

THE ABSENCE OF INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISM IN THE POSITION OF THE AMORPHOUS/FORMLESSNESS OF ETHICS AMONG IRANIANS

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Abstract: The present article attempts to determine the formlessness of ethics among Iranians in the selection of job orientations. In other words the present article illustrates that regardless of the materialistic or immaterialist approach that Iranians may adopt (in the sense provided by Ingelhart), they consider the materialistic aspects of job ethics as well as meta-ethics in the most significant aspect of social life which is the revenue earning process. The first section of the article provides a statistical description based on the ethical/meta-ethical value approach provided by Ingelhart.¹ In the second section, a theoretical analysis has been provided for the value formlessness in job selection. Here the opinions of Weber and his four faceted categorization of actions is presented. The theoretical analysis provided by the author claims that the superiority of public economics within the social-economic structure of Iran has stripped Iranians of the ability to have rational orientations toward objectives of economic gain. In other words, Iranians display a combination of Weber's four faceted categorizations of actions in job selection. With regards to their job ethics and morals they are both emotional and rational, both traditional and ethical.

Keywords: Socialization, ethics, job satisfaction, formlessness

INTRODUCTION THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Ingelhart has segregated ethics and meta-ethics based on two hypotheses of rarity and socialization. The rarity hypothesis claims that: "An individual's priorities are a reflection of the

socio-economic environment surrounding him/her: A person considers a higher value for items that are offered less." (Ingelhart 2004, 75). The hypothesis of socialization claims that "interactions between the socio-economic environment and value priorities is not a relationship based on immediate conformity: a tangible time delay is present because ones' main body of ethics are to a large extent a reflection of circumstances that have been present prior to his/her "puberty (same source). Accordingly, Ingelhart claims that individuals experiencing materialistic deficiencies in the years prior to puberty become proponents of ethics while those who have lived in luxury become proponents of meta-ethics. Ingelhart has applied the following twelve factors to operationalize material and immaterial ethics: (a) Maintaining order within the country (b) Giving more rights to people to participate in governmental decision making (c) Counteracting the rise in prices (d) Defending freedom of speech (e) Maintaining the fast rhythm of economic growth (f) Ensuring the presence of a strong national defense force (g) Granting more rights to people to participate in decisions related to their jobs and social groups (h) Efforts towards urban design (i) Maintaining a stable economy (j) Combating crime (k) Move towards a friendlier and more human oriented society (l) Move towards a society in which thoughts are worth a higher value than money

Among the mentioned items, a, c, e, f, i, j represent material and other items represent immaterial objectives (same source: 83). Ingelhart has formed two ideal types of pure materialists and pure immaterialists according to the mentioned factors. Pure materialists are those who have considered material needs as their primary priorities (same source: 40) and pure immaterialists are those that

¹ The research characteristics of data include:

have considered immaterial needs as their primary priority (same). Those falling in between are the mixed types. Ingelhart, however, has based his analysis primarily on the two ideal types for simpler presentation.

Engelhart has provided various hypotheses among different social values and other social variables (political, religious and job orientations and ...). The present article has attempted to test these hypotheses regarding relationships between material and immaterial values in job orientations. Ingelhart's hypothesis in this regard is as follows: those following a set of material ethics would usually select high salaries and job security as criteria for a good job and those following a set of meta-ethics usually select a friendly job environment and job satisfaction. Ingelhart has applied the following four factors to determine the job priorities of respondents (same source: 193). (A) A high salary that would resolve all money related problems. (B) A riskless job with no deployment or shut down risk. (C) Working with agreeable people. (D) Accomplishment of a job that gives a sense of satisfaction.

A and B stand for material needs and C and D represent immaterial job needs. Ingelhart illustrates that those categorized within the materialistic group would mostly select A and B criteria while immaterial individuals primarily choose C and D criteria.

HYPOTHESES TESTING PROCEDURES IN THE PRESENT RESEARCH

First, according to Ingelhart's twelve criteria, a 7 score range (from 0 to 6) was formulated. Criteria referring to the materialistic-immaterialist test have been presented in three groups each including four factors as follows: (1) A high level of economic growth (1) *A strong national defense force (2) An increase in the contribution of and interference in the society (3) Efforts toward urban and rural design

(1) *Maintaining order in the society (2) Involvement of people in significant decisions made by the government

(3) *Campaign against the rise in prices (4) Supporting freedom of speech

(1) *Stable Economy, (2) A more human oriented and non individualistic society (3) Progress towards a society that values opinions and beliefs more than it values money*(4) Counteracting crime.

