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اسم المحاضرة السابعة باللغة العربية:

اسم المحاضرة السابعة باللغة الإنكليزية **Combined patterns of change**

Combined patterns of change

Cyclic and one-directional changes may be observed simultaneously. This occurs in part because short-term change tends to be cyclic while long-term change tends to follow one direction. For example, production rates of industrializing countries exhibit the pattern of short-term business cycles occurring within long-term economic development.

These patterns cannot be applied simply and easily to social reality. At best, they are approximations of social reality. Comparing the model with reality is not always possible, because reliable data are not always available. Moreover, and more important, many social processes do not lend themselves to precise quantitative measurement. Processes such as bureaucratization or secularization, for example, can be defined through changes in a certain direction, but it is hard to reach agreement on the dimensions to be measured.

It remains to be seen whether long-term social change in a certain direction will be maintained. The transformation of medieval society into the Western nations of the 20th century may be conceived in terms of several interconnected long-term one-directional changes. Some of the more important of these changes include commercialization, increasing division of labour, growth of production, formation of nation-states, bureaucratization, growth of technology and science, secularization, urbanization, spread of literacy, increasing geographic and social mobility, and growth of organizations. Many of these changes have also occurred in non-Western societies. Most changes did not originate in the West, but some important changes did, such as the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism. These changes subsequently had a strong impact on non-Western societies. Additionally, groups of people outside western Europe have been drawn into a global division of labour, with Western nation-states gaining dominance both politically and economically.

The extent to which these changes are part of a global long-term social development is the central question of social evolution. Although knowledge concerning this question is far from complete, some general trends may be hypothesized. One trend is seen in the

technological innovations and advances in scientific knowledge that have harnessed natural forces for the satisfaction of human needs. Among these innovations were the use of fire, the cultivation of plants, the domestication of animals (dating from about 8000 BCE), the use of metals, and the process of industrialization. These long-term developments, combined with long-term capital accumulation, led to rising production and paved the way for population growth and increasing population density. Energy production and consumption grew, if not per capita, then at least per square mile.

Another trend stems from production methods based on the division of labour and social differentiation. The control of natural forces, and the ensuing social progress, was achieved only by utilizing the division of labour—and the corresponding specialization of knowledge—to raise productivity beyond natural limits. One consequence of this growth of productivity and technological innovation, however, was social differentiation. More people, in other words, could specialize in activities that were not immediately necessary for survival. Growth in the size and density of populations and increases in social differentiation heightened the interdependence of more and more people over longer distances. In hunting-and-gathering societies people were strongly interdependent within their small bands, depending on very little from outside their groups. In modern times most of the world's people are linked by networks of interdependence that span the globe.

These processes are not inevitable in the sense that they correspond to any “law” of social change. They have had the tendency, however, to spread whenever they occurred. For example, once the set of transformations known as the agrarian revolution had taken place anywhere in the world, their extension over the rest of the world was predictable. Societies that adopted these innovations grew in size and became more powerful. As a consequence, other societies had only three options: to be conquered and incorporated by a more powerful agrarian society, to adopt the innovations, or to be driven to marginal places of the globe. Something similar might be said of the Industrial Revolution and other power-enhancing innovations, such as bureaucratization and the introduction of more destructive weapons. The example of weapons illustrates that these transformational processes should not be equated with progress in general.