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BENNABI'S REFLECTION ON RISK SOCIETY

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Abstract

My paper tries to analyze the most important approaches emphasized by Bennabi in his study of modern and post Modern society, and analyzing texts and writings which are presented in his different publications that prove the importance of Bennabi in viewing the concept of progress, the study of the crisis of modern societies, and the risk that faces this world. Moreover we present the main ideas defended by Bennabi to give an image of the religion and its force to transcend this risk.

Keywords: *Bennabi risk society, Modern Society, Post Modern Society, Progress, Crisis, Religion, transcendence.*

INTRODUCTION

Risk represents a main concept shared by postmodern theorists as it is an essential feature of contemporary societies. Industrialization, modernization and technological development are affecting these societies and symbolize a threat that leaves several types of risks: insecurity (terrorism and violence in cities), health such as viruses, AIDS and unexpected diseases, resulting from unhealthy foodstuffs and genetically modified agricultural products, technological risks, electronic crimes, environmental risks: drought, global warming and pollution, and social risks resulting from marginalization, unemployment and poverty.

All these patterns of risk require a long-term collective effort to overcome it, in comparison with those risks appeared before the time of industrialization, as they were only natural or health risks. Even risks which appeared during the first stage of

industrialization were somewhat treated and fixed by the insurance¹, as it was characterized by its individualistic nature. But with the emergence of collective risks and the increasing uncertainty and unpredictability of these risks, it has become difficult for states to achieve the issue of insurance against collective, unbearable and global risks that occur in the world at every moment.

¹ Since 1946 security became social security as people participate with a sum of money deducted from their salaries to protect themselves from future existing damages.

1. RISK MANAGEMENT IN WESTERN SOCIETIES, RATIONALITY IN CHALLENGING SOCIAL ANXIETY

Since the fifties of the twentieth century, insurance began to be seen as costly and insufficient to protect from collective and major risks, so alternatives began to appear on the international scene to study and try to reduce or avoid these risks. Thus, companies intensified their financial abilities to risk management, and policies worked to raise alertness against practices and behaviors that lead to increase urban, industrial and technological effects carrying risks. However, if we go back to the nature of individual and collective defensive reactions represented in risk management, we find that it carries with it rational representations that interfere with the social construction of risk, so that the latter is no longer linked to fatalism and divine powers as it was before. It became subject to rational calculation, the direction of perceiving danger first, and then the direction of future prediction according to the rational nature of modern societies (Calvez, M., 2006). It has removed from its path "irrational" contexts and representations, and namely "religion", and this, since the emergence of modernity. This latter was confined to the development of rationality, the growth of individualism and the restriction of the religious. The aim of the risk-taking society was not to leave the future to religion, nature, or traditions, but rather that science and reason have a great role in protection from such risks

However, identification with rationality and advanced modernity did not play the role expected of it in modern society, as it fails to far-reaching the task assigned to it, in order to reduce the risks. Its problems and threats began to aggravate the social reality of western people. Disintegration of social ties accustomed in traditional societies led to social and psychological risks, by liquefying the "safety net" that addresses cases of alienation and social diseases such as anomia, suicide, crime and violence (Boukhris,F, 2013, p5).

This was reflected in questioning the efficacy of the modernist project and creating a crisis of meaning for the Western man. Postmodern theorist Zigmund Baumann acknowledges that after three centuries, the world in which we live is still far from being a safe home for human race, as it has become obligatory for the individual in "liquid modern societies", to find his way by himself, alone, without any help from others, in confronting and challenging dangers.

The risk society is not only concerned with the rise and change of the type of risks, but also with the rise in anxiety in confronting them and suspicion towards all systems and institutions that work to manage them due to the lack of confidence resulting from the faltering of science and safety systems in order to a safe future. This is what created a kind of ontological void in front of religious confinement. So the western man has no source of inspiration for achieving certain abilities to coexist with emergencies in order to confront threats that have become an inevitable reality.

The more we develop scientifically, the greater we confront risks and the thinking for avoiding these threats. Thus, it appears a lack of confidence in scientific inventions, and this led to a growing suspicion and an increasing demand for protection.

2. THE "WASHINGTON-MOSCOW" AXIS RELIGIOUS DECLINE AND

RISING RISKS :MALEK BENNABI'S APPROACH

The crisis of "advanced modernity" in Western societies coincided with the disruption of the institutions charged with the social sociability of individuals, including: the family, the school, and the latter work in particular, which was considered a factor of social integration and integration, as a result of the increase of unemployment. In addition to the excessive rationalization that led to the weakening of social ties. This is what led to the decline of the "traditional" forms of solidarity. Since the eighties and nineties of the last century western societies start focusing on the crisis of social links, as the main causes of this phenomenon is a lack of confidence in state institutions, resulting from the spread of hyper-liberalism, capitalism and the decline of the welfare state.

