J. Appl. Environ. Biol. Sci., 4(12)296-302, 2014
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ISSN: 2090-4274
Journal of Applied Environmental and Biological Sciences
www.textroad.com

Studying the Roots of Anomie in Iran before Islamic Revolution (With a Glance to France and USA)

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Received: July 9, 2014
Accepted: October 28, 2014

ABSTRACT

Anomie is a negative consequence of modernization. Naturally, one should more or less observe anomie in a society after its modernization. However, mildness or seriousness of anomie depends on how to modernize, in that anomie in western countries (especially France and USA) has more limited negative consequences because of their internal and gradual modernization that third world countries (like Iran) due to their external and sudden modernization. The reason is clear. In fact, internal and incremental modernization phenomenon in western countries has created a kind of coordination between culture and technology so that one can say that culture directs technology rather than technology supports culture while in developing countries like Iran, there is a conflict between local and imported technology due to external and sudden nature of technology. This conflict apparently led into scattering some traditional norms so that in contrary to western countries, it was the technology which directs culture rather than cultures supports technology!
KEYWORDS: Anomie, Modernization, Apparent development, Intolerable poverty.

1. INTRODUCTION

Emile Durkheim as the father of French sociology and one of the most reputable criminology theorists, introduced anomie theory during unrests in France due to its 1789 revolution and its sudden and rapid industrialization. It was exactly when France passed traditional structure suddenly and went to modernization. Among various works by Durkheim, ***Division of Labor in Society*** was introduced in his doctoral dissertation. Briefly, Durkheim believes that Anomie is the result of rapid social changes which is itself the result of modernization of mechanical societies (traditional countries). He describes social changes processes as a part of transition from mechanical to organic structure which leads into anomie birth and expansion intentionally or unintentionally. Later, anomie theory was expanded by Robert K. Merton, USA reputable sociologist. In fact, he copied Durkheim and brightened dumb anomie theory and revived it by USA literature so that it is seen as the pioneer of Strain theories.

However, anomie is not limited to mentioned countries and based on causality law, any country would be captured in the trap of its negative consequences intentionally or unintentionally in their transition from traditional to industrial form. To this end, Iran was not protected from the illegal child of modernization (anomie) when it looked for modernization. To the same reason, the real mission of present paper is to study the background of anomie in western countries like France and USA as the host of anomie theory and Iran (before Islamic revolution).

2. Anomie definition

Some have used limited definition and others have used broad definition for anomie. In limited definition, it is expressed that anomie is derived from Greek term animus in which *a* is negative prefix while *nomos* means law and tradition. Therefore, anomie means illegal or abnormal. Aspiring such approach, Oxford Dictionary has defined anomie as *not to respect law, illegality (disorder) and disrespect Divine law* (see Simpson, 1989) on the one hand and Learner Oxford Dictionary has defined anomie as *lack of ethical or social criteria* (See Hornby, 2005) on the other hand. With regard to broad definition, some believe that anomie is “normal disorder” not “abnormality”. In other words, “normal disorder is what called as anomie by Durkheim (Chalby, 1996: 107). Put it in another way, Durkheim believes that anomie is the scattering of social norms or rules as the result of rapid social changes along with modernization process (see Vold, 1998: 123). To this end, Robert K. Merton believes that “anomie does not mean only lack of norms (abnormality)” (Kowsari, 2007: 42). Rather, it is lack of coordination between accepted cultural goals and legal facilities to achieve these goals (See Glick and Miller, 2008: 148). Although such

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disagreements are more apparent than substantial, it seems that broad definition is preferred to limited definition and is more plausible.

3. Anomie background in western societies (France and USA) and Iran

Undoubtedly, the most important anomie generating factor is modernity. It has challenged social and economic structures of the society and paves the ground for Anomie occurrence. However, there is a special difference between anomie occurrence in third world countries link Iran and advanced societies like France and USA concerning the procedure of modernization since western development was an endogenous and incremental while it was exogenous and sudden in third world countries and Iran. It has increase the extent of delinquency is these nations.

