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اسم المادة باللغة العربية : التغير الاجتماعي

اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية : social change

اسم المحاضرة السادسة باللغة العربية: انماط التغير

اسم المحاضرة السادسة باللغة الإنكليزية **Patterns of social change**

Patterns of social change

Theories of social change, both old and new, commonly assume that the course of social change is not arbitrary but is, to a certain degree, regular or patterned. The three traditional ideas of social change—decline, cyclic change, and progress—have unquestionably influenced modern theories. Yet because these theories are not scientifically determined, they fail to make an explicit distinction between decline and progress. In fact, the qualities of decline and progress cannot be derived scientifically (that is, from empirical observations) alone but are instead identified by normative evaluations and value judgments. If the study of social change is to be conducted on scientific and nonnormative terms, then, only two basic patterns of social change can be considered: the cyclic, as identified above, and the one-directional. Often the time span of the change determines which pattern is observed.

Cyclic change

Much of ordinary social life is organized in cyclic changes: those of the day, the week, and the year. These short-term cyclic changes may be regarded as conditions necessary for structural stability. Other changes that have a more or less cyclic pattern are less predictable. One example is the business cycle, a recurrent phenomenon of capitalism, which seems somewhat patterned yet is hard to predict. A prominent theory of the business cycle is that of the Soviet economist Nikolay D. Kondratyev, who tried to show the recurrence of long waves of economic boom and recession on an international scale. He charted the waves from the end of the 18th century, with each complete wave comprising a period of about 50 years. Subsequent research has shown, however, that the patterns in different countries have been far from identical.

Long-term cyclic changes are addressed in theories on the birth, growth, flourishing, decline, and death of civilizations. Toynbee conceived world history in this way in the first volumes of *A Study of History* (1934–61), as did Spengler in his *Decline of the West* (1918–22). These theories have been criticized for conceiving of civilizations as natural entities with sharp boundaries, thinking that neglects the interrelations between civilizations.