Religion and Modernity in Kurdestan, Sociological Analysis about the Influence of Modernity on Social Values of Rural Community of Mokeran

**Rashid Ahmad Rash**  
Ph.D. in Sociology, University of Tehran  
**Yasaman Tohidian**  
Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch

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**Extended Abstract**

**Introduction**

During the last century and in a period of time called modern history of Iran we have seen different changes in urban communities, in general, and urban and rural areas of Kurdistan, in particular. The range and power of such changes has been such that we can claim it has changed the “life world” of Iranians noticeably.

Mukerian as the case of this study is faced, in one hand, with weak interests of first generation in keeping traditional values, e.g., in the fields of religion, family and socio-cultural problems. On the other hand, it is faced with double efforts of new generation who has made more adaption with modern elements like; new education, mass media, secular values and urban life values with interests in welfare. However, it must be mentioned that among all human societies Kurdistan has dynamic and consistent process of “detradtionalisation and traditionalisation”.

**Methodology**

This research has been done during two years and by studying and consistent refereeing to almost eighty villages of a region called” Mukerian” located in
southwest Azerbaijan, Iran. Data of this research have been collected by socio cultural peculiarities of rural areas studied by using qualitative methods and grounded theory and applying techniques like deep interviews, oral history and field participation.

Results
The facts show that our case study, Kurdisatan –Mokerian as a transitional society, has gone through a tremendous change in cultural values and life styles. But study of such kind of changes has been neglected which has not been studied academically. We here in this article, are going to answer why and how such changes happened. To do so, we have chosen qualitative approach and techniques.

New theories of modernization and some of those related to interpretive sociology have been our guidance. We have used some of the theories especially Engellhart’s theory of values in evolution, new theory of modernization and reflexive modernity of Giddens have formed our conceptual framework. Anyway, observation, studies and “lived experience” of the researchers show the happening of different “objective- subjective” kind of changes in the “life world” of Kurdish rural people. This might be under the influence of environmental conditions, i.e., their location in neighboring with Iraq and Turkey, as well as historical, political and cultural conditions of the region called “Mukerian” in different fields in terms of “religious and spiritual values”. These all show modernizing of rural people. In fact, we can observe “creation of some new and modern traditions’, in one side, and “modernizing of some old traditions” in Iranian rural community and so in Kurdistan, on the other. All such changes guided us toward our field theory which we have called it “rural pseudo-modernism with Kurdish Iranian characters”. In relation to the modernization of societies, especially the modernization of third world countries, there is two approaches which seems to be far apart; quantitative approach to development, which sees itself in modernization theories. These kinds of theories emphasize on linear process of transition and its ideal is the west industrialized countries. The second approach is qualitative and interpretive which gives much importance to the roles of the social actors. They believe that actors due
to their social and cultural values and norms respond to the changes actively and reflexively.

Appearance of every phenomenon in Kurdistan has not been singular, but it has been multi-dimensional and multi-factoral due to peculiarities of Kurdistan. So, in one way Kurdistan has been influenced by the modern elements and Modernity and in the other way, the modernity itself has been changed up to the level that we can call it as Kurdish Modernity with Iranian peculiarities.

Conclusion
We can also say that Islam always has been a part and somewhat a main part of Kurds Identity. This is because it has been mingled with Kurdish culture, so it has been Kurdinized considerably. So, there is a triangle of Kurdish culture, Islamic culture and western or modern culture, these have altogether constructed the Kurds Identity. Due to the socio politic conditions of Kurdistan, we have seen the importance of one or the other. In fact, due to entrance of modern elements into Kurdistan and as the result of causative factors and facilitator elements within the process of social interaction, the values and attitudes if the people under study have considerably altered. This is what we have called it value normative changes in the life world of the people.

Keywords: Grounded theory, Interpretive sociology, Life-world.

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