

Professional risks from a sociological Prespective**المخاطر المهنية من منظور اجتماعي****Bousemat Amina¹, Mecheri Farida²**¹ University Abdelhamid Ibn Badis, Mostaganem. amina.bousmat.etu@univ-mosta.dz² University Abdelhamid Ibn Badis, Mostaganem. fmecheri9@gmail.com

Received: 31/10/2023

Accepted: 27/01/2024

Published: 18/12/2024

Abstract:

This article is based on new sociological theories to highlight the meaning of risk through the discourses of the first theorists in the domain. Noting how risk has evolved from a simple concept to a subject that has attracted the attention of theorists and researchers in several fields including sociology in its various specializations, from which a new specialty was then born that is concerned only with the risk and consequences that resulted from it in our lives.

Keywords: risk, professional risk, sociology of risk, social risk.

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the risks get considerable interest especially in economically developed countries, and had become a subject in several disciplines and scientific branches as well as sociology which has been intrested in risk. It has become a central theme in the works of highly influential sociologists such as Beck and Giddens mainly from the perception of risk societies.

Referring to the literature and research that deals with risks, we see that there is a difference between dangers and risks; there is also another distinction between natural danger which is a threat arising from random geological or atmospheric phenomena, causes significant damage to humans, property and the environment and technological risk that generated by human activity.

In the field of work, the concept of risk has undergone a historical evolution, particularly with the emergence of the Law of Industrial Accidents in 1898 in France, which required the employer to insure workers and compensate them in the event that they were exposed to accidents during their work. Then, after about 4 decades, with the emergence of social security, risks were classified because they began to take on a social dimension due to their consequences on the worker's life at work and beyond. The latter represents an increase in expenses or a decrease in income.

The concept of risk is therefore linked to a case that gives rise to a priori unpredictable phenomena (in the professional sphere, these are probably of technical or organizational origin), mostly a series of interdependent or independent factors. Occupational risk does not apply to all possible events, only those that are undesirable and endanger the integrity of the worker, there is a subjectivity error associated with the perception of damage.

2. What is a risk in Sociology ?

The words risk, hazard, and danger are commonly used in the same way. The risk/danger distinction is constructed in an asymmetrical way, similar to the risk/safety distinction. Risk is a concept that describes a complex state that is, at least in modern society, a common aspect of life. The word « risk » is associated with the possibility, chance, or probabilities of events are the uncertainties, often as a consequence of an activity or policy. Like, risk has always accompanied the development of human society. The problems and difficulties we face have been influenced by a number of factors, including poor harvests, plague, migration, new religious currents, technological developments, and the unintended consequences of urbanization (Taylor-Gooby & Zinn, 2006). So, we cannot determine why risks occur and assess their impact on individual and society without knowing what is a risk itself. For this, we should review the theories that concerned with dealing with the concept of « risk », interpreting it, and analyzing its dimensions.

In Sociology, risk is defined as the possibility of triggering unexpected, unlikely, and detrimental consequences due to a decision made by a decision maker (Luhmann, 2005). Through interdisciplinary risk research in social sciences approaches «risk is mainly understood as something negative to be reduced or prevented» (Zinn, 2017). And from another perspective, Douglas considers risk as a cultural strategy that societies or groups using to understand the risk they perceive from others or from outsiders (Lupton, 1999).

In 1980s, studies on risks increased where social research start to interest to adverse events (threats and risks) as perceived by individuals. It was concluded that risk is a social construct and there is nothing in common between the way in which a bureaucracy manages its relationship to risk in an adverse and blind manner. In addition to that, awareness of risks cannot be reduced to a simple rational bet. For example, by the differentiated perception of

risks (cancer, unemployment, nuclear) by teenagers: gender, age and educational background influence the indicators of perceived severity and frequency as well as declared fear. From a historical point of view, the concept has evolved considerably. New risks (global, irreversible and invisible) have emerged in recent decades (Peretti-Watel & Colin, 2001).

3. From risk to the sociology of risk :

Risk is a prevalent topic in various research disciplines, such as crime, social work, health, regulation, and organizations. In sociology, risk research has developed rapidly and has addressed a wide range of issues from disaster awareness and management to decision-making and social regulation, to everyday theories about the future that are in principle uncertain and voluntary risks. The Beck's thesis (1992) "risk society" has been particularly influential in addition to many different approaches to risk, such as cultural (Douglas 1992), governmental (Dean 1999), systems theory (Luhmann 1993), and edgework (Lyng 2005) (Zinn J. O., 2009).