Malek Bennabi, describe with accuracy this crisis, when he states that European societies have lost their spiritual and social justifications. The confidence of these societies in science and civilization has been shaken, and they have also failed in the compensation process. (Bennabi, M, 1991:21). Even Ulrich Beck refers to the collapse of social capital in the American society, which led to the erosion of collective social ties and national commitments that are corresponding with the public concern.(Beck, U., 2001:129).

In this regard, Malek Bennabi stresses that social relations are cultural relations, and then, this necessities the religious phenomenon in order to shape these relations. He does not specify a definite religion, but he explains the religious phenomenon as what appears when a person directs his eyes towards the sky (Bennabi, M, 1988:18). Therefore the essence of Malek Bennabi's thought is centered on the idea of making religion a regulator and a catalyst for preserving the network of social relations in modern societies, as long as the excessive individualism affected modern societies and it makes religion a personal, individual, and "centripetal" religion. This religion has become the faith of an individual untied and isolated from his social milieu, lacking common values and purposes directing towards serving others.

It may be that the withdrawal of religion from social life, has been the main and the most important forewords that paved the way for the wild capitalism and the emergence of contemporary risks due to the spread of selfishness and egoism in realizing wealth and absolute well-being, with no consideration to the expense of humanity. Max Weber mentioned one day in his book "Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism" in 1905 that capitalism will continue without Protestantism and loses its true meaning (Turner, B., 1987:113).

Thus, we reach the stage of avaricious capitalism, which makes the world lose its economic, social, and even moral balance, as it threatens the existential security of the individual, due to the presence of a great deal of insecurity.

BENNABI points out on spiritual dangers in Western societies, when he considers it more dangerous than industrial and technological dangers, as these latter when it is not manageable, inevitably leads to an impact on the quality of life on earth, while the first type of dangers certainly leads to the death of man, in terms of a decline of collective consciousness and the domination of personal benefits. This lasting in losing personal justifications for existence, as long as, European modernity proceeds for calculable and material values.

Due to the increase and accumulation of crises and the daily burdens of the Western man, BENNABI defends the need for a solid spiritual backwardness to escape these burdens (Bennabi, M., 1988: 32). And he gives us examples of the results of the failure in the process of spiritual compensation in Western societies on the eve of modernity, which created for us disappointment, uncertainty, anxiety and confusion, which resulted in resignation from life and the deterioration of the moral state. He mentions Sweden as a country that has maximizing social security and welfare state, but it reaches the first place in the list of suicide statistics in the world (Bennabi, M., 1988:16). Also the security service in Paris recorded that the percentage of drug addicts among young people doubled by twenty percent in the seventies of the last century (Bennabi, M., 1988:17).

BENNABI explains that the resignation from life, whether by suicide or by escaping to the abominations of alcohol, drugs and evils, is the result of the loss of the justifications for life, which modernity failed to contain after it has disinterested religion completely and replaced it with rationality. Then with excessive rationality, which led to disappoint the modernist project after the two world wars and the disengagement of the European human being, especially the youth, from the "traditional" reference backgrounds without replacing them with others.

Malek BENNABI mentions that the balance of justifications produced by modernity to bear the burdens of life in the countries on the "Washington-Moscow" line has been exhausted, meaning that the cultural balance on which Western civilization was built is no longer valid for all times and places.

Christianity, which is considered the religion of the majority along this line, has since the advent of modernity suffered from the crisis of an individualistic society, as religion has become just a traditional behavior confined to going to church. The crisis even included the resignation of clergy and priests in protest against the Vatican's policy.

Malek BENNABI does not hesitate to give us a shocking example of what Christianity has become like in Italian society, when the doors of Christian higher education houses were closed and the nuns went to other areas, so that the supervising priest replaced these sisters with others, as he bought other Indian sisters from Carla and taught them how to perform some rituals, in order to avoid a scandal and the crisis of the Christiane institution.

Thus, BENNABI criticizes modern Europe because it fell short in respect of the Christian religion, which was the first catalyst for Western civilization and which formed the individual ego and the collective conscience that led Europe to civilized possibility. Happiness is measured by its calories and hormones (Bennabi, M., 1988:23).

3. THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN FACING RISKS ACCORDING TO BENNABI

Malek BENNABI predicted the signs of contemporary society that began to appear to him since the last third of the last century. He was a pioneer in thinking about the destiny of modernity and the misappropriation it produced of humanity, before modern and contemporary Western postmodern theorists and sociologists. In the nineties of the last century, Anthony Giddens was interested in this modernity and its outcomes, and gave it the character of hyper and advanced modernity (cf. Giddens, A., 1990), and then Ulrich

Beck, almost in the same period, who insisted on the role of capitalism in producing risks and eroding solidarity and common affiliations. Not only, is the life of an individual or a group of individuals threatened, but the human existence as a whole (Peretti-Watel, P., 2000:75). It gives a global character for facing dangers and risks.

Before these scholars, Malek Bennabi mentioned that the human crisis facing both the developed and the underdeveloped world, is the most dangerous crisis on the earth, and it is living in what is called a "state of emergency" (Bennabi, M., 1988:34).

Malek Bennabi gave the global character of the emergency society, which requires only thinking about common salvation. This is what Beck dealt with under the term global citizenship community (Beck, U.,2001). BENNABI acknowledges that the countries located on the Washington-Moscow axis wanted, through industrial power, to collect all the material conditions to unite the world (Bennabi, M., 2013:135). However, it united its problems, dangers and threats.

The logic of common or collective salvation, according to Malek Bennabi, lies in achieving a coexistent global community, and this can only be achieved by combining the points of strength between the Tangier-Jakarta and Washington-Moscow axes. And this idea of coexistence cannot be embodied at any time more than today. The world today is in dire need to confront global risks. People of the world feel, thanks to modern industrial developments, especially in the atomic field, that they have to deal with a common problem, and it is true that Bennabi on the fifties of the last century, considered the Bandung conference as a project to achieve global coexistence. Today, a similar alliance is considered more than necessary, because the data of the global field contains the characters of a global risk society. An economic crisis in a country can threat and destruct the living conditions through its impact on local work in another country, and the problem of emitted gases is considered a north-south problem, and this is what created the "global danger" (Beck, U.,2001).

Using the example of the Bandung Conference, which Bennabi saw as a solution to all the crises of the age, is only one example among many others that may be similar as long as it carries with it the same principles and premises of this conference. The starting point of Gandhi's principle about his embodiment of the idea of non-violence (Satyagraha) emanating from the religious basis and which establishes the idea of overcoming imminent dangers through peace.

Coexistence, in Bennabi's view, lies in freeing humanity of its misfortune that threatens it since the bombing of Hiroshima, atomic weapons and nuclear tests(Bennabi, M., 2013:169). The contemporary risk society is an opportunity to surpass the classifications created by European modernity between civilized countries and colonized ones.

Rather, Bennabi mentions that the world is living the reality of globalism imposed by the 'Mondialisme' industrial development a long time ago. He does not see salvation except through what he called a global or a universal state "Etat Universel" (Bennabi, M., 2013:206). From here stems the idea of a global citizen who is obsessed with global risk management.

CONCLUSION

Malek BENNABI's precursors about the reflexive societies of modernity and his contributions to overcoming global crises can be considered as approaches in the field of risks sociology that begin with a critique of the extreme Cartesian mind which is brought with modernity, then to its repercussions on the social relations network through the withering away of the religious and its confinement at the individual level as a result of individualism and the decline of traditional and even societal bases.

The process of socialization, and the dissolution of the collective conscience that establishes the idea of living in society, has produced the excessive modernity man who is characterized by extravagant selfishness and the desire to maximize profit, embodied in the form of the European man in the modern era, who is fed from all these ideas to achieve his colonial project. This latter, has been defended by scientific and technological development, to the point of destroying humanity with the atomic threat. In light of the deviation of the modernist project and the globalization of industrial and technological developments and their dangers, Malek Bennabi proposes to rethink and to review the "traditional" ideas that founded modernity, that include cultural and social issues separating human groups, in an advanced world and a backward one. Both will inevitably meet, as the first will fall spiritually and the second materialistically. This is what Malek BENNABI called the global human event that feeds on the idea of spirituality and the return of the moral motive that fights savage capitalism, for example, by finding additional and diverse forms of the informal economy alongside the formal economy, such as the free economy or the gift economy, which stems from the cultural and religious specifics that established it. For the economy of pension since ages against the forms of capitalist obscene profit, the safe future of humanity can only be shaped by the return of spirituality.

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