1-3. Anomie background in western societies (France and USA)

Since anomie happens when society's norms are scattering and traditional and agricultural life is replaced by industrial revolutions, one can divide the history of the West (especially such countries as France and USA) into two pre-modernity and post-modernity eras. Although it is too difficult to determine benchmarks for abovementioned categorization, to understand this concept, one can say that the medieval west was a traditional one in which rooted norms were highly influential and individuals had accepted their positions in the society. After Renaissance and modernity age emergence, the West observed types of economic, social and cultural movements, the industry was bloomed and the first signs of progress were seen in this age and the pave was grounded for the occurrence of industrial revolutions.

1-1-3. Pre-modernity age

Western societies had no important progress in the Middle Age. They had no special status concerning industry and development and people were satisfied of what they possessed. US psychologist, Erich Fromm explains this period as below: "in this age, anyone had been linked to its role in social system. No one had chance to go from one to another social class or even from one city/country to another. Except than a few individuals, all people had to live where they had been born and even they were not free to wear or eat everything they liked. The industry was enforced to sell its goods with determined prices and farmers sold their products in certain places – Bazaar. No one was separated from its role in society. Farmer, artist and knight were only farmer, artist and knight not people to be in such position randomly. Social system was imagined as a natural system and people felt safety since they were a part of a whole" (Fromm, 2002: 60 – 61).

Therefore, in medieval western societies, modernization had no meaning. Traditional norms were extremely respected, common values were worship and respectable for people and society dominated its members and individual maneuver was highly impossible against social ego. Obviously, there is no room in such space for the growth of anomie phenomenon since such phenomenon is shaped and grown in progressing societies and it is rooted in social volatile climate of those societies that have left their traditional structure which has no similarity with dominating climate in the middle Age. Therefore, medieval western societies can be remarkable implications of those societies that Durkheim called them as mechanical societies in which he believed that anomie occurrence is impossible or too weak.

2-1-3. Post-modernity age

After the occurrence of Renaissance golden age, the pave was grounded for huge industrial revolutions. One by one, the societies wore the cloth of progress and technology. Tradition was replaced by industry and religion was replaced by science. There were no signs of prevalent and public values and the concept of individuality was against the concept of society. Under such conditions, anomie as the illegal child of modernism phenomenon put its shadow on all western society incrementally. Since Durkheim and Merton are seen as the pioneers of anomie theory, only the conditions of USA and France are studied here as the representative of developed countries.

Emile Durkheim introduced the concept of anomie as a social disease in his books when (the last decade of 19th century) France had passes its Great Revolution and was increasingly industrializing so that one can point another revolution as *industrial revolution* in France alongside revolution of 1789. Before industrial revolution, France had a relatively traditional structure and was in a terrible economic situation so that the climate of the country before revolution of 1789 and, consequently, before industrial revolution is reported as below: "economic situation of France in immediate years before revolution is getting critical. Since 1770, prices and wages were experienced uncoordinated and irregular ups and downs. The result was increase in the poverty of mass population" (Pezeshkzad, 2004: 18). Just one year before revolution, "depression had shadowed on works, business and industry. Mass people were lived in terrible conditions characterized by hungriness and poverty. Farmers left their villages and moved aimless and fueled unrests." (V. Dalin, 1988 : 9–10) Under such conditions, it is not surprising that poor and

traditional people of France observed that they are getting rid of past limitations upon industrial revolution and scattering tradition al norms and did everything to achieve their unlimited wishes. According to Durkheim, is paved the ground for anomie growth. The United States passed similar situation. When in the fourth decade of 20th century, Robert Merton renewed Durkheim's works; USA had passed a kind of industrial and economic revolution and was stepping forward in the route of development and modernization so that in the end of 19th century, it encountered extraordinarily development of agriculture, industry and commerce. After civil war, the United States faced with enormous economic transformations so that "a real revolution in production methods was happened and old manual industry was replaced by numerous industrial factories and they competed without any disturbance or supervision on them by governments. Gradually, larger industrial units which enjoyed better management planned to acquire smaller and incapable units and it yielded to inevitable concentration of industrial goods. As a result, last twenty years of the 19th century witnessed the emergence of big economy namely large organization and powerful manufacturers" (Shuell, 2004: 238). Under such conditions, US economic growth velocity was not comparable with any other country. "US population was growing triple and number of workers increased five times. Investments in industries increased 20 times more than pre-civil war. Between 1865 through 1900, US industrial expansion can be interpreted as economic industry and the victory of capitalization. Until 1880, agriculture was seen as the main source of national wealth. In 1890, the quantity of industrial products surpassed agricultural ones and in next ten years, the value of industrial products was two times more than agricultural goods. In global scales, it was a very rapid growth and within 50 years, USA achieved the first rank (form fifth) in terms of the value of industrial goods" (Nuraei: 79).

