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On the study of social change

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*Traditional anthropological description in terms of pattern and custom, convenient as it is for certain purposes, results essentially in accounts that do not adequately portray change. Change is more easily handled if one looks at social behavior as allocations of time and resources. Analyses of ongoing process that the latter view makes possible seem more productive of insight into the nature of social change than has been the case with typological and comparative approaches.*

THE analytical contribution of modern anthropology to the understanding of social change has been limited, despite the fact that our material is becoming increasingly rich with most dramatic cases of change. I shall use the opportunity that a brief and general discussion of the wide theme of social change offers to make a preliminary diagnosis of why this should be so, and to suggest certain requirements and reorientations that I feel are necessary if we wish to remedy this situation. I shall argue in favor of (a) a greater attention to the empirical study of the events of change, and a need for concepts that facilitate this; (b) the necessity for specification of the nature of the continuity in a sequence of change, and the processual analyses

that this entails; and (c) the importance of the study of institutionalization as an ongoing process.