
The New Social Developments of Durkheim and Merton Theories on Anomie in Modern Society

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ABSTRACT

The authors of the present article consider anomie as a natural manifestation of the process of social evolution, especially macroevolution. Macroevolution implies a qualitative transformation of some social institutions with their system of social control into other social institutions with a different set of norms and sanctions. During the process of social macroevolution, the following scenarios are systematically observed: the old systems of social regulation cease to function effectively, and the effective functioning of the new systems of social regulation does not yet begin. All this gives rise to the phenomenon of social anomie in all its variety of manifestations. The interpretations of anomie inspired by Durkheim and Merton still dominate the research literature. However, society is changing, so the theories created a century ago can hardly embrace all the nuances of the new social reality, such as the nonlinear behavior of a social system or the acceleration of social processes. We seek to understand how the anomie theory should be updated in order it could reflect the transformations of society and changes in social actors. So we introduce the concept of reflexive anomie. This concept helps us better understand seemingly unwarranted, high-profile crimes like the cases of Anders Breivik in Norway or Stephen Paddock in the USA. We compare and contrast two of the possible approaches to explaining these cases of asocial behavior: from the perspective of narcissistic personality disorder and reflexive anomie. The comparison of the

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resulting conclusions provides a deeper insight into the changes at the micro-level of the social system.

The proposed developmental variants of social anomie concept: normal anomie and reflexive anomie – link into a single semantic space both the changes that occur in society and the transformation of the social subject itself, take into account the effects of self-organization that arise in the virtual world in the process of network interaction, reflect the mobility and instability of modern society, the influence of a potentially possible tomorrow on the perception of the phenomena of the present day.

They can become a promising theoretical and methodological basis for the study of digital society, which is undergoing a permanent process of becoming, transformation of its institutions and processes.

Keywords: *Durkheim, Merton, non-equilibrium society, anomie, reflexive anomie, normal anomie, social evolution, macroevolution, narcissistic personality disorder.*

In the present article, we consider anomie as a natural manifestation of the process of social evolution, especially macroevolution. Macroevolution implies a qualitative transformation of some social institutions with their system of social control into other social institutions with a different set of norms and sanctions. During the process of social macroevolution, the following scenarios are systematically observed: the old systems of social regulation cease to function effectively, while the effective functioning of new systems of social regulation does not yet start. All this gives rise to the phenomenon of social anomie in all its variety of manifestations. The theory of social anomie as formulated by Durkheim and Merton does not seem to represent the reflexivity of modern social actors anymore or explain why collective norms and social control mechanisms turn ineffective in restraining individuals' antisocial behavior. This brings us to the concepts of normal anomie and reflexive anomie.

The focus in this interpretation is not on weakening social connections, which is traditional for Durkheim's followers, but on the macro-level behavioral change in the system. The activity of collective actors or even separate agents based on individually significant narratives is becoming more and more dominant. The reflexivity of social actors implies that the decision-making center shifted to the micro-level of the individual and the decisions themselves became nearly unpredictable.

Émile Durkheim introduced the concept of anomie as a reason behind the suicide rate and first expounded it in 1897. The next most

famous theorist of anomie as a phenomenon after Durkheim was Robert Merton (1938). The concept never received any further substantial elaboration and stayed within the scope of functionalism and institutionalism.

Durkheim defines anomie as the state of normlessness. Anomie is especially typical of transition periods in the development of societies, when past norms become too obsolete to effectively regulate social interactions and relationships, while the new ones are not yet a tradition. Individual anomic behavior may also manifest itself during stable spells in the life of a system. However, until it covers broad social strata, it does not pose any serious threat to society, although it does need regular control. Wallace and Wolf (1991: 23) liken Durkheim's anomie to Marx's alienation. However, Durkheim and Marx suggest completely different ways to minimize the ramifications of these phenomena in society. The former underlines the need for greater normative regulation, whereas the latter insists on greater decision-making freedom for individuals.

