

Modern Societies

A Comparative Perspective

Stephen K. Sanderson



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Preface

There are approximately two hundred societies in the world today. *Modern Societies: A Comparative Perspective* explores the nature of many of these societies by comparing and contrasting their basic institutions and patterns of social organization. The book's distinctiveness lies in its comparative and global perspective. It allows students to situate the United States in global context—to see how their society is both similar to and different from other societies. *Modern Societies* mixes description with theory, and rather than discussing theory at the beginning, it compares and contrasts competing theories in individual chapters. This is designed to give instructors maximum flexibility in using the book.

Modern Societies is suitable for courses in introductory sociology, social institutions, and comparative sociology. Major topics include

- How the rich democracies became both rich and democratic
- Governments and welfare states
- The growth of democracy in the twentieth century
- The collapse of Communism and the transition to postsocialist societies
- The circumstances of less-developed countries, with attention to those that are developing rapidly as well as those that continue to lag far behind the rich countries
- Racial and ethnic divisions and conflicts worldwide
- The gender revolution of the past fifty years and contemporary patterns of gender inequality throughout the world
- Major shifts in family patterns and the transition to below-replacement fertility
- The global spread and expansion of mass education and educational credentialism
- Worldwide patterns of religious belief and practice
- The controversy over the secularization thesis
- Economic, political, and cultural globalization
- The nature of social and economic progress over the past two centuries
- Nine predictions concerning the short-term and long-term future of the world

The book provides detailed and fully up-to-date statistical data in forty-five tables. Students and instructors will find data from countries throughout the world on such topics as

- Economic development
- Government expansion
- Democracy
- Racial segregation
- Gender empowerment
- Fertility levels
- Single-parent households
- Educational enrollments
- Religiosity
- Religious pluralism and religious freedom
- Happiness

As a pedagogical aid, discussion questions for each chapter are posted on the book's companion webpage at www.paradigmpublishers.com/Books/BookDetail.aspx?productID=393431.

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