

THE CRISIS OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE MODERN SOCIETY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE WORKS OF MARX, DURKHEIM AND WEBER

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Abstract

With the onset of capitalist economy and industrialization, one can argue that a new era has begun with its peculiar characteristics and huge impact on the all spheres of life. As the individual is increasingly exposed to constant changes taking place in the modern society, he becomes astounded by the ceaseless movement in it and he goes through an individual crisis in that society where traditional ways of living, thought and conceptualizing do not work anymore. This paper aims to provide a definition of modern society at first and then to touch upon the works of prominent scholars in social theory such as Marx, Durkheim and Weber in order to find out how the concept of individual crisis is elaborated on in these works.

Keywords: Alienation, Rationalization, Anomie, Modern Society, Social Theory

Modern Toplumda Bireyin Krizi: Marx, Durkheim ve Weber'in Eserlerinin Bir İncelemesi

Öz

Kapitalist ekonomi ve sanayileşmenin hızla ortaya çıkmasıyla, kendine has özellikleri olan ve hayatın tüm alanlarını etkileyen yeni bir çağ başlamış oldu. Birey, modern toplumdaki durmaksızın devam eden yeniliklere daha fazla maruz kaldıkça, toplumdaki hareketin ivmesinden başı döndü ve geleneksel yaşam tarzı, düşünce ve değerlerin artık işlemediği bu durumda bir kriz içine girdi. Bu makale, öncelikle modern toplumun tanımını vermeyi ve daha sonra Marx, Durkheim ve Weber gibi önemli düşünürlerin eserlerinde bireylerin deneyimlediği bu krizin nasıl ele alındığını göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, yabancılaşma, anomi ve rasyonelleşme gibi önemli kavramlar incelenecek, birbirleri ile olan benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları ortaya konulmaya çalışılacaktır.

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With the onset of capitalist economy and industrialization, one can argue that a new era has begun with its peculiar characteristics and huge impact on the all spheres of life. As the individual is increasingly exposed to constant changes taking place in the modern society, he becomes astounded by the ceaseless movement in it and he goes through an individual crisis in that society where traditional ways of living, thought and conceptualizing do not work anymore. This paper aims to provide a definition of modern society at first and then to touch upon the works of prominent scholars in social theory such as Marx, Durkheim and Weber in order to find out how the concept of individual crisis is elaborated on in these works.

This kind of study would help us conceive how modernization with its cardinal concepts such as capitalism, division of labor, urbanization, rationalization, institutional and technological changes influence the moral, psychological, social and economic tenets of the individual life. As the whole literature of social theory and criticism is based on the position of individual within the society, this study would contribute to our understanding of modern society and how it positions the individual in it. Bearing this purpose in mind, the concepts of alienation, anomie and disenchantment will be explored respectively in this paper with an emphasis on their significance for social theory.

As for the characteristics of the modern society, Frisby (1985) portrays us a type of society which is of transitory nature, in a state of flux, filled with new and changes. Therefore, it is not feasible to delineate it as a fixed state of being. Comparing and contrasting the new society with the traditional one comes into play in social theory when the modern society becomes dominant and coercive of the individual in any way possible. That's why, a number of scholars make concerted efforts on exploring this gap between the old and the new with an emphasis on the position of the individual.

Baudelaire introduces the concept of modernity as the distinguishing quality of modern life. In his opinion, modernity refers to the newness of the things in the modern society and the aim of the artist should be to adopt a childish gaze at the things happening around him in order to capture the very moment of modernity. As it is in constant change and you know that the world is not going to be the same next morning, it is of striking importance to capture the essence of timeless beauty and show its reflections in your work of art

(Baudelaire, 1964). Therefore, it is possible to say that Baudelaire comes among the first scholars who seeks to define the modern society and he agrees with his fellows in the idea that modern society is marked by constant changes and fleeting moments.

Among these eminent scholars who notice the changing nature of the modern society, Marx comes to the fore with his influential ideas on capitalism and the position of individuals in modern society. For him, capitalism is an historical outcome where social and economic relations are under constant attack and disturbance, human relationships are deconstructed and there is no fixed configuration of political and social institutions (Marx & Engels, 1967). Therefore, the individual has to confront the new conditions coming along with capitalism and his new position in society compared to his nature and his fellows.

Unlike the historical analysis of Marx, Nietzsche highlights the significance of the present in the modern society which refers to the decadence and inversion of all norms, values and representations. For him, the modern society is marked by illusions which conceal the real individual and a hectic way of living that pushes the individual to haste and hurry all the time. The individual experiences modernity through a restlessness, being preoccupied with himself and he becomes enslaved by moment, opinion and fashion which exhibits the fleeting and transitory nature of modernity (Nietzsche, 2003).