Continuing a tradition established by Durkheim, Merton studied how 'certain phases of social structure generate the circumstances in which infringement of social codes constitutes a "normal" response' (Merton 1938: 672). In his interpretation, anomie does not necessarily result from extreme circumstances, whether a crisis or a happy event, but may well be a routine state of a social system. In that case, it is caused by a discrepancy between the value attached to goals and the norms regulating their achievement. As the primary reason for anomie in the US society, Merton identifies 'the extreme emphasis upon the accumulation of wealth as a symbol of success' (*Ibid.*: 675). According to Merton, goals are premised on the main values of the culture. Wealth as a symbol of success is considered desirable for everyone but there are no institutionalized ways for everyone to accumulate wealth. Inflated value attached to a goal reduces the significance of means, so 'fraud, corruption, vice, crime, in short, the entire catalogue of proscribed behavior, becomes increasingly common' (*Ibid.*: 672).

Durkheim focused on the effects of sharp structural changes. Merton, on the contrary, assumed that the fallouts of social anomie may be long-term and claimed that structural disorientation fuels deviance including corruption, fraud, and crimes. Trying to find reasons why some societies show a higher level of anomie than others do, Merton associated it with the fundamental imbalance pertaining to such societies – a contradiction between the cultural structure and the social structure.

There are no significant contradictions in the interpretations of anomie by Durkheim and Merton primarily because their concepts were developed on the methodological platform of functionalism. Along with the leader of functionalism – Talcott Parsons – both authors are its major theorists (Wallace and Wolf 1991). Therefore, they both primarily interpret anomie as a dysfunction of a system. A system seeks equilibrium, which is achieved through values or standards shared by everyone with a smooth interaction of elements, both social and cultural. Dysfunction of any given element leads to a certain degree of imbalance.

Contemporary authors also rely on the methodological platform of the theories of the institutions and structures (Arne 2009) as well as structural functionalism (Wallace and Wolf 1991). We suggest referring to anomie in the traditional interpretation (normlessness) as structural anomie in contrast with normal anomie and reflexive anomie, which we introduce in this study.

The theory of anomie is still largely used to find reasons behind suicide rate (Maimon and Kuhl 2008; Mueller and Abrutyn 2016), which is a tradition started by Durkheim, and to explain criminal and deviant behavior (Messner and Rosenfeld 2008; Light and Ulmer 2016).

The idea of insufficient control over behavior undoubtedly dates back to Durkheim. In particular, this claim is true for the institutional theory of anomie (Messner and Rosenfeld 2006, 2008; Bjerregaard and Cochran 2008; Burkatzki 2008). Here, anomie is interpreted through too much focus on economic goals related to the American dream in line with the devaluation of non-economic institutes of the society (family, education, and power structures). High crime rate results from this contradiction.

Based on how the concept of anomie has been understood over the recent decades, we conclude that Durkheim and Merton's successors interpret it through several attributes.

Primarily, the manifestation of anomie through disorganization (Maimon and Kuhl 2008; Light and Ulmer 2016). Disorganization reduces the effectiveness of social control, which, in turn, encourages crime (Light and Ulmer 2016: 295). In disorganized communities, members are not capable of pursuing their common values or provide effective social control. Disorganization may manifest itself in small social groups as well. Maimon and Kuhl study its effects at the level of family and family relationships. From their viewpoint, the disturbance of a family structure (single life or living with non-biological parents) may be regarded as anomie (Maimon and Kuhl 2008: 931).

Since Durkheim and Marx, anomie has been strongly associated with alienation. Vaisey believes that alienation and anomie make one seek the rationale for group existence over and over to overcome the Great Disembedding (Vaisey 2007: 866). Human beings are still left to attempt to ‘re-embed’ themselves in ways that will not do undue violence to their freedom or autonomy, while simultaneously trying to find sources of shared meaning and purpose.

Anomie may be a response to uncertainty, which undermines human identity (Kalleberg 2009; Sennett 1998; Uchitelle 2006). It may also result from a social disaster like the destruction of community in the Buffalo Creek flood in 1972 (Erikson 1978). Erikson claims that ‘as well as a reaction to the disaster itself, that the fear and apathy and demoralization one encounters along the entire length of the hollow are derived from the shock of being ripped out of a meaningful community setting’ (*Ibid.*: 193–94).

Disorganization, uncertainty, alienation, and demoralization are the attributes that can be used to describe structural anomie since there are conditions in the social system itself, in which anomic behavior becomes a normal response to a social situation. However, the theory of social anomie developed by Durkheim and Merton fails to fully reflect such attributes of the modern sophisticated and ever-changing society as its nonlinearity, ability to self-organization, and reflexivity of social actors. We need a useful conceptualization of anomie to explore the phenomenon of social anomie.

