



كلية : الاداب

القسم او الفرع : علم الاجتماع

المرحلة: الماجستير

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اسم المادة باللغة العربية : التغير الاجتماعي

اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية : social change

اسم المحاضرة الرابعة باللغة العربية: مجتمع المخاطر

اسم المحاضرة الرابعة باللغة الإنكليزية *The risk society*

1. *The risk society*

Images of a classless society, a common way of speaking, dressing, and seeing, can also serve to hide more profound differences; there is a surface on which everyone appears on an equal plane, but breaking the surface may require a code people lack.

The life experiences of young people in modern societies have changed quite significantly. These changes affect relationships with family and friends, experiences in education and the labour market, leisure and lifestyles and the ability to become established as independent young adults.

Many of these changes are a direct result of the re-structuring of labour markets, of an increased demand for educated workers, of flexible employment practices and of social policies which have extended the period in which young people remain dependent on their families.

As a consequence of these changes, young people today have to negotiate a set of risks which were largely unknown to their parents: this is true irrespective of social background or gender. Moreover, as many of these changes have come about within a relatively short period of time, points of reference which, by serving as clear route maps previously helped smooth processes of social reproduction, have become obscure. In turn, increased uncertainty can be seen as a source of stress and vulnerability.

On a theoretical level, these changes have been expressed in a number of ways, with sociologists holding different opinions about whether they signify the beginning of a new era, just as significant as the transition from medieval to modern society, or whether they represent developments within modernity.

At one end of the spectrum, post-modernists such as Lyotard (1984) and Baudrillard (1988) argue that we have entered a new, post-modern, epoch in which structural analysis has lost its validity. In post-modern societies it is no longer seen as appropriate to apply grand theories to the study of social life. Patterns of

behaviour and individual life chances have lost their predictability and post-modernism involves a new and much more diverse set of lifestyles.

The validity of a science of the social is rejected, along with the usefulness of key explanatory variables such as class and gender. As Lash and Urry suggest, for post-modernists, 'all that is solid about organised capitalism, class, industry, cities, collectivity, nation-states, even the world, melts into air' (1987: 313).

313).

Other theorists have been more cautious in their interpretation of the changes and have used terms like 'high modernity', 'late modernity' (Giddens 1990, 1991) or 'reflexive modernisation' (Lash 1992) to draw attention to the far-reaching implications of recent socio-economic change, at the same time as expressing the view that, as yet, these changes do not represent an epochal shift.¹ This is a view with which we concur.