Like other notable scholars, Simmel (1950) strives for defining modernity and looking for the way through which the individual makes sense of the new world around him. Rather than defining the structure of modern life, he focuses on the experience of the individual in the modern society and how the components of the modern life are integrated into the inner life of the individual. Like his fellows, he describes modernity as fragmentary, constant flux and composed of fleeting moments. He also pictures the modern individual as bombarded with a great number of stimuli coming from his environment and therefore, goes through a great disturbance.

Another factor that suffocates the individual in the modern society is money economy and its reification of social world and human relationships. This results in the domination of objective culture over subjective culture which means that the individual is enslaved by the things he has created himself. In his depiction of the modern society, the individual finds himself in highly impersonalized relationships, in danger of losing his autonomy and individuality against the coercion of the society and the metropolis (Simmel, 1950).

All in all, one can argue that the individual is pictured as isolated, torn away from his nature and puzzled with the new circumstances of modernity in these depictions of modern society. Although each scholar defines it in a different way, what they all agree is that the modern society has broken the ties with the traditional way of living which leaves the individual in a perplexed situation in the end. With a limited scope, this paper aims to go through the works of only three pioneers in social theory and how they dwell upon the individual experience of modernity in their works. In this respect, the concept of alienation by Marx, anomie by Durkheim and disenchantment of the world by Weber will be explored in the following parts of this paper. After explicating these cardinal concepts that lie at the core of social criticism, their similarities and differences will be analyzed briefly, too.

The notion of alienation carries utmost significance for social theory and theorists since it opens up a new space to talk about the crisis of the individual in the modern society and to place it in social sciences. The theme of alienation would help us understand the changing context of the modern world and it paves the way for other scholars to theorize and investigate the human relations in the modern society. In that sense, Nisbet (1953) claims that the theme of alienation has a profound place in all social sciences which attempt to define the marginal, isolated, powerless or normless individual in the modern society and it has become a classical notion in the works of Marx, Durkheim and Weber under different terms. Another scholar Kahler (1957) accentuates that the whole history of man can be regarded as the history of alienation. Hence, it is possible to argue that the concept of alienation lies at the heart of social theory. In addition to these, Wegner (1975) suggests that alienation causes significant social problems since the alienated individual has difficulty in conforming or committing to the prevalent social norms, values and roles in the modern society. Hence, high rates of external social control is needed in these times in order to ensure that the individual conforms to social norms and to provide stable social equilibrium.

As for alienation, Marx develops an analysis of economic conditions and proposes that alienation is separation from the ideal state of being caused by the onset of bourgeois social order. Being influenced by the ideas of German Romantic thinkers, Marx puts forward the idea that human beings carry an essence or creative capacity to be active and transform the environment around themselves which can be realized if proper conditions of freedom are provided (Wegner, 1975). However, Marx believes that capitalist economy estranges the individual from his creative essence, species-being and transforms him into an object in relation to his product, production activity, his nature and his fellows.

As a result, man becomes a passive object in all tenets of life in a bourgeois society and for Marx, its origins solely depend on economic conditions (Israel, 1971).

Both Marx and Durkheim date back the origins of alienation in the modern society to the onset of capitalism and bourgeois society. However, Marx solely focuses on economic structure and its huge impact on human relations in the modern society whereas Durkheim pays more attention to social order and norms which influence the psychology and mindset of the modern individual (Giddens, 1971). That is the reason why other scholars and his successors criticize the theory of Marx as it is based on materialistic determinism. For Marx, history is a succession of specific stages of development which ends up with its peculiar concepts and consequences. Rather than a linear progress of history, Marx puts forward the idea of dialectical thinking borrowed from Hegel.

With this historical framework, Marx concludes that the prevalent capitalist system is also an historical outcome brought by industrialization and the struggle between exploiters and exploited individuals. In capitalist economy, class system emerges since human beings are categorized into two classes; property owners (bourgeoisie, capitalist) and property-less owners (proletariat, workers) in the end. The definition of class is based upon the position of the individuals to the means of production, private property and forces of production (Marx, 2005). Therefore, an antagonist relationship emerges between wage laborers and capitalists since capitalists look for the ways of paying less wages to the workers and gaining more profit which leaves wage laborers with an income that is just enough for their subsistence.