Concepts that reflect both the transformation of social reality and changes in social actors have emerged in Russian sociology (Vasilenko and Meshcheryakova 2021). For example, the theory of ‘normal anomie’ expressed by Sergey A. Kravchenko and Liudmila A. Vasilenko.

Kravchenko considers it utopian to believe that a return to normative long-term stability is possible today, since society has reached a certain threshold of complexity. He interprets normal anomie as an expanding set of vulnerabilities for society in the form of side-effects of human innovative, rational and pragmatic activities. The effects of deviation as a norm are generated not as a result of the non-functionality and dysfunctionality of the institutions of a particular society, but as a result of the complication of the elements of social structure (Kravchenko 2014).

Liudmila Vasilenko's interpretation of ‘normal anomie’ focuses on the constructive potential of normal anomie, since what is a devia-

tion from the norms of the old social system may become normal in the becoming social system (Vasilenko 2018).

Nataliya Meshcheryakova introduces the term 'reflexive anomie' in connection with the shift of the human decision-making center to the micro-world level; hence, decisions and judgments have become as hard to predict as the whole social life. Structural anomie is an on-par response of an individual or group to tension from the structure. Reflexive anomie, however, results from a subjective, non-linear reaction of social actors to external, often random influences, while being a product of self-organization at the micro-level. This transformation has become possible with the following processes occurring symmetrically: acceleration of mobility, both spatial and social, weakening of connections with small groups and family, increasing dependence on oneself, and growth of social actors' reflexivity.

The new theoretical concept makes it possible to study such extreme and rare cases as Anders Breivik's attack on a youth camp in 2011 or the Las Vegas shooting in 2017.

In this study, we advance the sociological perspective on anomie by addressing extreme cases in order to gain a deeper insight into the ordinary (see Taleb 2007).

Having defined anomie in modern society, we consider as our primary task to outline how this social force affects people's lives.

METHODOLOGY

When developing a theoretical model of *reflexive anomie*, Nataliya Meshcheryakova proceeds from Archer's idea on the reflexivity of society and its unintended consequences (Archer 2003, 2007), Inglehart's theory of post-materialist values (Inglehart 1990), and Sztompka's theory of social becoming (Sztompka 1991). By combining the principal ideas of these approaches, we obtain a representation of the renewed social reality and renewed social actors.

The empirical part of the research is based on the case study method. We are interested in cases that are somehow exceptional. By its type, it is rather a key case study, since the cases of choice are far from the norm and the circumstances associated with them are of special interest. By its form, this is a critical case study, which is a new critical look at a unique event.

The analysis of empirical data is based on the principles of the grounded theory method: inductivity, skepticism, and thorough compliance with research procedures (Glaser and Strauss 1967). As the cases to be explored and compared, we chose the following two

events: Anders Breivik's attack on a youth camp in 2011 and the Las Vegas shooting in 2017. These two events have the following attributes in common:

- 1) They have a devastating effect on society.
- 2) They severely undermine the values and norms of behavior.
- 3) The investigation did not confirm any mental disorders in the perpetrators Breivik and Paddock.*
- 4) No significant social determiners of such extreme actions were established by the investigation: poverty, long-term unemployment, pressure by an extremist social group or other similar dire circumstances.

For objective reasons, it is impossible to interview the two main culprits of the events as part of the work on these two cases. However, abundant documents were accumulated during the pre-trial investigation and court hearings.

The rapid pace of changes provokes processes of anomie, which becomes the most important risk factor. Liudmila Vasilenko in her treatment of normal anomie describes synergetic and fractal-evolutionary effects of self-organization (Vasilenko 2019).

RESULTS

There is a difference between the narratives by Breivik and Paddock since the former spoke and wrote readily and enthusiastically, whereas the latter did not leave anything, not even a death note, and his motive remains unknown to this day. According to police, Paddock acted alone. His motive remains unknown (Preliminary Investigative Report, 2018: 52). However, the open coding of the pre-trial investigation and court action reports helped us single out the common behavioral patterns, trends, and relationships among the data of these two cases.

Anders Behring Breivik is a Norwegian far-right terrorist, the organizer, and perpetrator of the 2011 explosion in the center of Oslo and attack on a youth camp causing 77 people dead and another 151 injured. In 2012, he was convicted of mass murder and terrorism.

