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اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية : social change

اسم المحاضرة العاشرة باللغة العربية: اليات التغير

**Mechanisms of social change** اسم المحاضرة العاشرة باللغة الإنكليزية

## Mechanisms of social change

Causal explanations of social change are limited in scope, especially when the subject of study involves initial conditions or basic processes. A more general and theoretical way of explaining social change is to construct a model of recurring mechanisms of social change. Such mechanisms, incorporated in different theoretical models, include the following.

### Mechanisms of one-directional change: accumulation, selection, and differentiation

Some evolutionary theories stress the essentially cumulative nature of human knowledge. Because human beings are innovative, they add to existing knowledge, replacing less adequate ideas and practices with better ones. As they learn from mistakes, they select new ideas and practices through a trial-and-error process (sometimes compared to the process of natural selection). According to this theory, the expansion of collective knowledge and capabilities beyond a certain limit is possible only by specialization and differentiation. Growth of technical knowledge stimulates capital accumulation, which leads to rising production levels. Population growth also may be incorporated in this model of cumulative evolution: it is by the accumulation of collective technical knowledge and means of

production that human beings can increase their numbers; this growth then leads to new problems, which are solved by succeeding innovation.

## **Mechanisms of curvilinear and cyclic change: saturation and exhaustion**

Models of one-directional change assume that change in a certain direction induces further change in the same direction; models of curvilinear or cyclic change, on the other hand, assume that change in a certain direction creates the conditions for change in another (perhaps even the opposite) direction. More specifically, it is often assumed that growth has its limits and that in approaching these limits the change curve will inevitably be bent. Ecological conditions such as the availability of natural resources, for instance, can limit population, economic, and organizational growth.

Shorter-term cyclic changes are explained by comparable mechanisms. Some theories of the business cycle, for example, assume that the economy is saturated periodically with capital goods; investments become less necessary and less profitable, the rate of investments diminishes, and this downward trend results in a recession. After a period of time, however, essential capital goods will have to be replaced; investments are pushed up again, and a phase of economic expansion begins.