In this capitalist system, everything is produced in order to be bought and sold in the exchange market. Therefore, the exchange value of goods instead of their use value gains significance and that also reinforces workers to sell their labor power in order to survive in this system. At this point, alienation of the individual begins to be pronounced since Marx argues that labor transforms human nature, needs and relations as it is a social thing and the nature of labor has changed in the capitalist economic order (Ritzer, 2010). While capitalists accumulate wealth, workers are forced to sell their labor and live on the bare minimum level of substance which results in the misery of workers and that's why, the system of private property and imposed division of labor lead to a kind of frustration in society which is quite linked with the idea of alienation (Zeitlin, 1968).

To be able to understand his point clearly, we should have a look at the concept of human praxis in his theory. Marx asserts that human potential to create things and transform nature is a unique characteristic that distinguishes us from animals. Through labor, human beings create something in reality that they previously imagined in their minds. Therefore, they can transform the needs, consciousness and nature of humankind. In that sense, labor can be regarded as the objectification of our purpose that existed in our mind, transformation of the material world around us and transformation of human nature since he believes that human beings never produce as individuals but as a member of their society (Ritzer, 2010). Marx's belief in man living harmoniously in nature seems similar to the ideas of Rousseau who also believes that men used to be in sync with nature in the past until certain conditions force them to gather in bigger groups where competition and hierarchy among different strata emerged which result in frustration and problems with the integration of the individual into the society (Rousseau, 1920).

Within a capitalist society that is marked by class conflict, commodity fetishism and reification of the social world, the individual begins to feel estranged and this kind of estrangement originates from the estranged labor that is in contradictory terms with the nature of human labor mentioned above (Aiken, 1956). Since capitalism is not just a system of economy, but also a system of power, the circumstances circulating labor causes the exploitation of workers and leaves them alienated in four ways offered by Marx.

Unlike what he used to do in nature, the individual in capitalist economy is alienated from his production activity. In a traditional society, the individual used to produce goods in order to satisfy his immediate needs and sometimes out of his creative potentiality. However, in capitalist society, the individual works in order to provide his survival by earning money. Therefore, labor becomes forced labor and it becomes a means to an end (earning money) rather than an end itself (Marx, 2005). In addition, he is not working so as to develop his creative potential or capacity, but by the force of external circumstances which distorts the nature of human labor.

Another type of alienation delineated by Marx is the estrangement of the individual from his product since he does not have any kind of control over the disposal of his products now. The goods he produces are produced in order to be bought and sold in the exchange market like his labor which also becomes a commodity in the exchange market (Giddens, 1971). If the individual desires to own the goods that he produces, he has to go to the market and buy it as

everyone else. Therefore, the more he produces, the less he has to consume for himself.

The third way of alienation formulated by Marx is based on the conception of human praxis mentioned above. For Marx, human beings begin to produce goods in order to adapt himself to the system rather than actively mastering nature around it within the capitalist society. On the contrary Marx maintains that human beings are deprived of their creative being with the new type of labor which is forced upon the individual by external forces. This results in detachment of the individual from his species being in the end.

This type of alienation also estranges the individual from his fellows and social relationships as Marx considers labor to be as a social thing that is practiced with the collaboration of other individual that belong to the same society. However, human beings working with rigid division of labor and under the terms of forced labor come to be alienated from other workers which in turn transforms the relationship among human beings (Ritzer, 2010). If we think about laborers working on the assembly line, it is clear that they do not have control over the production activity since they are just responsible for a smaller part of that production. They also have no time to communicate with his colleagues and may work for a long time without knowing the name of his colleague which leaves him highly isolated and powerless over the production process and causes him to feel alienated in the modern society.

Looking through the ideas of Marx on the modern society and the crisis of the individual, it seems clear that he attempts to explain a social phenomenon in terms of economic relations. Unsatisfied with the arguments of political economy, he suggests his theory of historical materialism and reveals that this state of society is also a transient one which can be overthrown in a revolutionary way. Like Marx, Durkheim also approves the fact that the modern society witnesses a new state of being by detaching from tradition with the disintegration of the feudal society.

The concept of anomie put forward by Durkheim carries utmost importance for us to hold a grasp of the crisis of the modern individual and its underlying reasons. Similar to Marx, Durkheim departs from the economic conditions and division of labor at the time. However, he makes use of other dimensions of social life so as to explain the changing conditions of the modern world and its nausea on the individual. Like Marx, he is also aware of the fact that a new epoch has begun with the industrialization process and its consequences. Bellah (1959) argues that Durkheim is one of the earliest

thinkers who comes to realize a new type of society that is embedded in universal and rational cultural norms, values and forms that provides more autonomy to the individual. Therefore, his arguments should be analyzed by bearing the cultural context of the period in mind.