Stephen Craig Paddock was an American mass murderer responsible for the 2017 Las Vegas shooting at a country music festival on the Las Vegas Strip. 58 people including the shooter were victims of the attack and over 700 more were injured (Preliminary Investigative Report, 2018: 3). Both crimes had a devastating effect on the society due to the scale of the tragedies, subversion of the fundamental value for the Christian culture – human life – as well as the senselessness of the actions themselves from the rational viewpoint.

The exact motive of the crime in both cases is not as important for the present research since they were generated at the micro-level, in the perpetrators' cognitive structure. There are no facts, in either case, to confirm that Breivik or Paddock was under someone's influence. According to the preliminary investigation, Paddock never discussed the preparation of the crime or his possible motives with anyone.

There was no evidence of radicalization or ideology to support any theory that Paddock supported or followed any hate groups or any domestic or foreign terrorist organizations. Despite numerous interviews with Paddock's family, acquaintances and gambling contacts, investigators could not link Paddock to any specific ideology (Preliminary Investigative Report, 2018: 52).

His brother Eric said that Stephen had no political or religious affiliations of any kind (Grinberg 2017). 'Something went "incredibly wrong" with Las Vegas gunman, brother says' (*Ibid.*).

Breivik formulates a set of ideas that brought him to the shooting of the youth camp on the island of Utoya. In his 'Manifest 2083 – A European Declaration of Independence', he declares a crusade against multiculturalism and Islamic colonization. However, despite his appeal to the Order of Knights Templar of Norway, he seems to be its only representative (Melle 2013: 15). Both shooters reached a decision to commit a mass murder based on their own motivation that had been ripening inside their minds; they were not coerced or pressured by any third parties.

Due to the enormity of such offenses, we mainly search for their reasons in the mental deficiency of the criminals. However, if we settle on this, we may overlook the social determinants of such behavior. But they have no confirmed psychiatric deviations. Despite the conflict between the first and second psychiatric examinations, the court declared Breivik legally sane and liable for the crimes committed (Melle 2013). The preliminary investigative report on Paddock's case shows that no evidence has been found of any brain abnormality, according to autopsy results, though toxicology and other autopsy results have yet to be disclosed (Preliminary Investigative Report, 2018: 48). The doctor, whom Paddock consulted while still alive, described him only as 'odd' and showing 'little emotion' ('Las Vegas Gunman Was Germophobe, Possibly Bipolar'. Snopes. January 20, 2018. Retrieved January 20, 2018.)

There were no obvious reasons stimulating the criminal actions. The analysis of the perpetrators' living conditions and formative years does not suggest that these conditions were especially severe or traumatizing. Neither of them knew poverty, and Paddock was even an affluent man. They spent their childhood with their biological parents, at least with one parent, mother and both have siblings. Paddock's father is a criminal, but according to his brother, their father never lived with them (Grinberg 2017). As far as is known, they were not exposed to violence, they had no criminal history, and they were never involved in any active military service, having no post-traumatic disorders related thereto. Paddock was in a relationship at the time of the crime. Breivik told the investigators that he had been saving his energy for great deeds.

These two persons, without any connections to each other, in different places and times, after long-term premeditation rather than spontaneously, went on to shoot and explode people unknown to them in an attempt to kill as many as possible. They made this decision deliberately, not in a state of temporary insanity, not being terminally ill, blackmailed or pressurized by any other external forces, and one of them did not even try to explain himself. It was only their own, subjective decision not justified by common values and norms and unfettered by the authority of others that happened to become the reason for such staggering actions. So what is happening to social actors in the modern world?

DISCUSSION

What is peculiar to the modern stage of social development relative to the society studied by Durkheim and Merton? How did the complication of our society change the anomie-provoking factors? How did the social actors themselves change?

When considering these points, we will focus on three ideas that are instrumental to this research:

1. In modern society, the actor's behavior has become more significant for the overall macro-system.
2. The actor has undergone major changes.
3. Actors in search of appropriate patterns of behavior in a changing normality focus on appropriate patterns of behavior of small but influential social groups with great symbolic, intellectual, financial, and social capital.

