A society that has the features of modernity is named a modern society. The transformation from conservative society to modern society is called modernization. In the second part of the past millennium, the modernization of Europe had played a significant role in the emergence of sociology. According to the critical theory of sociology, modernization is related to an encompassing process of rationalization. Modernization places high emphasis on specialization and structural differentiation.

Morris Ginsberg stated four factors that are credited for the development of sociology. It includes political philosophy, philosophy of history, the biological theory of evolution, and movements for political and social changes that necessitated social survey methods.

Important factors for the emergence of sociology identified by George Ritzer are the industrial revolution and rise of capitalism, the French revolution, the rise of socialism, urbanization, religious change, and the growth of science. These factors of modernization critically altered the social structure of traditional and conservative European society.

Renaissance, Enlightenment, Counter-enlightenment, Reformation, Counter-reformation brought various new social thoughts into European society.

The industrial revolution transformed the traditional agrarian feudalism-based socio-economic system into a modern capitalist industrial system. The motive of production is to sell in the market rather than for local use. Urbanization was a byproduct of the Industrial revolution.

Social institutions in Europe like family, political system, religion, economy, stratification system had sustained enormous change. The tradition-based extended family was transformed into a nuclear family. The rise of meritocracy weakened the status-based estate system. The advancement in the field of science increased secularization and weakened religion.

The feudal stability of European society was destroyed, but the new social order was not crystallized. Even though there was a positive and negative impact for the changes in Europe, social scientists were concerned more about negative changes such as chaos and disorder in society. In this context, restoration of order was the primary goal of social thinkers.

One section of thinkers stated that industrialization and urbanization were disruptive forces and wanted to go back to the days of the Middle Ages to restore social order.

Another section of social thinkers like Saint Simon and Auguste Comte argued that return was not possible and wanted to discover the underlying pattern of society. They argued that society could be reorganized if social laws were discovered. This search resulted in the emergence of a new social science called sociology. Sociology emerged as a solution to the social problems, and the changes brought to the society by the modernization of Europe.