

The Present World system as a Jungle: Towards A Different Sociological Thought

Introduction

Theories enjoy a significant position in the past and modern sociological thoughts. Such theories didn't come in vain or randomly, but as a result of tremendous efforts by well respected scholars. Such efforts gave sociology its highly respected status among sciences, especially after adopting the modern scientific research methods in social studies and explanations.

Sociology is well known as a flexible science due to the fact of adjusting the sociological thoughts after each progress or advancements in all sciences. In the past, for example, sociological thoughts were dependent on magic and spiritual explanations for solving daily and social problems. With the progress in biology, social scientists started to apply the biological law in the study of social groups as parts of one body (which is society). After the industrial revolution, some sociologists started to study social groups as conflicting parts against each other. And with the progress in genetic medicine, some sociologists began to use genetics in their explanations why certain nations or groups are known with certain habits or social characteristics. The same happened with the progress in the environmental sciences, where scientists started to apply environmental laws in the study of human societies and social groups.

This paper will try to turn the attention of modern sociologists to the following question: Do we live in a modern humanistic world, or in a jungle governed by laws of the jungle, or may be worse than that?

Methodology

Due to the nature of this kind of research, documentary methods will be used; this will include books, periodicals, articles, and published and unpublished materials. As a result, descriptive methodology will be used as explanations and comparative analysis. This should cover most relevant and available sociological theories in this regard.

Historical Background

In the old ages, in the social thought (if there was any) was fully dependent on what August Comte called "theological, magical, and spiritual explanations". The best example for this came from Greece where scholars who used to explain most of the social phenomenon –at that time- naming certain god, hidden power or authority as responsible, using no rational or intellectual explanations.

By the rise of the Islamic civilization in the middle ages, scientists were encouraged to translate from Roman and Greek books. As a result, many Muslim scientists made great progress in the field of math, medicine, geography, astronomy and sociology as well. The most famous sociologist was Ibn Khaldoun, who was affected by the progress in medicine, biology and environmental sciences. Consequently, Ibn Khaldoun studied society as a human body which has certain age and function, and consists of organs submitted to the will of the brain. Such organs represented in sociology as individuals and groups whereby each group or individual has certain use or function for the wellbeing of the body, which is the society. Thus, biological and environmental laws were applied in studying certain groups or social problems. Furthermore, Ibn Khaldoun studied nations on earth as a part of natural life, where each has a certain domain, function and age that ends by a new power taking over; exactly, like human cells give life or birth for new ones. Added to this is the environmental impact on human body in terms of biological structure, adaptation, culture, and economic activities based on local resources and temperature.

Thus, western sociologists admitted that there was a "tendency to think of sociology as exclusively a modern western phenomenon. In fact, however, scholars were doing sociology long ago in other parts of the world. An example was Ibn Khaldoun in the 14th c. He was comparing primitive with modern societies and the laws that govern all that" (Ritzer, George, 2006, p.8) By this, Ibn Khaldoun pushed social scholars to the process of reasoning instead of just describing social changes and phenomena. This was a great transformation in sociological thought that opened the way for the application of the scientific research methods in sociology by the western sociologists, especially after the industrial revolution in Europe in the 19th century.

The industrial revolution has truly created drastic social and economic changes that affected all aspects of human life, this include division of labor among individuals, groups and states, where bureaucracy rises as a new form of organizing business, and where colonialism started to take place among the powerful nations against the weak ones. Thus, "societies ruling elites started to employ certain symbols

to create the images required to legitimate and justify their power and position. But it would be a great mistake to assume that the images of reality conveyed by these powerful nations must prevail less society come apart, or fail to distinguish between symbolic attempts at legitimizing authority and the actual rule of specific people" (Anderson, 1974. p.24) Thus, struggle took place between social groups and states as well, where the theory of Marxism found a fertile ground to grow on and domain. On the other hand, Capitalism - founded since the 12th century - grew up and deeply rooted after the industrial revolution and became a dominant ideology that characterized the way of living in the west (wallerstein, 1986. p.39)

By the end of the 20th century, American scholars turned social researches from large scale theoretical ones to partial and local scales. In other words, they turned social thoughts from theories in socialism, capitalism, and class conflict into small groups and small social subjects, such as juvenile delinquency (gazawi and others, p.47, 2006). American sociologists were encouraged to apply their knowledge in solving new social problems aroused after the industrial revolution, instead of solving world social problems or building world-wide social theories.

Comparing human social groups with animal groups, in terms of form and structure was the base of many old and modern scholars. Ibn Al Mokafa'a in his book "kalilah Wa Dimnah", in the 8th century, used animals names and characters to describe human groups. Freedom of speech was known at that time as it is now. Therefore, (it would be possible to formulate a sociology of relations of men to animals) Many animals understood commands, anger, love, hostility, and react to them in ways which are evidently often by no means purely instinctive and mechanical. There are various forms of social organization among animals; monogamous and polygamous families, herds, flock, and finally state, with a functional division of labor. As the principal bearers of these functions, differentiated types to be identified; kings, queens, workers, soldiers, drones, propagators, and so on (Henderson and Parsons, 1974. p.104)

With the progress in industry and technology, some sociologists started to divide the nations of the world into civilized and uncivilized (Rene, 1983. p.1) or to core and periphery (Wallerstein, 1987. p.264) where periphery or uncivilized nations provide the core or civilized nations with slaves, raw materials, and cash crops. Besides serving as markets for their industries, this resulted in more dependency from the periphery nations on the core nations.