Criteria marked with a * represent materialistic values (including life and economic security) while

other criteria represent immaterial values (such as aesthetic-cognitive values and emotional attachment and respect towards others). Each respondent has to select two out of four criteria. Each criteria representing materialistic values has a score of 1 and other criteria valued with a zero. Thus if an individual selects all materialistic criteria his/her total score would be a 6 and a zero score would mean that he/she has not selected any materialistic criterion and can be considered an absolute immaterialist.

In the next stage to evaluate the job orientation of respondents criteria 51 to 61 have been examined which are as follows: * High salary, *Low job stress,*Reasonable job security,A job respected by the majority,*Reasonable working hours *Opportunities to display creativity,*Attractive day off allowances, A job that will make me feel able to accomplish a significant achievement or objective, A job with adequate responsibility, An attractive job, A job in coordination with an individual's abilities

Criteria marked with a * involve those with a materialistic job orientation, while others indicate immaterial job orientation. The expected circumstances according to the ideal type introduced by Ingelhart, is such that those individuals scoring a 6 in the materialistic-immaterialist criteria have selected starred criteria as well. The closer the real circumstances are to the ideal Ingelhart type, the brighter the image provided by the society on job orientations.

To examine the materialist-immaterialist relationship with job orientation, a new criterion "The job ethics orientation" has been developed. The development of this criterion follows the same rationality for the development of the materialistic-immaterialist criterion. The starred criteria have a value of 1 while other criteria are valued at -1. Thus a person having selected all the starred criteria will have a total score of 5 and if he/she has selected starless criteria he/she would score -5. To maintain equality among materialistic and immaterial criteria, the criterion called "job with adequate responsibility" and is equally distributed within the material-immaterial range, has been omitted. Moreover, to simplify the procedures the scores for each respondent ranging from -5 to 5 have been coded once more to develop a range from 0 to 10. The expected circumstance would mean that respondents that have scored 6, would score 10 in the new set of criteria. The hypothetical circumstance indicates clearly the assumption that exists in the social world between ethical and job-related orientations.

		Job Ethic Orientation	Materialism- Immaterialism
Ethical Orientation	Pierson's Correlation Coefficient Meaningful Level Total	1 0 2275	0.047 0.026 2257
Materialism- Immaterialism	Pierson's Correlation Coefficient Meaningful Level Total	0.047 0.026 2257	1 0 2275

Table 1: Correlation between material-immaterialism and job ethics orientation

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The correlation calculations of the two criteria namely material-immaterialism and job ethics orientation indicates that the correlation of the two criteria is quite low (Pierson r : 0.047), even though correlation in the 0.05 level is meaningful.

To evaluate the relationship between materialism-immaterialism more precisely among respondents with regards to their choices in job orientation and the relationship between materialism-immaterialism with each of the criteria representing job orientation a segregated table was designed and examined. Results indicate that aside from criteria such as low stress jobs, attractive jobs hours, and the accomplishment of significant achievements, other criteria do not reflect a meaningful correlation. (Meaningful level in the mentioned criteria is 0.03, 0.035, 0.001 respectively). It should be noted however that even amongst the mentioned three criteria, correlation is low meaning that no significant difference exists between the percentage of materialists and immaterialists that have chosen the low stress job criteria as their priority. Secondly, if the 0 score which is representative of the most immaterial individual and has the lowest statistical distribution is omitted the correlation would be meaningless (Refer to tables in the appendix).

It can be concluded thus that individuals, whether materialist or immaterialist have similar job orientations desiring both materialist (high salaries and...) and immaterial (social respect and...) ethics.

The simultaneous selection of material and immaterial job ethics indicates what we call Amorphous. The term has been borrowed from a research by Azadarmaki and Ghiasvand (2002). Azadarmaki and Ghiasvand illustrate that the youth have expectations of religion as well, that represent religious formlessness. The youth are looking for the satisfaction of both material and immaterial needs; they are both group and individual oriented.

THEORETICAL CRITICISM OF THE INGELHART APPROACH

The Ingelhart approach has offered applicable technical reforms to describe changes in ethics. However the method of determination of ethics changes in one's opinions is not adequate. Adequacy refers to the structural level. In Ingelhart's approach the materialist-structural aspect of the social world is ignored. It is as if "social circumstances" are considered as factors accounting for changes in ethics. However "circumstances" are not viewed in a structural level. A more significant issue in criticisms made of Ingelhart is the absence of analysis of awkward situations. The range between the material and immaterial circumstance complicates the analytical situation. In a similar research, the Ingelhart theory would not be able to resolve the questions that remain. The appearance of ethical contradiction (simultaneous materialism and immaterialism) at a collective level indicates the complexity of the social structure. The determination of this complexity is not within the capacity of Ingelhart's theoretical concepts.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS BASED ON WEBER'S FOUR TYPES OF ACTIONS

According to the criticism made of Ingelhart's theory, we have attempted to present one of the possible facets of determining the theory of ethical complexity of Iranians according to Weber's four types of actions and the presentation of these to the economic structure.

