relationship between culture, history and progress. Many of the influential philosophers writing in France and England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had assimilated some version of the developmental approach to history that was associated with the Scottish Enlightenment. According to the **stadal theory of historical development**, all societies naturally moved from hunting, to herding, to farming, to commerce, a developmental process that simultaneously tracked a cultural arc from *savagery,* through *barbarism,* to *civilization.* “Civilization”...
was not just a marker of material improvement, but also a normative judgment about the moral progress of society. (Kohn and O'Neill 2006)

The language of civilization, savagery, and barbarism is pervasive in writers as diverse of Edmund Burke, Karl Marx, and John Stuart Mill. It would therefore be incorrect to conclude that a developmental theory of history is distinctive of the liberal tradition; nevertheless, given that figures of the Scottish Enlightenment such as Ferguson and Smith were among its leading expositors, it is strongly associated with liberalism.

The idea that civilization is the culmination of a process of historical development, however, proved useful in justifying imperialism. According to Uday Mehta, liberal imperialism was the product of the interaction between universalism and developmental history (1999). A core doctrine of liberalism holds that all individuals share a capacity for reason and self-government. The theory of developmental history, however, modifies this universalism with the notion that these capacities only emerge at a certain stage of civilization. (...) Only commercial society produces the material and cultural conditions that enable individuals to realize their potential for freedom and self-government. According to this logic, civilized societies like Great Britain are acting in the interest of less-developed peoples by governing them. Imperialism, from this perspective, is not primarily a form of political domination and economic exploitation but rather a paternalistic practice of government that exports “civilization” (e.g. modernization) in order to foster the improvement of native peoples. Despotic government (and Mill doesn't hesitate to use this term) is a means to the end of improvement and ultimately self-government.

Nineteenth century liberal thinkers held a range of views on the legitimacy of foreign domination and conquest.
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/ March 2013

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