Therefore, it is clear that both in USA and France, anomie occurred as the consequence of industrial revolution and modernity. The issue is getting clearer when we study the history. French Great Revolution occurred in 1789 upon which France also experienced industrial revolution in early 19th century and over 50 years later, Durkheim revealed the increasingly growth of anomie in France by relying upon modernity phenomenon in his books social labor division (1893) and suicide (1897). After civil war, the United States experienced industrial revolution and modernization between 1865 through 1900. 40 years later, Robert Merton (1938) reminded increasingly growth of anomie in the developing United States in his paper "social structure and anomie" and renewed Durkheim's theory. Therefore, it is obvious that modernization is highly effective in anomie occurrence.

2-3. Anomie background in Iran before Islamic revolution

Undoubtedly, theories provided by western thinkers (especially Durkheim and Merton) are based on their experiences and conceptions of anomie aspects in their own social system while anomie aspects are much wider in the third world countries and they are not comparable with western societies because that economic growth in western countries which led into modernization was an internal issue happened gradually during long years. Therefore, western economic is to somehow synchronized with culture and tradition while the third world countries that see themselves as losers in the field of progress competition attempted to advance overnight and they found that the solution of their backwardness is in rapid economic development and growth (modernization) without knowing that the development rooted in external technology import disproportionate to society's tradition and culture would not open the knots and it would be the cause of many social damages and diseases and instead of adapting the technology with culture, it is the culture adapted to technology which would result in anomie growth and social upsets. In Iran, anomie was shaped by Reza Khan along with "domestic modernization policy" by which Shah claimed that he is going to compensate centuries of domestic backwardness by a 25-year plan (Zanjani, 1998: 314). Therefore, Iranian modernization policy which formulated in Pahlavi Age not only resolved no social difficulty but also led the society to threshold of social paralysis and caused the occurrence of anomie phenomenon in a wide level.

In pre-Islamic revolution, is a period as old as human history but since anomie is the offspring of modernity, its occurrence or not occurrence in before and after modernization should be investigated.

1-2-3. Pre-modernity age

Based on reputable theories, anomie occurs when the society is coming out its traditional situation and is getting modernized namely the periods in which people are influenced by kinds of propaganda and importation and look for social valuable option internationally or unintentionally. In such conditions, the outcome of rapid economic growth is the expansion of mass media, increase in the communicative networks and the possibility to observe achieved progresses due to development and modernization.

Pre-modernity age includes a very broad part of Iranian history in which studying the existence or nonexistence of anomie is to waste the time since concerning above points it is clear that the occurrence of anomie in Iranian old history was impossible! Apparently, initial contacts between Iran and Europe happened in Safavi age; however, the west (in 16th century) was not strong, aggressive and relied to industrial revolution in the 19th century and the volume of contacts and transactions between Iran and west was not in a level which can leave high impact. The new

round of relations between Iran and West was when the West had progressed while Iran had experienced backwardness. The contact between Safavi and Europe in 16th century was between two powers which were in similar level more or less while in 19th century; two powers were not the same. On the one hand, industrial west was equipped, progressed and strong and, on the other hand, Iran was weak and backward in Qajar age (for more information, see Zibakalam, 2000: 225). Therefore, 19th century and Qajar can be considered as an age when the possibility of anomie occurrence was higher than previous ages due to progresses in the west and the backwardness of Iran.

In Qajar age, although the travels by foreigners to Iran motivated modernization and Iran increased its communications with external world in 19th century, the lack of proper roads was a big barrier against social development and changes so that the most important routes were special for animals and carts and using automobile, railroad and airport was not common till the end of Qajar age and most commercial trips were conducted collectively through these routes in long time and it was true for travels to other countries especially neighboring nations (Ghadyani, 2005: 205). Interestingly, clerks opposed the construction of new roads and railroad since they feared that communication progress would pave the ground for Europeans' travel into Iran and their actions and life styles threats believers' lives. Therefore, Iran in Qajar age was still a traditional and Islamic society (for more information, see Lembton, 1996: 272 – 289). So, one can conclude:

Firstly: Iran has never been encountered economic growth, industrialization and internal development so that it can be accused of tendency toward modernization, scattering of traditional age and breaking the norms and anomie (modernization method by western countries).