Today's social system is notable for non-linear behavior and accelerating social processes. At the dawn of industrialism, the patterns

of causation used to be consistent, when causes produced effects and response to an impact proportional to its strength, but the post-industrial society responds to an impact in a non-linear manner and disproportionately. In the former type of society, changes in the system accumulated gradually, producing a new quality over time and giving social actors some time to adapt to these changes. Today, however, changes may come in an avalanche mode causing shock by the premature arrival of the future (Toffler 1970).

Modern sociology proposes a number of concepts to productively interpret the unusual aspects and complexities of the modern world. One of these concepts is the theory of a becoming society by Sztompka (1991). He argues that a becoming society is in permanent motion as in changing itself and constant transformation. The initiative in this process belongs to social actors. On the one hand, their activity is determined by structural elements, but on the other hand, it overrides these constraints, moving, transforming, or dismissing them. Currently, we can only study structures and social actors as an integral whole: artificially severed for analysis, they lose the quality of sociality engendered in the process of joint activity within a certain place and time.

The increasing significance of subjectively motivated actions by collective actors and even individual agents for the macro-level of the system is one of the points accepted in the modern sociology. Another point is that the actor changes. The essential characteristics of an acting subject change and so does the level of the system requirements to the competences of a subject. These changes are correlated and develop in parallel, stimulating each other and if we take as a basis the idea that the modern society is becoming one with the imminent constant transformations, these changes do not happen simultaneously. The modern society and a subject therein move in the flow of time and transform symmetrically to each other.

In the epochs prior to modern times, the motion of society and subjects in time and relative to each other largely happened in succession. Quantitative changes accumulated and engendered a new quality, which in turn forced the subject to adapt to a new state of things. Today, the pace of social changes is so high that the change of balance between the characteristics of the system and quality of social actors happens in a dependent and symmetrical manner.

People change either from within (under the influence of goals, values, and attitudes) or due to external factors (the need to adapt or coercion). Both sets of factors exist simultaneously and affect each other. Thus, subjects derive information from the external reality,

while changing on the inside, and the transformation they undergo, in turn, affects the subjects' intentions regarding the external reality. And vice versa, the need to adjust to external influence changes the internal structures of the personality.

The modern risk-generating society (Beck 2012; Giddens 1990) 'balances on the edge'. The concept of *edgework* was first used by Lyng (2004) to characterize the modern type of personality. Deliberate risk-taking becomes an element of personal growth. Accelerating social processes also require faster readjustment of the intrapersonal structures gravitating towards conservatism. Overcoming crises promotes self-development. Risk-taking – the ability to take risks and responsibility for the choices made – becomes an indispensable quality of a personality.

The growth of reflexivity is yet another change that happened to people in a modern society (Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994; Archer 1996, 2007). Reflexivity is the ability of social actors (individuals or groups) to use their accumulated knowledge to interpret their and other people's actions or social affairs. This affects the decision they make, their modus operandi and the nature of the society, in which they act. The reflexive ability allows society in the form of individual actors, groups, and public opinion to spot ominous trends of social development and minimize its risks.

What is reflexivity in respect of each particular person or a member of society? Archer explores this concept in detail. According to her interpretation (Archer 2007), reflexivity manifests itself as an inner dialog involving dreams, fantasies, flashbacks, modeling upcoming meetings, calculating the odds, clarifying the current status, claiming our understanding of the situation, summarizing our life. This is an inner dialog with ourselves rather than with others. Archer argues that reflexive ability is a link between the structure and the agency. During the inner dialog, an individual subjectively determines their practical projects relative to objective circumstances. Thus, through the inner discourse, individuals critically analyze objective factors as well as their own desires and apprehensions before making a decision on what to do next. The researcher believes that the understanding of the inner dialog is a key to solving the problem of structure and agency.

There comes a time when the validity of knowledge is determined by the self-reflection of a subject, who is the ultimate authority. Self-reflection may give the subject invincible confidence but it will not protect them from an error or misconception or wrong attitude. The

crimes we are analyzing in this paper resulted from decisions based on this kind of false self-reflection.

An increase in the reflexivity of social actors is closely connected with a change in their self-identification and identity is a result of the reflection process. Bauman (2000) argues that modern people cannot belong anymore. Today, the heteronomous determination of social status is replaced by mandatory self-identification. In a traditional society, statuses were largely assigned: not only man-woman but also peasant-noble, shoemaker-tailor, *etc.* In an industrial society, the social field was a set of certain statuses. To the extent of the talents, desires, and luck, a person could shift from one assigned social rank to another, for example, a wage-worker turned businessman. In modern society, however, you may freely construct your statuses, including those related to your gender.