Weber distinguishes four types of actions: 1- the objective oriented rational action (Implementation objective based action) 2- Ethic oriented rational actions 3- Passive or emotional actions 4-Traditional actions. In the objective oriented rational action the "Subject of the action has a clear objective in mind and directs all efforts towards the achievement of the objective" (Aron 2002: 566). The ethics oriented rational actions involve actions directed towards the achievement of meta-ethics such as the action of a navy captain who gives in to drowning along with his ship. In these types of actions "the subject of the action or risk acts in a rational manner not for purposes of achieving an external objective as a result of his/her own deeds but rather to remain faithful to the honorable image projected of him/herself" (same source, 567). The action of a mother who based on her instincts spontaneously slaps her child is a passive action and actions based on tradition and those with a secondary nature are traditional actions (same source).

Among all types of actions Weber has considered a special status for the objective oriented rational actions as the typical action within modern societies in his theoretical frameworks of the nature of modern society. The modern society is a society structured upon the objective oriented rational implemented actions. Weber considers the structuring based on objective oriented rational actions to be the destiny of the modern era:

"This is the destiny of our era. The rationalization and clarity of criteria and more significantly de-incantation of its criteria across the world has resulted in the abandonment of the most sublime ethics from the public realm." (Citation from Derlewit: 92).

As is obvious from the mentioned quotations, the prevalence of the objective oriented rational action is correlated with de-incantation of the world and the oblivion of any sublime meaning for the world in the public realm. In the modern world any phenomenon beyond tangible phenomena is disregarded and actions are formulated based on one's own manipulations and at the tangible level. Manipulations based on the tangible level significantly affect the formation of social actions. To understand the result we should go back to Aron's

quote on the objective oriented rational social actions. Within the quote from Aron on the objective oriented rational action a certain term has been used that unveils the conclusion: "clear". The quote claims that the subject has a clear objective in mind. The meaning of all sublime and spiritual concepts within social actions becomes clear and plain. For instance an individual would like to build a bridge in an objective oriented manner, would have both a clear objective and the obvious tools to achieve the objective. Clarity in this context refers to the idea that the objective and its related tools can be illustrated according to the tangible laws of the world. For example the architectural engineer would never say that the building of the bridge should not be initiated on the thirteenth of the month based on the belief that 13 is an ominous number. The omen of 13 is not derived from empirical sciences or tangible factors. But rather it comes from an intangible concept that would be typical of the pre-modern social world. Thus we have clear objectives in the modern society that would be achieved through clear tools available within the tangible world. The modern actor would not say in a public context that he/she would like to attain "Divine Sacrificing" because the goal and its tools cannot be illustrated in a tangible level.

The significant issue here is that the formation of objective oriented implemented actions is an issue that has been formed previously in the social world and reflects the possibility of the dominancy of such action in macro social measures. In other words economic and legal structures formed previously have given the subject the ability to predict his/her objectives and provide him/her with obvious/discreet tools for the achievement of the objectives. In these social circumstances such actions can be performed. Thus formations of structures that have been developed based on economic necessities are prevalent to the type of action.

Based on the discussions, the problem that Iranians are now facing is that due to inability of objective oriented rational actions to dominate Iran, no clear image of the ethical system can be projected as a typical social action. The inability to project a clear image means that Iranians have on one hand been introduced to a social world that should be organized based on tool oriented rationalization and on the other hand are intertwined with the pre modern-secular ethical system. Iranians performances in economic projects which require objective oriented and clear procedures are rather deformed. By deformed we mean the type of performance which arises from the ambiguous combination of the four action types of Weber. In other words the analysis unit is rational, yet emotional and simultaneously traditional. For instance, consider tourism in Iran: Tourism all over the world is considered a merely

economic project however in Iran it contradicts ethical pre-modern and secular systems to an extent that the economic aspect or rather its nature is forgotten. The point is that ethical formlessness mutilates the nature of objectives. In simpler terms, Iranians do not know what they want from the world. In the present research as well it has been shown that job motivations are ambiguous. An individual desires materialistic values and would like to be wealthy yet he/she is unable to ignore the emotional feelings and needs as a prerequisite of wealth. The image that the individual has in mind of the work environment is one where in money is available and so are friendly relationships among colleagues. This is another type of the deformed social atmosphere in Iran; deformation that is caused by the lack of a coherent ethical system. The Iranian desires a work place that would include friendly and warm relationships totally unrelated to income generation in its logical form alongside the earning process as the most important factor in the tool oriented action. In other words the Iranian individual is still not able to distinguish the difference between her/his colleague, friend and/or enemy and is not able to distance her/himself from the other, which is a professional characteristic.