The sociology of risk is a relatively modern branch of sociology. It is interested in understanding and interpreting the phenomenon of risk in a sociological manner, with its causes and consequences in the historical and societal context as a whole. It is also interested in studying the risks resulting from the era of modernity and beyond. That is, it studies the risks that our world knows today and their impact on human society. These social risks depending on societies and their cultural and economic structure. This scientific branch is closely linked to the contributions of German sociologist Ulrich Beck, who is credited with formulating the concept of 'risk society' (1986).

Risk society, according to Beck, is a conformity state of circumstances where the idea of controlling the side effects and risks imposed by decision-making has become questionable. Here, we acknowledge that risk is related to making a decision about a

behavior that can bring us either an opportunity or a danger. Then, in 2006, he published another book 'The Global Risk Society: In Search of Lost Security,' noting in the introduction that what seemed exaggerated twenty years ago had become a tangible reality. Among the examples that Beck mentioned about risks: climate change resulting from human activities, especially industries and transportation that release large quantities of gases that lead to raising the Earth's temperature, or harming the ozone layer in the atmosphere, and global terrorism that is not linked to a country or place, and which uses means and methods that are difficult to know. Or expect them, such as suicide attacks. Anthony Giddens evaluated the risk in relation to future possibilities, he considered it also as the driving force of a society that insists on change and that wants to determine its future and not leave it to religion, traditions, or the forces of nature. Besides that Giddens divided risks into two types. External risks, which are related to traditions and nature (epidemics, floods, famine, drought, environment, etc.), and which occur outside of human control. And manufactured risks are those in which humans voluntarily intervene, and which result from human shortcomings and lack of experience, such as excessive consumption of savanna forests and others.

Both Beck and Giddens developed the risk society, which is one of the most ambitious and debated social theories of risk. This theory focused on the transition from modern industrial society to a new era marked by technological hazards. Technological hazards are considered preventable because they are created by society, which contrasts with "natural" hazards that have traditionally been studied by hazards researchers (Baxter, 2019). One of the propositions in the risk society research is to predict from technological hazards.

4. From the professional risk to the social risk:

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) categorizes workplace dangers into five groups: risks associated with ergonomics, chemical risks, biological risks,

and physical risks. One of the primary reasons for workplace injuries, illnesses, and incidents is the failure to identify or recognize hazards that are present or could have been anticipated ; a successful safety and health program requires a proactive, ongoing process to identify and evaluate such hazards. (Legal Information Institute, 2020).

Occupational hazard is an event whose occurrence endangers people while carrying out their job. The events that lead to occupational hazards are commonly known, but they are uncertain, particularly when it comes to the combined effects, which can lead to a vast number of possibilities. Injuries or damage to health can be caused by this occupational risk, and it is evaluated based on two criteria: the likelihood of the unwanted event and the seriousness of the damage caused by its intensity or extent. After that, in the eighties of the last century in particular with the advent of social security, risks were classified because they began to take a social dimension due to their consequences on the worker's life at work and beyond. The latter represents an increase in expenses or a decrease in income.

Social risks emerged to distinguish between damage resulting from a random accident and an accident that causes social effects such as injury or illness, one of which results in temporary or permanent loss of work. Especially in terms of taking responsibility. Thus, the law of work-related accidents related to the profession has revolutionized the field of occupational risks in terms of changing the concept of responsibility; in particular from the legal perspective, because in doing so it has ended the principle of compensation based on admitting fault and holding responsibility to the individual alone. Hence came the idea of social insurance for risks represented by unemployment, family responsibilities, injuries, work accidents, occupational diseases, loss of a job position, maternity, aging, death, and other risks recognized in the labor law and covered by social rights, and this is what social security covers. As an example, we mention Unemployment as a risk, which is one of the most widespread social phenomena and whose causes are still not understood by specialists,

especially with the emergence of new forms of work. According to a health report on job seekers conducted by the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (Cese) on May 10, 2016, on the phenomenon of unemployment, it was concluded that the phenomenon's effects are not limited to the economic aspect only, but it also has other social effects, represented by 10,000 to 14,000 deaths annually from one person. Its causes are high blood pressure, in addition to the poor health of the unemployed and an increase in disorders, depression, and suicide. Not to mention other social impacts that have not been taken into adequate consideration, such as the increase in divorce cases and the difficulty of educating children. The Council presented a set of recommendations, including providing psychological and medical support in job interviews and working to expand the insurance system to include the unemployed (Vollaire, 2020).