Several decades ago, the world consisted of men and women, but today the choice is yours. Of course, homosexuals and bisexuals have always been here, along with heterosexuals, but after many centuries when this was considered a pathology in the Christian type of culture, these statuses have become legal. Moreover, one can choose the identity of an asexual, demisexual, transvestite, or construct something brand-new. Today, the free choice of identity is a right and responsibility.

Carla Bertolo (2014) is another researcher who addresses the broadened options for self-reconstruction embodied in the 'personal subject'. In late modernity, she believes, places of conflict, such as resistance against subjection and dominion, relocate to the personal subject. Self-reconstruction unites such resources as sensations, emotions, feelings, reason, conscious needs, desires, and expectations. The personal subject is the human encounter with self-comprehension and self-production through reflexive processes. The researcher says that it takes an effort to maintain the ability to look at yourself from the outside and assume responsibility for yourself without meta protection (religion or ideology). You have to employ your emotional, cognitive symbolic resources to balance between two poles: social determination and growing conscious reflexivity of yours, which the author refers to as a prerequisite of sociocultural changes.

What makes this research especially appealing is the thought of the new type of sociality, not imposed in the course of socialization but forming as a free conscious choice resulting from the constant discourse and communication with others. The author emphasizes that the values, symbols, and practices that her respondents address are reasons to believe in the fusion of significant relationships and autonomy.

The increase in the reflexivity of social actors is a process that occurs in parallel with the shifts of values in Western culture. Inglehart (1990) wrote about the center of gravity shifting towards 'post-materialistic values' of self-development, quality of living, health and fitness, experience, knowledge, and friendship. The values of self-actualization are sidelining the values of survival but this is a change of priorities rather than a polarity inversion. The desire for self-actualization and quality of living does not contradict the striving for physical and economic safety but casts it aside according to the scarcity hypothesis. According to Inglehart, the feeling of existential safety as a condition of early stages of socialization makes you a post-materialist.

Without taking into account a change in the personality type in the modern society, we cannot determine what kind of response certain factors evoke in certain social groups; among other things, we will not be able to study the phenomenon of anomie in the modern conditions.

Thus, modern society is unstable, turbulent, and risk-inducing. The risks are predominantly due to the unsteady balance the society is in, where even a small impact may lead to the most unexpected and unpredictable ramifications since the society does not respond to impacts linearly. Its unsteadiness largely originates from the weakened links between elements that used to provide integrity to the social structure. These effects emerged against the backdrop of accelerated social processes and, per se, came to be their result. The system became more complicated and fragile.

A relatively stable state of a social system is connected with its steady operation. Such a period of relative stability once fostered structural functionalism. The modern society is explored by Talcott Parsons in such detail (1991) as a network-based society is to a system-based one. The latter has a hierarchical structure, gravitates towards inner balance, and maintains equilibrium by acting on the deviations so as to return to the steady state, which was reflected in the theory of 'social order'. It can reproduce itself by passing its values and norms on to further generations and using social control mechanisms to ensure they are still in place. That is not to say that such a society is not dynamic. When it recovers to the steady state, it does not return to the same spot it deviated from, yet the periods of linear development are long-term and sustainable. Our civilization is going through hard times. Since the main property of a system (internal order and cohesion) is disrupted, the modern society assumes game-changing properties: it becomes nonlinear, chaotic, and open, and there are no unified laws to describe and explain what is happening.

We have to admit that the modern complex society, in terms of both the actors themselves and their interactions, differs qualitatively from the social system that Durkheim and then Merton used to explore and characterize. However, complex does not mean erratic: this is a sophisticated order of a whole new level. External impact in such a society leads to a disproportionate and nonlinear response along with emergent changes in the social system. Social life does not develop in an evolutionary-linear way but it forms a rhizomorphous organization of the medium (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). The modern complex society is a product of the growing pace of social changes and at the same time the producer of inadvertent effects of the same process. Changes to the social milieu dictate the necessity of updating its theoretical knowledge base including the theory of social anomie.