In terms of the position of the individual and his ties to the society, the arguments of Durkheim are quite distinguishable since he considers society as a *sui generis* reality, independent from the individual but coercive of him. Hence, he conceptualizes society as a material entity that has a power over the individual and emphasizes the social integration of the individual into that structure in such a time of rapid changes resulting in modern crisis (Zeitlin, 1968). It is manifest in his works that he prioritizes society which is the reason and also the remedy of the alienation of the individual.

Durkheim believes that society is going through a kind of moral crisis since the high pace of industrialization and new economy system inverts the traditional way of living and causes a breakdown of norms circulating and governing the social world. Especially in big cities where individuals interact with each other more and where you can witness high social density, it is difficult to keep up with these changes and this chaotic situation causes a kind of normlessness where traditional norms, values and practices do not work anymore or do not hold the society together (Ritzer, 2010). Durkheim names this normlessness as 'anomie' and he places it at the heart of modern crisis as it constantly destabilizes the dynamics of the society, thereby the position of the individual in itself. Thus providing a moral system that would be the anchor of modern society comes among the top tasks of sociology for him (Tiryakian, 1975). As can be seen, Durkheim concentrates his efforts and analyses on morality in his works which is a part ignored in the works of Marx.

In his theory, Durkheim highlights the transition from traditional to modern society which happens in an increasing speed and without giving any time to the individual to adapt himself to this new type of society. In here, it would be helpful to touch upon his conceptualization of traditional and modern society as the transition between them is a token of modern crisis of the individual. For him, traditional society is composed of mechanical solidarity where there is no room for individuality and members of the society are quite alike. In such a society, legal codes are ruled by repressive laws that severely punishes the individual that deviates from the values of the society. On the other hand, modern society is marked by organic solidarity which leaves more space for individuality and autonomy. It is ruled by restitutive laws that seek to

compensate the damages caused by the individual rather than making him suffer for it (Zeitlin, 1968).

The primary cause of this transition from traditional to modern society is the changing division of labor that comes with the industrialization and urbanization process. Since the number of people competing for limited sources increases now, division of labor in the modern society gets highly specialized and in the end human beings become more dependent on each other (Giddens, 1971). For Durkheim, this results in organic solidarity which helps the individual to improve his skills and capacity in the best way while integrating him into a greater cause than himself, in other words, his society.

As can be deduced, Durkheim regards division of labor in a more positive way than Marx. However, he also warns us against the dangers of modern division of labor since it is difficult for the individual to keep up with these changes. These new circumstances can lead to lack of moral deregulation and normlessness since it is not possible to make sense of the world with the prevalent norms now and what kind of ethics to be followed is not certain yet (Tiryakian, 1975). Durkheim asserts that this chaotic situation has an alienating effect on the individual since it may distort the mindset of the individual in a way that can put an end to his life.

Upon this point, Durkheim claims that anomie is the main reason of suicide where the individual feels alienated from his fellows and finds himself socially disintegrated. Once again, we feel the significance of social cohesion and integration in his arguments. Departing from this point, Durkheim formulates the concept of suicide into four categories such as altruistic, fatalistic, altruistic and anomic. All these categories are highly related to the regulation of social life and the integration of the individual to it. For this paper, anomic suicide should be highlighted since it is related to the times of quick changes where the individual feels disconnected from the society and loses his sense of belonging (Giddens, 1971). With difficulty in adapting to the new social environment, the individual commits a suicide as he cannot position himself in his society anymore.

Like Marx, Durkheim is also disturbed by the rapid changes and the fleeting characteristic of the modern society. However, their ideas diverge in terms of their conceptualization of the nature of man. Marx depicts human beings living harmoniously with each other in nature but they are corrupted by the capitalist system that leaves them isolated and detached from nature. On the other side, Durkheim rejects the inner good of human beings depicted by

Marx. Instead, he argues that human beings are inclined to chase unattainable goals throughout their lives as they are greedy and cannot determine the boundaries of their lust and desires (Ritzer, 2010). Therefore, he insistently proposes a moral discipline as a solution to the moral crisis of the individual since human beings are in need of an external force that is higher than them in order to control their desires. This point of view is a token of how Marx and Durkheim evaluate the crisis of the individual in the modern society in a different way.