Secondly: along with internal development in 19th and early 20th centuries, Iran even enjoyed apparent development since initiatives were taken to import western goods to Iran but not only these importations were trivial but also was unique to rich people. Apart from this, the possibility of propaganda and ambitious by other society's members was trivial due to lack of mass media and broad communicative networks. So, Iranian social structure was not broadly threated in 19th century (modernization method by the third world countries).

Thirdly: as mentioned, the policies by Iranian officials and religious clerks have been so that it was impossible to disseminate western culture and importation of luxury goods and, as a result, breaking traditional norms and anomie occurrence.

Therefore, considering Iranian traditional contexture in 19th century, Durkheim theory which believes that anomie is special for transiting societies has no effective application and Iran in Qajar age had in turn the characteristics of a mechanical society described by Durkheim and admires that anomie would not occur in such societies because of the strong collective wisdom powerful unofficial social controls (for more information, see Mostafapour, 2010: 51–77).

2-2-3. Post-modernity age

After scattering incompetent Qajar Sultanate and establishing Pahlavi administration, Iranian social conditions were completely changes. Reza Khan followed by Mohammad Reza Pahlavi stepped forward Iranian modernization alongside rapid economic growth (due to increases in oil prices). Such modernization was the result of western luxury goods without any synchronization with Iranian traditional culture. To the same reason, Iranian apparent development not only was to meet Iran's needs but also complicated social relations and anomie occurrence in relatively broad levels.

To understand the issue, it is attempted to address Iran's conditions after modernization (till Islamic revolution) only through below diagram on Durkheim anomie theory.

(1) Rapid economic growth ⟶ (2) sudden wealth ⟶ (3) wealth/poverty ⟶ (4) unendurable poverty ⟶ (5) image/promise of ambitious dreams ⟶ (6) borderless wishes ⟶ (7) scattering traditional norms ⟶ (8) incapability to satisfy borderless needs ⟶ (9) social dissatisfaction ⟶ (11) anomie

1-2-2-3. Rapid economic growth and sudden wealth

Although a general look shows that during Pahlavi, Iran had no proper economic situation, in the last decade economic situation had become better so that by oil crisis in 1973 and oil price increases from US$11 to US$33 – US$36, Iranian oil income highly increased (Rafiepor, 2008: 81). Between 1973 and 1974, Iranian oil income increase was surprisingly and government's expenditure increase into US$22 billion which was equal to total

expenditures of past three decades. Annual growth increased from 11.4% to 29.5% (Mohammadi, 2003: 82) which resulted it rapid economic growth and achieving huge wealth.

2-2-2-3. Wealth/poverty and unendurable poverty

Poverty impacts the society as a stabilizing factor alone (without the interference of other factors). If ambitious images or dreams are provided against poverty, the result is unendurable poverty and deviational behavior would grow if human attempts to come out poverty by all possible tools (whether legal or illegal and even illegitimate). It is a little difficult to understand what Koenig says but by more care one can understand the deep of his words since poverty is unendurable when wealth rendering phenomenon disseminates in the society and anyone plans to show its wealth to other people. On the other hand, wealth rendering leads into social comparison phenomenon as a vital factor for anomie growth which paves the ground for committing types of crimes. However, social comparison is diversified by different social structures. It means that if social structure is feudal and traditional, the cycle of social comparison phenomenon is much limited since these social stem only involves two higher and lower classes. Lower class includes poor people while higher class involves rich people. Social comparison is only intra-class and there is no inter-class comparison due to extensive inequality because that people do not compare them with unachievable things rather they compare with what close to them. In societies with modernity structure, in addition to higher and lower classes, a middle class is shaped by rapid economic growth in which social comparison is wider and more dangerous since in such social system, middle class is like a bridge and link between lower and higher classes leads social comparison process from lower to higher class and creates a kind of vertical social comparison. Such factors as increase in individuals' educational levels, rising awareness power, expanding communicative network and mass media and, most importantly, rendering the wealth by higher class to satisfy its superiority sense and boasting would expand social comparison phenomenon in the society. In Iran, along with improvement in people's economic status, social system structure was also changed radically from feudalism in early Pahlavi age to modernity (three classes) structure (see Rafeipour, 2008: 76 – 78). On the other hand, by Shah's land reforms and destroying agriculture and developing urbanism, villagers immigrated to cities in order to find proper jobs and they created daily wage workers. They immigrated as single persons whose families were remained in villages and were strange with western culture in cities (Mohammadi, 2002: 94). They encountered huge luxury goods and through their comparisons, they concluded that they had lived all their age in poverty and adversity while they have be unaware and enduring the poverty shadowed their total life became painful! A Condition that is associated with the concept of "relative deprivation". (To be familiar with the concept, See Heydari, 2013)