The phenomenon of anomie, in general, may be perceived as (1) a property of the system. This approach is closer to Durkheim's interpretation: a situation, in which norms become invalid and inefficient due to the system breakdown, its transition to a qualitatively different state where other norms will be valid. However, it can also be interpreted as (2) a property of social actors. Their anomie is measured through their anxiety, distrust in other people, attitude to rule breaking, *etc.* A gradual drift from the system to the subject is already visible in Merton's studies. His version of anomie implies that the problem exists at the system level. It is the lack of fit between socially approved goals and appropriate ways to achieve them. The subject's response is, however, individual. For their internal reasons, they may act as a conformist, ritualist, rebel, *etc.* Today, with the greater significance of subjective response for the overall system behavior, anomie emerges at the point when the actors perceive the system or its elements rather than at the moment of the system's impact.

A reflexive society is matched with reflexive anomie. One's own subjectivity becomes the ultimate authority and the planning time frame shortens at the individual level. Due to the vast variety of norm-value systems, norms have turned into an act of choice, which in turn leads to inadvertent consequences for the society as a whole. Bauman notes that, 'Rational choice in the era of instantaneity means to pursue gratification while avoiding the consequences, and particularly the responsibilities which such consequences may imply' (Bauman 2000: 128).

Reflexive anomie is engendered by internal factors, the subjectivity of the actor, which becomes important when the ties between individuals in society become weaker. Anomie as a social phenomenon emerges at the system / social actors interface. Through rules, behavioral

norms, social control mechanisms, and their animated representatives, social institutes affect other actors, who in turn perceive this impact and respond to it. The difference between structural anomie and reflexive anomie is in perception and reflection. This difference is connected with a change of the type of personality showing the traits of anomie in modern society.

The carriers of the traits of structural and reflexive anomie are the representatives of two different social types, whose classification criterion is the system of values. We can use Inglehart's classification and denote them as materialistic or post-materialistic. Structural anomie is more typical of social subjects engaged in survival mode at the moment or while growing up, whereas social subjects aimed at self-development and self-actualization are more inclined to reflexive anomie. With structural anomie, the impact of the system engenders a linear, parity response, which may overall be predicted. Prohibition law in the USA in the 1920s led to the growth of urban crime organizations.

The response of the carriers of reflexive anomie is not that obvious or linear, being more subjective by definition. If we are talking about the postmodernists, their paramount value is the right of choice. Structural anomie, which is better studied, manifests itself on society through high crime rate, low labor efficiency, as well as antisocial (domestic violence, aggression, profanity, *etc.*) and destructive (alcohol abuse, drug addiction, suicide) behavior. Reflexive anomie shows through social cynicism and ignoring the official regulations, as well as active support of the established informal connections.

If we take into account such changes to the social subject, we will have to admit that the 'new solidarity' is only possible on the basis of free choice, and people have to realize it as a need and a must. Reflexivity should be followed by the growth of responsibility to balance the subjectivity.

It is very tempting to analyze both Breivik's and Paddock's actions from the perspective of mental disorder in an attempt to uncover at least personal disorder if not a mental illness. Being easier to spot, mental illnesses are ruled out in both cases. However, researchers are looking for a borderline personal state that could provoke such a destructive antisocial behavior under unfavorable circumstances.

The most popular version in the scientific discourse and mass media is the narcissistic personality disorder. Anders Breivik's crime was the action of an extreme narcissist, Manne claims in her book (Manne 2015). According to Keith Durkin, Professor of Sociology at Ohio Northern University, Paddock could suffer from a severe personality

disorder known as malignant narcissism. The scientist adds that unfortunately one can only diagnose it post factum because it is practically asymptomatic (Hometown Stations October 9, 2017).

Malignant narcissism is considered especially dangerous with its key features: paranoid propensities, psychopathic features, as well as proclivity for a sadistic and aggressive interpersonal style (Lenzenweger *et al.* 2018).

Currently, narcissism is a buzzword for explaining everything, from terrorism to unruly behavior by celebrities. Psychologists warn us that the incidence of narcissistic personality disorder in society is on the rise. Purely scientific reasons such as less volume of gray matter in the left anterior insula in the human population are not enough to explain this rise (Schulze *et al.* 2013). That is where culture and society come under new scrutiny.