The reason for such an approach in the ethical orientation of Iranians can be clarified by analyzing the economic structure. Today, it is an accepted principle that a close relationship exists between competitive economy and tool oriented rationalism. Weber has also made this clear in his Protestant ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism. The Public-oil based economy of Iran has prevented the possibility of wealth accumulation through objective oriented rational actions. In other words Iranians have not yet been placed within economic structures that would require the clarity of ethics and subsequently the clarity of objectives. It should be explained that the non-governmental economic structure that attempts to accumulate wealth based on competition has resulted the individual to view the surrounding world based on the ends-means relationship in the process of gaining wealth. In these types of economic structures where effortless revenues and the possibility of friendship or animosity does not exist for purposes of gaining wealth the possibility of ethical orientation in a way that would engulf the social world in darkness and ambiguity is not possible in the public context. The two dimensional mystery of public-private realm in the modern world is the same. However in Iran, because of the lack of dependence of the economic structure on competition, the formation of rational-tool

orientations is not felt within the public realm. Wherever wealth is gained through sources other than work- in the sense of objective oriented production- the ambiguous atmosphere is maintained in the macro level. A note should be made on the economic structure of Iran which usually creates ambiguity: the government is the largest investor in the Iranian economy and this has caused private companies to act as the government's audience for its actions and projects. In other words, those organizations characterized as private economic organizations in Iran, are in fact and in the final analysis public companies. In short the dominance of government in social life and the possibility of connecting to it as the only source of wealth creates a strong barrier against the rational-tool oriented approach to the surrounding environment and subsequently the ambiguity of ethical orientations.

CONCLUSION

Statistical description on the method of selection of job values is indicative of the ethical formlessness in this context. This means that in job selection, Iranians are both materialists and immaterialists. This is indicative of their inability to see appropriate objectives for the hardware aspect of social life which is the economic aspect. Whenever the society reflects an image of value degradation in the economic aspect of social life, it would naturally project a more fragile image in the symbolic social life as well. We have shown in the theoretical analysis that value formlessness could be due to the economic structure that regenerates the formlessness. The economic structure is an oil-government based structure where in activists are not regarded as sources for government income.

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Appendix

			Materialism-Immaterialism							Total
			0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Low Stress Job	0	Number	7	45	216	559	604	350	105	1886
		% of Materialism-Immaterialism	77.8%	77.6%	84.4%	84.4%	80.9%	85.0%	92.9%	83.6%
	1	Number	2	13	40	103	143	62	8	371
		% of Materialism-Immaterialism	22.2%	22.4%	15.6%	15.6%	19.1%	15.0%	7.1%	16.4%
Total	Number	9	58	256	662	747	412	113	2257	
	% of Materialism-Immaterialism	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Table 2: The Interceptive Table for Low Stress- Materialism/Immaterialism

Correlation Test	Meaningful Level	Degree of Freedom	Amount
Chi ²	0.030	6	13.987(a)

Table 2: The Interceptive Table for Low Stress- Materialism/Immaterialism - Summary

			Materialism-Immaterialism							Total
			0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Reasonable Working Hours	0	Number	4	27	142	322	336	182	44	1057
		% of Materialism-Immaterialism	44.4%	46.6%	55.5%	48.6%	45.0%	44.2%	38.9%	46.8%
	1	Number	5	31	114	340	411	230	69	1200
		% of Materialism-Immaterialism	55.6%	53.4%	44.5%	51.4%	55.0%	55.8%	61.1%	53.2%
Total	Number	9	58	256	662	747	412	113	2257	
	% of Materialism-Immaterialism	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Table 3: The Interceptive Table for Reasonable Working Hours - Materialism/Immaterialism

Correlation Test	Meaningful Level	Degree of Freedom	Amount
Chi ²	0.035	6	13.587(a)

Table 3: The Interceptive Table for Reasonable Working Hours - Materialism/Immaterialism – Summary

			Materialism-Immaterialism							Total
			0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Accomplishment of Significant Achievement	0	Number	4	29	136	345	414	244	84	1256
		% of Materialism-Immaterialism	44.4%	50.0%	53.1%	52.1%	55.4%	59.2%	74.3%	55.6%
	1	Number	5	29	120	317	333	168	29	1001
		% of Materialism-Immaterialism	55.6%	50.0%	46.9%	47.9%	44.6%	40.8%	25.7%	44.4%
	Total	Number	9	58	256	662	747	412	113	2257
		% of Materialism-Immaterialism	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4: The Interceptive Table for Significant Achievement - Materialism/Immaterialism

Correlation Test	Meaningful Level	Degree of Freedom	Amount
Chi ²	0.001	6	23.356(a)

Table 4: The Interceptive Table for Significant Achievement - Materialism/Immaterialism - Summary