Social risks are now understood as random events that affect the economic life of individuals by causing a decrease in their income or increasing their expenses, and which constitute a social disorder to which it is necessary to respond (Pollak, 2011).

5. Risk prevention as a form of social protection:

In the modern era, with the progress of industry and industrialization in European societies, social thought has clearly been interested in the study of the phenomenon of specialization and division of labor. The phenomenon of division of labor, which develops with technological progress, creates social and industrial separations between man and nature, and its negative effects for the worker appear in the narrow horizon of work. Robert Owen (1860-1916) was the first proponent of improving the industrial environment for workers by taking care of workers and improving their standard of health and living. His claim was supported in industrial circles, whether in France, England or the United States of America (Abdel Rahim, 1975). Thus, scientific attempts are multiplying around the need to

improve working conditions and the feeling of the importance of the human element in maintaining the pace of production.

The Work Accidents Law in 1898 in France required employers to provide workers with insurance and compensation in the event they were exposed to work-related accidents, and various institutions are trying to achieve protection. If efforts are made to develop the means and methods of production, then the greatest effort should be directed towards the development and protection of the workforce from industrial hazards such as accidents and occupational diseases.

In 1948, the WHO determined that “prevention is the set of measures aimed at avoiding or reducing the number and severity of illnesses, accidents and disabilities”. It defines 03 types of prevention ranging from measures to be implemented to avoid the disease, treat it and reintegrate the patient into society (Chapelle, 2018). Primary prevention, it is the basic level of prevention because it prevents the stability of a disease, epidemic or health problem. Secondary prevention, it aims to reduce the spread and prevalence of a disease within society, that is to say, to reduce the extent of its development through medical intervention. Tertiary prevention, it seeks to reduce the rate and severity of complications and consequences resulting from a disease. Yet, It requires the employer to obtain a license before establishing and operating the facility, as it requires the employer to take necessary safety precautions and create sanitary working conditions that protect the worker from the dangers of occupational diseases.

6. CONCLUSION

Risk has been a major focus of scientific, policy and popular interest in recent decades. The focus on risk is often understood in the context of policy using the notion of risk society which refers to a social system characterized by an excessive fear of risk. As such, this focus has become a major concern for the sociology of risk and uncertainty. To the extent that risk research has been successful in drawing attention to trends of social change and their social, political and economic implications, questions arise about the scope and object of risk research.

7. Bibliography List :

1. Abdel Rahim, A. (1975). *Industrial Sociology*. Cairo: Anglo-Egyptian Library.
2. Lupton, D. (1999). *Sociology and risk*. Dans D. Lupton, *Risk* (p.14). London: Routledge.
3. Peretti-Watel, P., & Colin, A. (2001, february). *Sociology of risk*. *Humanities Sciences*, p. 288.
4. Zinn, J. O. (2009, January 01). *The sociology of risk and uncertainty—current state and perspectives*. *The Future of Sociology*. Australian Sociological Association, pp. 1-14.
5. Baxter, J. (2019). *Health and Environmental Risk*. In A. Kobayashi, *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 303-307). Elsevier.
6. Chapelle, F. (2018). *Preventions*. In *Psychosocial Risks and Quality of Life at Work*, pp. 223-231.
7. Legal Information Institute. (2020, July). *occupational hazard*. Cornell Law School. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/occupational_hazard
8. Luhmann, N. (2005). *Risk: A Sociological Theory*. London: Routledge.

9. Pollak, C. (2011). Test of positive approach to new social risks. Work and employment, 125, pp. 67-77. <https://doi.org/10.4000/travailemploi.4952>
10. Taylor-Gooby, P., & Zinn, J. O. (2006). Risk in social science. Oxford University Press, USA, 308.
11. Voltaire, C. (2020). How insurance and social protection contribute to risk management in developed societies. melchior: <https://www.melchior.fr/cours/>
12. Zinn, J. O. (2017, august 11). The Sociology of Risk. The Cambridge Handbook of Sociology: Specialty and Interdisciplinary Studies, pp. 129-138.