As early as in the 1970s, Lasch wrote of cultural determinants behind the narcissistic personality disorder, such as mass media contributing to the lack of meaning and depth in culture. Bread and circus oriented society nourishes a desire to record one's life and share it with one's invisible audience. This way it reveals features of a narcissistic personality, which are inherent in everyone (Lasch 1979). *A much newer phenomenon of selfies makes it even easier to showcase yourself. We create a brand-new personality from what we want others to see* (Turkle 2011; Gabbard and Grisp-Han 2016). *We do not get approval for our real self but for the idealized self, which is publicly displayed through selfies.* There is no need to improve yourself to push the real closer to the ideal; you only need to be good at faking it.

Invisibility is the narcissist's nightmare. In our hyper-individualistic world, a competitive fight for attention engenders winners and losers. The latter feel painfully left-out. One of the reactions to isolation is violence as a form of revenge for the lack of attention. Moreover, it thrusts the aggressor into the limelight.

Bushman finds a correlation between an increase in narcissism, especially among young people, and growing levels of violence. He claims that such elements of American culture as Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube, as well as various reality shows, which can make you an overnight star, encourage these narcissistic trends. This is in good agreement with the culture of hyperindividualism where the biggest fear is of going unnoticed. Violence becomes a way to gain notice (Bushman and Baumeister 1998; Bushman 2017).

Getting back to Breivik's and Paddock's cases and the like, their purely psychological analysis does not give enough grounds for generalization and limits the scope of preventive measures. It does not im-

ply a wide-scale analysis of social factors acting at the macro-level of the system and triggering such phenomena. Max Weber revealed the importance of values and norms in his classic research, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The Protestant work ethic was an important force behind the unplanned and uncoordinated emergence of modern capitalism (McKinnon 2010). The system of values and norms in modern society is as far from the Christian Protestant ethics, as the latter is from paganism. By ignoring this, we shoot ourselves in the foot. A modernized theory of anomie might help us gain a deeper insight into sociocultural processes typical of modern society.

An open system cannot stay balanced for a historically long-term period. Accelerating social changes, increasingly complicated social life, national public systems going beyond the established configurations as part of globalization have made social order extremely unsteady. Unlike functionalists' views back in the twentieth century, today, the efforts taken to restore the disrupted order, in turn, engender unpredictable and unforeseen consequences (Urry 2003: 105).

CONCLUSION (FUTURE DIRECTIONS)

The theory of social anomie has a high epistemological potential, but it requires the development and refinement of discourse in connection with the process of social evolution and, moreover, macroevolution. Reflexivity is the paramount quality of present-day social actors determining the increasing significance of their subjectivity for the behavior of the whole system. What social actors think about reality is a major source of its transformation. Reflexivity is growing in parallel with the value shift and changes in the system of important personal values. The theory of social anomie must be developed to reflect these ongoing changes.

Merton interpreted anomie as the manifested dysfunction of social institutes, and dysfunction is a source of social changes, not necessarily negative at that. He classifies innovation, which has the potential to become a norm, as another type of deviant behavior. But how can we keep the social organism healthy? How do we compensate for the growing reflexivity of social actors? In the context of 'weak connections' typical of the modern complex society, formalized, institutionalized social control mechanisms acquire special importance. They may balance the growing freedom of social actors under the conditions of effective political power or accelerate entropy when power is ineffective. Exploring the efficiency/inefficiency of social control mechanisms is inseparable from studying social anomie. A topic in its own right is the role of corporations and corporate culture, *i.e.*, media-level

values and norms, in providing the stability of the whole system. And a major issue is how to instill in the new generations an indispensable link between the growing personal freedom and responsibility for the implications of their decisions.

The concepts of reflexive anomie and normal anomie do not contradict the current discourse that various forms of deviant behavior up to terrorist acts result from a narcissistic personality disorder but it broadens and deepens it. The NPD theory suggests cultural determinants behind the growing incidence of narcissistic disorders in the population, in particular, hyperindividualism and competitive striving for attention. The concept of reflexive anomie and normal anomie allows us to ascertain how these sociocultural dominants act at the micro-level, how social control is weakened in small groups, and how, without the group control, one's subjective opinion governs one's perception of 'red lines'.

NOTE

* This is a key point for the design of the case study. Such a massive erosion of values and behavioral norms in these cases cannot be explained by individual psychiatric deviations. This is why we did not include the 2015 Germanwings airplane crash case, which is similar in other attributes, but the culprit Andreas Lubitz had a previous psychiatric history.

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