As for the comparison of these two concepts, both scholars agree that there is a new type of consciousness emerging in the modern society which consolidates the primacy of personal identity and it is marked by modern division of labor that breaks the ties with traditional society. The most distinguishing difference between these two scholars is that Marx emphasizes the primacy of the economic over the social which leads to the underestimation of social and cultural norms, values and practices. On the other side, Durkheim draws his social theory towards the boundaries of cultural anthropology by taking into consideration the position of the individual within the general framework of society, rather than just focusing on the economic sphere (Cohen, 1978).

Analyzing their works, one can argue that both scholars focus on the economic conditions of the society which lie at the core of their society. However, their ideas diverge from each other in terms of their approach to the concept of division of labor. Unlike Marx who regards modern division of labor as an enforcement on the individual which causes class struggles, hierarchical relationships and alienation of the individual, Durkheim views division of labor as a source of a new type of social solidarity that can bind the members of any given society together (Palumbo & Scott, 2005). In that sense, it is evident that Durkheim is more optimistic with regards to the future of the society and the moral crisis of the individual since he believes that restructuring social norms and moral discipline would be enough to provide social cohesion and integration in the modern society.

From these statements, one can conclude that Marx looks for uprooting the conditions of the modern society as it is a token of human exploitation. He believes that the prevalent problems are immanent in capitalist system, therefore it is of utmost significance to construct a post-capitalist order. On the other hand, Durkheim considers these problems as a sign of social disorder rather than a technical one and he does not favor the idea of the abolishment of the state (Hirschman, 1982). Rather, he prefers to regulate the gap growing

between the individual and the state in a time of rapid changes in order to reach social equilibrium again. In that sense, it is possible to argue that Marx projects an ideal future with the abolishment of the state, private property and accumulation of wealth whereas Durkheim focuses on the present and its detachment from the traditional society.

Another radical opposition between the theory of Durkheim and Marx is that Durkheim mostly rejects the notion of historical materialism. While Marx believes that history is composed of breaks and transformations emerging from class conflicts, Durkheim argues that social developments happen gradually with a process of social differentiation. For Durkheim, this process does not yield a conflicting situation, but necessarily ends with social solidarity since economic conditions are also an outcome of collective norms and representations (Bottomore, 1981). Therefore, it is evident that Durkheim explains social phenomenon through ideas, norms and social values rather than an account of materialistic basis.

Unlike Marx and Durkheim who focuses on the impact of economic sphere and capitalism on the individual crisis, Weber adopts a different approach to that problematic. For Weber, the alienation of the individual in the modern society which is named as 'disenchantment of the world' by him originates from some other factors such as religion and rationalization of social life instead of only economic reasons. Indeed, his work titled as 'The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism' suggests that capitalism is an unanticipated consequence of the teachings of Calvinism that highly rationalizes the religious thought by getting rid of its magical characteristic (Giddens, 1971). Therefore, it is possible to view the concept of disenchantment as a broader category than capitalism and rationalization.

Another point that the theory of Weber derives from the other scholars is that he rejects historical materialism and proposes that the acts, practices and opinions of the individuals in the social sphere can also shape the economic conditions. Therefore, it can be claimed that Weber attributes the power of agency to the individual more than others, since he can also transform the nature of social, economic and political sphere around him through his deeds and actions. This kind of agency is ignored in the works of Marx and Durkheim as they both consider the individual as a passive object of greater institutions in the modern society that has power him. In that sense, the theory of Weber on society and its relation to the individual can be seen as a break from the former scholars mentioned above.

In the light of the information above, it can be argued that the disenchantment of the world coined by Weber shares some common points with the concepts of alienation and anomie since all of these try to figure out the challenges the individual face in the modern society and to cast light on the directions in which the modern society will grow. However, the concept of disenchantment also differs from others in the sense that it has religious origins for Weber and it mostly depends upon the rationalization of the world through instrumental reasoning capitalism and bureaucracy. Although all scholars touch upon the subject of capitalism, Weber does not base all his arguments on it as he adds other dimensions into his explanations.

The theme of disenchantment carries utmost importance to be able to understand the social theory of Weber as it provides an inner unity in his works. It is also possible to say that Weber offers a critique of modern society through the theme of disenchantment going beyond the boundaries of economy and social organization. In addition, Carroll (2011) maintains that Weber aims to come up with a new world that is freed from all illusions where the individuals are considered to be active agents instead of the objects of reason.