In summary, two types of world systems are evident in the history: world empires or great civilizations of pre modern times (such as China, Egypt and Rome,

and the world economic powers) dominated by nation states networks exemplified by Great Britain and France (Chilcote, 1989, p.97).

Wallerstein was concerned with the transition of feudalism (based on communal mode of production) to Capitalism (based on world divided into metropolis and satellites) where the transfer of surplus from periphery to the core (Wallerstein, 1987, p.264).

Based on the above, it would be of great use to present this paper as an effort to have a different view about the present world system neither as a human body nor as a market, but a jungle where super powers or social elites play the role of lions against all animals.

This research, I hope, it would be a step to bring attention to the importance of world-wide social theories, due to the significant role they play in social thought.

The present world system as a jungle:

Based on a meaningful attached drawing distributed at the World Economic Forum Summit held in Amman in 1994, it can be concluded that there is a sharp division of labor at world wide scale. While Wallerstein divided the world to core and periphery states, the attached drawing divided the world to five groups (as the case wills animals in the jungle): management, working, problem solving, virtual, and quality circle teams.

Management teams (Lions): At the head of each Era, there will be certain nation or nations which will take over the management of world (the jungle), such team will be lead by the strongest one which will impose its culture, language, ethnics, and ideology on the rest of the world. Every time a lion dies, a new one will take over the leadership, and so on. This was the case with Roman, Persian, Ottoman, British empires, as well as the United States of America, which leads now the greatest seven nations in the world (called G.7 nations). These nations represent the world management team in the present time. They dominate the world interms of wealth, economy, technology, media, military power. They even classify other nations to good and bad, radical and peaceful, satanic and merciful ones. Any state refuses or disobey the management team's laws or ethics esires will be severely punished through world boy-cut, siege, or even occupation by military forces as the case with Iraq and Afghanistan. Such occupation or siege will be used as a good lesson in discipline of other nations which may ever work or think against the well of the management team, exactly like the behavior of lions ruling in the jungle.

Lions are well known with their wisdom and mature behavior towards other animals. While the wolf, for example, may kill tens of goats in order to eat one, the lion usually hunts only one animal when gets hungry. Many animals and other species will benefit from the hunt. This wise behavior is what made the lion well known as the king of the jungle. Added to all of this, each lion will be the king at a certain part of the jungle, in order to avoid clashes among other lions. Thus, in the case of nations, the powerful ones have the right to veto any movement or effort by the weak ones at the United Nations or elsewhere, and as a result, they legitimize the using of force against them under the name of certain claims such as protecting freedom, democracy, world peace, and stability. Such claims, in fact, can be applied for the powerful nations only. The rest of nations should support such claims or, otherwise, will be considered satanic ones and then will be punished. Thus, freedom of speech, economic prosperity, human rights, and many other claims be applied to the powerful nations, since the rest of worlds nation were created for the well being of the powerful nations.

Work teams: The second division of labor in the jungle is mainly formed from bees, butterflies and ants. Such groups are well known as hardworking groups busy with their assigned duties such as cleaning, food making and storage. Such groups are also known by their organization and obedience for the supervisor or other authorities. These groups, in fact, work for others and not for themselves. Bees, for example, don't eat the honey they make, which, instead, is usually eaten by beers and other animals. Thus, it can be said that such groups, work for the sake of work. They live and die for the sake of work and not for prosperity and progress.

In the case of states, there are many Third World Countries which are responsible for the production of a given product or item. For example, some states are responsible for the production of oil (such as OPEC), or meat (such as Argentina) or banana (such as Somalia) or Coffee (such as Brasilia) and so on. These states are responsible for the production of specific item only. Prices, marketing and transportation will be handled by other states. Worse than all of this, the unit price is in the hand of the advanced and powerful countries only. This means that such countries work for the pleasure and joyful life of the advanced powerful states. The best example is the coconut prices in Ghana (which produced the coconut) are much more than in the United States (which imported the transported, carried, and shipped the coconut). The same can be said about oil prices in some Arab countries which are higher than in some western powerful states.

Added to all of this, the powerful Western Countries named some African States by the product they used to import from these states, such as Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, and so on.

Progress in the above states is not visible since the powerful nations will try to prohibit such states from any other economic activity than just the production of that item. For example, producing oil countries are not allowed to produce cars, machines, or even processing their own oil. They export raw oil only.

