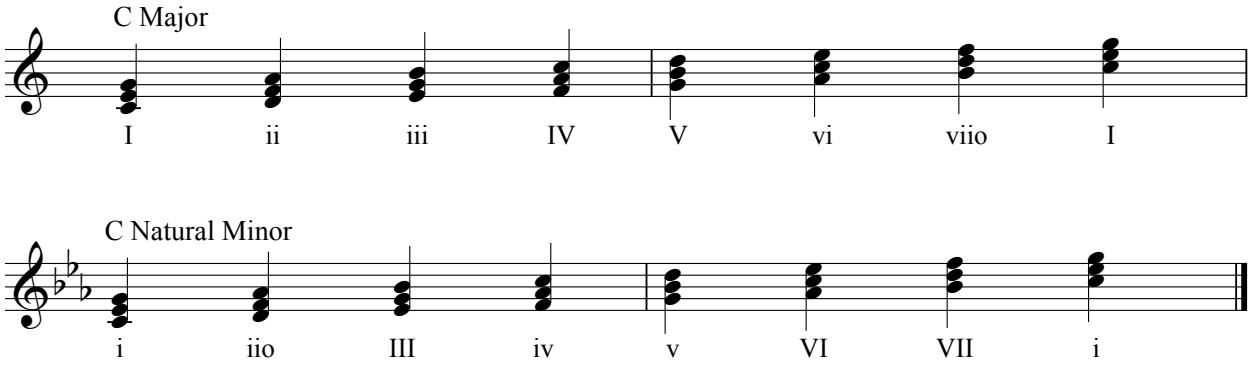
Modal Borrowing (Mode Mixture)

Definition: Chords borrowed from the parallel major or minor key.

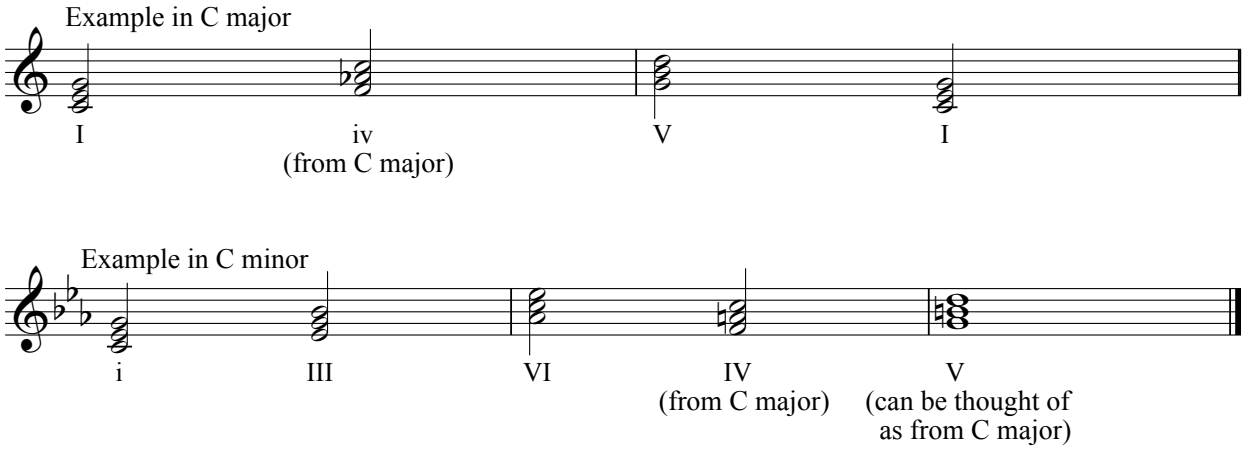
They can be built on any scale degree.

Their function stays the same.

Here is a way to look at it using the Key of C major and the parallel C natural minor:



Here are two simple examples of the Subdominant being “borrowed”:



A few notorious modally borrowed harmonies we hear all the time are:

The “Picardy Third.” In minor the i chord’s third is raised to create a major I (borrowed from the parallel major key. Used a lot throughout the common practice.

The IV - iv - I cadence. Used (overused many would say) a lot in pop.
Ex: “In My Life” the Beatles (right at 0:17, “in my life”) the D major (IV) becomes D minor (iv)