As for the origins of disenchantment, Weber points out the teachings of Protestants, especially Calvinism since he believes that there is an elective affinity between the spirit of modern capitalism and the ethics of Protestant. For him, the concept of predestination opens a new epoch for Protestants since it radically alters their worldview and their daily lives. With the teachings of Calvinism, Protestants come to believe that God created this world in order to reflect his glory, not for the sake of man. Besides, the power of Almighty is considered to be beyond human comprehension so human beings could just capture the bits and pieces of his glory. Lastly, they come to believe the significance of 'predestination' which preaches that an individual cannot know whether he is among the selected one that can reach salvation or not (Zeitlin, 1968).

As can be deduced, this concept of predestination leaves the individual highly isolated and lonely which can lead to depression and despair. Since believers are now ridden of the power of magic or salvation through their church or sacraments, they feel that their religious life is completely refined from its enchanted character. Therefore, Protestants begin to look for the ways that can relieve their isolation and remove the doubts about their predestination. This results in searching for the signs of their election in this world and their daily lives (Carroll, 2011). At that point, working efficiently and fulfilling your duty to

God by conducting your life morally become the core of the hopes for their selection.

Wasting your time and idleness are strictly prohibited since it would mean that you are wasting the hours of God. Another tenet of this belief is that it leads you to an inner-worldly ascetism which requires you to work hard and efficiently without indulging in the worldly pursuits or personal enjoyment. This means you should provide great performance at work and you should not spend the wealth you accumulate for your personal desires or indulgence. Weber believes that this is quiet linked with the spirit of modern capitalism which is based on the accumulation of wealth (Giddens, 1971). Although this belief system encourages you to work hard and be successful in this world, it also loses its enchanted character since there is no element of magic or salvation that you can apply anymore (Scribner, 1993).

Another factor that contributes to the disenchantment of the world is that the modern society is highly rationalized through its money economy, bureaucracy and new ways of thinking etc. Weber lists four types of rationality that lie at the heart of modern society which can be defined as practical, theoretical, substantive and formal rationality (Greisman, 1976). For this paper, formal rationality comes to the fore since it refers to actions and decisions conducted through means-ends calculation that uses universally applied rules and laws. Formal rationality epitomizes predictability, efficiency, certainty and calculability. It also replaces human technology with a non-human one. Last but not least, it ends up with irrational consequences for the individual who feels that the world is more democratic and efficient but has lost its meaning and enchantment now (Ritzer, 2010). Therefore, human beings come to live in an iron cage that is marked by high rationalization of the world and the world becomes a disenchanted place with it.

Although Marx and Weber agrees on the significance of the expropriation of peasantry and the formation of a class based society, Weber does not view it as the main axis for capitalism. Instead of division of labor, Weber places high specialization of task through bureaucracy at the core of capitalism which can be accepted as another token of formal rationality that pulls the strings of the modern society now (Giddens, 1971). In Weber's theory, bureaucracy contributes to the rationalization, thereby the disenchantment of the world through its operating system. For instance; offices are based on specified functions which require a certain degree of competence and technical training for the officers working there. Another characteristic of these bureaus is

that they are organized in a hierarchical structure which does not allow any kind of appropriation or owning the means of production by the officers. Besides, all the transactions that are taking place in these offices are expected to be well-written and documented. Considering all these tenets of bureaucracy, one can feel the existence of a world marked by high rationality which leaves no space for any kind of spontaneity or impulses (Ritzer, 2010). Therefore, the individual ends up feeling under the pressure of the rational world around himself.

Another difference between the ideas of Weber and Marx could be that Weber highlights the relationships of dominance and subordination whereas Marx focuses on the relationships of means of production in his works. In that sense, the disenchantment of the world can be likened to the concept of anomie, since both of them deal with the social relations and the position of the individual with regards to the totality of society. However, it can be said that Durkheim has a more optimistic approach since he accentuates that the modern society can be regulated through moral discipline and it can reach a social equilibrium with creating an organic solidarity. On the other side, Weber does not picture the modern society in optimistic terms as he indicates that human beings will sustain their lives under the pressure of iron cage brought by capitalism and rationalization of the world.

To put in a nutshell, the theories formulated and furthered by Marx, Durkheim and Weber are groundbreaking as these scholars are the very early sociologists of modernity. Besides, their ideas shed light on the changing position of the individual in the modern society which leads to the moral crisis of the individual under these circumstances. Although they depart from the same problematic, their arguments diverge from each other in many terms. This paper provides a synopsis of their ideas on how they articulate this chaotic experience of the modern individual with their similarities and differences. It is hoped that this study would contribute to our understanding of the modern world and its indications on the individual.

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