A new form of exploitation is recently emerged by some Multinational Corporations that produce computers. These Corporations have their headquarters in the West or in the United States while their factories are located in the Southeast Asia. The reason for that is not only the cheap labor cost, but also the absence of human rights for workers who partially lose their sight after a year or two in working on big magnifying instruments specialized in computer microchips production. If this happened in Western State, workers will be given million of dollars in compensation. But, the well being of Third World worker can be ignored or not even be mentioned if we talk about the prosperity of Western Powerful States. Even scientists in Third World countries will be brought to the Western Powerful States in order to be more powerful, leaving their countries without any hope of progress for the future.

Problem solving teams: In the middle of the jungle, a group of foxes and monkeys represent the link between masters and slaves (lions and weak animals) such animals are known as smart and hypocrite ones. They use their miracles in developing laws and equations needed by the lions to over rule the jungle. Lions use these animals to create the needed laws that justify the use of power against weak animals. For example, lions should eat other animals in order to survive and to enforce the equilibrium balance in the jungle as ecology scientists explain. Otherwise, the number of animals will exceed much above the capacity of the jungle with its limited resources. Thus, lions have the right to eat, kill and punish other animals under such names as law enforcement, survival, freedom of choice, and so on.

In the case of states, there are certain states assigned by the powerful ones just to create the needed umbrella of international law, democracy, freedom of speech, world business and trade, and so on, to justify the use of power or military occupation against radical states. This was clear in many instances. In the case of Iraq, for example, the United States seiged, raided and occupied Iraq under the name of spreading democracy and human right in the region. Many states supported such efforts either by few soldiers, or by boy cutting the Iraqi regime. In fact, they have nothing to do with Iraq, but that was the well of the United States and England.

This is clearer when we look at the United Nation agencies. The budgets of such agencies are mainly from the powerful states, especially the United States and Europe. Thus, they enjoy the use of veto against any move that doesn't reflect their interest. Furthermore, the powerful states use the United Nations agencies to authorize and legitimize the use of power and military occupation against certain states, although that such agencies were established, to avoid the use of force. Even the constitutions of United Nation agencies were designed to protect the interests of powerful states which they enjoy a permanent membership, the right to veto, the admission of any new membership, the presidency, the location and mechanism of work of such agencies.

In the case of Iran now, which is trying to develop atomic plants, the west wouldn't allow such activity, because it was classified as a bad state (satanic). It's only for the powerful ones. Classifying the world states to good and bad ones is being done by the powerful states and not by the United Nations agencies. The good ones will be issued financial and military assistance, while the bad ones will be boy-cut, sieged, threatened, or military occupied. The United Nation authorized England to create the needed situation for the establishment of the state of Israel in the occupied Palestine And when England is no longer a powerful state, the United States took over.

Virtual teams: The fourth division of labor is a group of birds on trees playing and singing in order to make the life of lions happy and joyful. They do not do that at night when lions are sleep, but during the day. In fact they do that in order to hide the noise and screaming of victim when they are eaten by lions. Such noise and screaming make other tense and annoyed. So, the birds will turn such sad tune to joy and happiness.

In the case of states, there are certain number of states which were assigned to say what the powerful states wanted or liked. Such states will try to expose the merciful meanings and attitudes of the powerful states and, at the same time, hide the aspects of injustice and human miserable life in the third world countries. The powerful states, using the World Bank as means of development of the third world countries, while, in fact, otherwise is happening. Many media and newspapers do the same thing.

Third world states are suffering now from debts and economic problems due to polices adopted by the World Bank and other agencies. Yet they need to apply for more loans.

Quality Circles (Teams): The last division of labor in the jungle is represented by dinosaurs and dragons. Such animals were known by their power and wisdom, despite the fact that none of these animals exist in the present time.

In the case of states it is clear that the present world system has no room for the wisdom of the old civilizations such as Greeks, Roman, or even traditional western ethics. The present world system is governed now by no human ethics at all. The powerful states do certain things that would not allow others to do so. Certain terms such as democracy, freedom, human rights, sovereignty, self defense, and human ethics, are applied on western countries and people only. The occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi forces was treated and ended within few months; while the occupation of Palestine and the Issue of Palestinian refugees lasted for sixty years and god only know for how long to come. The present world system lacks the needed code of ethics that powerful states usually enjoy and claim in order to justify their own actions. Yet, the present world system is suffering from severe shortage in a world wide accepted ethics frame work; while double standards can be seen in every aspect of life among other people and nations. This fact should weaken the attitude of the present powerful nation, and raise many questions about the future.

Conclusion

It seems very clear that we live now in a new world system far from the previous and traditional ones. While previous powers and civilizations used to rule the world using their military power side by side with their wisdom or ethical frame work in order to persuade the people of the world in the genuinity of such ethics, the present world system seems to be far from this fact. Although human race and humanity has accomplished a significant and distinguished scientific and technological progress, it seems that the opposite is occurring in the areas of justice, humanity and traditional man made civilization. The present world system is running now as animal society in the jungle. Such picture seems to be very persuasive given the aforementioned cartoon drawings. This raise a big question: do we live in a human society and humanistic world with human morals and ideals? Or are we not? Should we go back to the jungle code of ethics in order to understand the present world system? Why progress in science and technology was not met with similar progress in human dignity and peaceful world? It would be useful to study the jungle law in order to help understand the present world system.