قائمة المراجع باللغة العربية:

1. عبد الرحيم، ع. (1975). علم الاجتماع الصناعي. القاهرة: المكتبة الأنجلومصرية.
2. لوبتون، د. (1999). علم الاجتماع والمخاطر. دانس د. لوبتون، ريسك (ص 14). لندن: روتليدج.
3. بريتي-واتل، بي، وكولين، أ. (2001، فبراير). سوسيولوجيا المخاطر. العلوم الإنسانية، ص. 288.
4. زين، جي أو (2009، 01 يناير). علم اجتماع المخاطر وعدم اليقين-الحالة الراهنة ووجهات النظر. مستقبل علم الاجتماع. الجمعية الأسترالية لعلم الاجتماع، ص 1-14.
5. باكستر، ج. (2019). المخاطر الصحية والبيئية Kobayashi، الموسوعة الدولية للجغرافيا البشرية (ص 303-307). إلسفير.
6. تشابيل، ف. (2018). الوقاية. في المخاطر النفسية الاجتماعية ونوعية الحياة في العمل، الصفحات من 223 إلى 231.
7. معهد المعلومات القانونية. (2020، يوليو). الخطر المهني. كلية الحقوق بجامعة كورنيل. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/occupational_hazard
8. لوهمان، ن. (2005). الخطر: نظرية اجتماعية. لندن: روتليدج
9. بولاك، سي. (2011). اختبار النهج الإيجابي للمخاطر الاجتماعية الجديدة. العمل والتوظيف، 125، الصفحات 67-125. <https://doi.org/10.4000/travailemploi.495277>

10. تايلور جوي، بي، وزين، جيه أو (2006). المخاطر في العلوم الاجتماعية. مطبعة جامعة أكسفورد، الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، 308.
11. فولير، سي. (2020). كيف يساهم التأمين والحماية الاجتماعية في إدارة المخاطر في المجتمعات المتقدمة. <https://www.melchior.fr/cours/>
12. زين، جي (2017، 11 أغسطس). علم اجتماع المخاطر. دليل كامبريدج لعلم الاجتماع: الدراسات المتخصصة والمتعددة التخصصات، الصفحات من 129 إلى 138.

Liste bibliographique :

1. Abdel Rahim, A. (1975). Sociologie industrielle. Le Caire : Bibliothèque anglo-égyptienne.
2. Lupton, D. (1999). Sociologie et risque. Dans D. Lupton, Risque (p.14). Londres : Routledge.
3. Peretti-Watel, P. et Colin, A. (2001, février). Sociologie du risque. Sciences humaines, p. 288.
4. Zinn, JO (1er janvier 2009). La sociologie du risque et de l'incertitude — état actuel et perspectives. L'avenir de la sociologie. Association australienne de sociologie., pp. 1-14.
5. Baxter, J. (2019). Risque sanitaire et environnemental. Dans A. Kobayashi, Encyclopédie internationale de géographie humaine (pp. 303-307). Elsevier.
6. Chapelle, F. (2018). Préventions. Dans Risques psychosociaux et qualité de vie au travail, pp. 223-231.
7. Institut d'information juridique. (2020, juillet). risque professionnel. Faculté de droit de Cornell.
https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/occupational_hazard
8. Luhmann, N. (2005). Risque : une théorie sociologique . Londres : Routledge

9. Pollak, C. (2011). Test d'approche positive des nouveaux risques sociaux. *Travail et emploi*, 125, pp.67-77. <https://doi.org/10.4000/travailemploi.4952>
10. Taylor-Gooby, P. et Zinn, JO (2006). *Le risque en sciences sociales*. Oxford University Press, États-Unis, 308.
11. Vollaire, C. (2020). Comment l'assurance et la protection sociale contribuent à la gestion des risques dans les sociétés développées. Melchior : <https://www.melchior.fr/cours/>
12. Zinn, JO (11 août 2017). La sociologie du risque. *Le Cambridge Handbook of Sociology : études spécialisées et interdisciplinaires*, pp. 129-138.