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## Societies: evolutionary and comparative perspectives.

**Author:** Parsons T

**Source:** Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1966. 120 p.

**Abstract:** The focus in this volume is on the most comprehensive unit ordinarily studied by sociologists, i.e., the total society. Both an evolutionary and a comparative perspective guides this study of societies. The evolutionary perspective conceives of the human as integral to the organic world, and human society and culture as properly analyzed in the general framework appropriate to the life process. The principle of evolution is firmly established as applying to the world of living things, and the social aspect of human life must be included. Such basic concepts of organic evolution as variation, selection, adaptation, differentiation, and integration belong at the center of concern, when appropriately adjusted to social and cultural subject matter. Sociocultural evolution has proceeded by variation and differentiation from simple to progressively more complex forms. The immense variability of human patterns of action is 1 of the most important facts about the human condition. Seen from this point of view, there are 4 interdependent yet in certain respects independent aspects of the theoretical problems at hand: 1) the general conceptual scheme of the social system which underlies all sociological analysis must be used, whatever the size and functional importance of the system of reference relative to other systems; 2) the problems of the society must be considered that arise from its being a type of social system which is more inclusive of controls over action than all others and which hence has special features requiring special analysis; 3) concern must be directed to the evolutionary development of societies, both as wholes and in their principal structural parts; and 4) variability must also be considered as a problem distinct from but

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anthropology has studied primitive societies so extensively and intensively. The societies examined include the societies of Ancient Egypt and the Mesopotamian Empires, China, India, and the Islamic and Roman Empires, and Israel and Greece.

**Language:** [English](#)

**Year:** [1966](#)

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**Keywords:** [Culture](#) | [Sociology](#) | [Social Sciences](#) | [Indigenous Population](#) | [Social Development](#) | [Political Factors](#) | [Sociocultural Factors](#) | [Science](#) | [Population Characteristics](#) | [Demographic Factors](#) | [Population](#) | [Economic Factors](#) | [Developing Countries](#) | [Developed Countries](#)

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