3-2-2-3. Ambitious image/promise and borderless wishes

Following to economic growth and shaping middle class and wealth rendering by rich, ambiguous questions are raised in the upset mindsets of poor people that "why I should be in such a catastrophic situation? Why one should live in a palace and me in a small home? Why should I be belittled because of not having a proper economic situation? The feeling of inequality and deprivation involved them. Such feeling alongside the importation of western luxury goods and wealth rendering caused the growth of serious needs in two lower classes and achieving imported goods became their sweet dream!

However, the feeling of relative deprivation is seen to some extent in all societies but its growth and impact is different. In traditional communities, because of the existence of the middle class and the impossibility of social comparison between higher and lower classes, feeling of relative deprivation is seen less. In Iran, however, because of rapid economic growth and apparent modernization, social contests, wealth rendering and ambitious were grown and the conditions were favored for cross-class comparison because of the existence of middle class. Since in pre-revolution Iran, poverty was considered as a negative element while wealth was a valuable phenomenon, other classes felt a serious relative deprivation in a social comparison process and with any price, they wanted to achieve what higher classes of the society have acquired by following foreign reference groups.

4-2-2-3. Traditional norms scattering

The society is constituted by various elements and components which impact on each other and are interrelated. In such case, any change in one element would undoubtedly change other members and components proportionately to achieve the past coordination. Therefore, when spiritual values are replaced by material values and wealth becomes a positive value in the society and people focus on not losing in this material contest, it would obvious that traditional norms would lose their past functions.

In fact, when the society comes out its traditional cocoon and goes forward modernization, not only traditional norms lose their functions but also it may have reversed results. What called as norms scattering was too obvious in Iran after modernization and apparent development. Those norms were once honorable for Iranian people were

gradually demolished. Like other third world countries, modernization in Iran led into inequalities and social system scattering. It was a trap and mirage expanded under the name of "growth" following Iran's backwardness and belittles feeling.

5-2-2-3. Incapability to satisfy borderless needs and social dissatisfaction

When numerous goods imported Iran after its apparent modernization, many traditional Islamic – Iranian norms and rules were failed against imported technology and they were not replaced by proper norms. On the other hand, when wealth was considered as a positive value and huge needs were shaped in the society, borderless dreams were grown in the minds of people while only rich people accessed to facilities to realize them. It causes that poor people observe that their beliefs are failed in development field which led into social dissatisfaction.

6-2-2-3. Anomie

Therefore, one of the results of rapid economic growth and huge volume of importations on the one hand and traditional norms and old values scattering on the other hand is Anomie phenomenon seen widely in pre-revolution Iran which has also paved the ground for criminal behaviors!

Conclusion

The process of birth, growth and intensifying anomie in western countries particularly France and USA (as the pioneers of expanding anomie theory) highly differs from developing countries like Iran. In western countries, this triple process was fully gradually and internal since their development was so that it was highly adapted to their social values, beliefs and norms and their "cultural capitals". To the same reason, disorders in transition from mechanical (traditional) to organic manner does not show increases in criminal statistics of these countries while in Iran (especially during Pahlavi age), because of authorities' economic policies, cultural reservoir of the country was attacked by huge imported technologies which had no consistency with religious – traditional values of the society. It paved the ground for disorders in norms as the result of transition age to encounter Iranian original culture (a mixture of traditions and religious teachings) and western imported culture (a mixture of material beliefs and western rituals). It finally led into an increase in domestic criminal statistics!

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