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(Review article)

Ethical and Social Consequences of Dogmatism in Society

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Abstract

Background: Dogmatism is a global challenge in recent years. Terrorist groups such as Taliban, Al Qaeda, Al-shabab, ISIS, Jondollah and so on are some example in recent century. Hence, what is more attended today is the religious dogmatism. It doesn't mean that there are no other forms of dogmatism. Various kinds of dogmatism in political, racial and ethnical forms are developed in modern societies. Because of forming close mind manner, dogmatism in each form is in opposite of ethics. Therefore, this study tries to consider the ethical and social consequences of dogmatism in societies.

Conclusion: With prevalence of dogmatism, ethical foundations are weakened and wellbeing will be replaced with violence and autarchy. In such societies, trust, adjustment and social cooperation will be decreased.

Keywords: Ethics, Dogmatism, Closed mind

Introduction

The word "dogma" is derived from the Greek word (δόγμα) that means literally "that which one thinks is true".

Dogmatism, from a philosophical point of view, reflects the non-dialectical and metaphysical ideas that are not tested and challenged in certain historical circumstances. People, who are saying "No" against other people's ideas and innovations, are known as dogmatic and zealous people. Such people carry the uncritical way of thinking, and they assume that their constant beliefs are unmistakable truths that can be invoked at any time and place. They accept a series of beliefs without the slightest criticism and apply them stereotypical in new conditions, without analyzing and generalizing them theoretically (1).

Dogmatism is defined as unwillingness to know, accept or respect the opinions, ideas and behaviors of others. These people fail to recognize the ideas of others, especially when these ideas are different from their preconceived thoughts. They cannot understand and analyze different perspectives or accept them even when they are less rational, correct, and better than their views. In this

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regard, it should be noted that the use of the concept of "dogmatic thinking" is completely incorrect. Thinking has no place in dogmatism because it is against the basic concepts of thinking such as question, doubt and criticism (2).

One of the most important theories in the field of dogmatism is Rockeach's theory (1954). He believes that dogmatism is pointed out to a network or closed cognitive system (3). Dogmatism in his theory is defined as followed:

1- A relatively closed cognitive system from believes and unbelieves toward the reality.
2- Organizing a fundamental belief about absolute power.
3- Providing a framework of dogmatism forms towards everything (4).

Based on that, dogmatism can be attended in two levels:

1- In the first category, there is a group that rejects any thought that is opposed to their opinion regardless of its content (masked).
2- In the second type, there is a group that, in addition to rejecting the opposing beliefs, does not allow others to express their thoughts (unmasked) (5).

Dogmatism is a global challenge in our world. Dogmatism is a particular characteristic of every religion and every religious attitude. Studies show that dogmatism is considered as an important root of forming terrorist groups in national and international areas (6). Therefore, what is more attended about dogmatism is religious dogmatism. In contemporary societies, various instances of dogmatic thinking are widespread, and dogmatism has grown substantially in political, ethnic, racial and sectarian forms.

Dogmatism against Ethics

Ethics refers to those standards of behavior that are the same for everyone. The accuracy or inaccuracy of affairs, the recognition of good and evil, and the recognition of virtues constitute the fundamental issues of morality that can be examined at individual and social levels. Undoubtedly, both individual and social morality is strongly influenced by the negativity of dogmatic thinking, and perhaps the first domain that is degraded by dogmatism is the domain of ethics. Since, the ethical judgments of a person and as well the ethical behaviors formed by such judgment are heavily influenced by dogmatism. Overall, there are two prominent perspectives in ethical psychology about the origin of the ethical judgment and motivators of ethical behavior: cognitive and emotion oriented subjects (7).

The first one is the cognitive view which is rooted in the ancient Greek philosophy. From this point of view, the main source of the judgment and ethical behavior is the rational and logical arguments based on the understanding the concept of good and bad. In this perspective, human cognitive system is over the affective system and it controls the emotions and conducts the ethical behaviors and decision-making. Excessive form of ethical rationalism is attributed to Kant. In recent decades, scientists like Kohlberg, with a look at Piaget's theory, explained the ethical judgment during the developmental stages (8).

The second view is the emotion based perspective that considers the source of moral judgments and moral behavior in emotions, and considers the role of moral reasoning as a follow-up trend and considers cognition solely to justify or explain ethical judgment and behavior (9). Most of the philosophers believe that human have a special wisdom that is over the logical considerations (10). David Hume, with regard to the role of ethical feelings in ethical behavior, has been stressed on emotions rather than wisdom. He was clearly stated that "wisdom is deserved to be noticed as a slave of emotion" (10). In the theory of Hume, emotions have been seen as stimulator of actions and behaviors and also they are the main reason of thinking. Adam Smith was also emphasized on ethical emotions as a foundation of human ethics in social communications. Recent century is seen as a period of emotion centered in psychology (11). One of the most important ideas in this period, emphasizing the central role of excitement in ethical decisions and behaviors, is the theory of Haidt that is called "Social Intuition Model". In this theory, individual intuition (what is called

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by haidt as ethical emotions) is seen as origin of good ethics (12).
Given that dogmatism dominates both the cognitive domain and the emotional / emotional domain of a person, it undoubtedly affects the moral judgment of the individual.

Ethical and social consequences of dogmatism

1- Individualism and mythology

Dogmatism is typically associated with individualism and mythology as an anti-ethical approach. Because these people mentally need to imagine their thoughts. The same applies to the incidence of bullying and corruption and the social problems like; economical inequality, increase of crime and so on that result from them (1).

2- Decrease of social adjustment

Dogmatic people usually have low social adjustment. It is well analyzed in the theory of Marcia about identity. James Marcia was believed that an adolescent encounter with four different kind of identity: Identity achievement, identity moratorium, identity foreclosure, identity diffusion

- Identity diffusion: the status in which the adolescent does no have a sense of having choices; he or she has not yet made (nor is attempting/willing to make) a commitment
- Identity foreclosure: the status in which the adolescent seems willing to commit to some relevant roles, values, or goals for the future. Adolescents in this stage have not experienced an identity crisis. They tend to conform to the expectations of others regarding their future (e. g. allowing a parent to determine a career direction) As such; these individuals have not explored a range of options.
- Identity moratorium: the status in which the adolescent is currently in a crisis, exploring various commitments and is ready to make choices, but has not made a commitment to these choices yet.
- Identity achievement: the status in which adolescent has gone through a identity crisis and has made a commitment to a sense of identity (i.e. certain role or value) that he or she has chosen (13).
- Adolescence with foreclosure identity show more problems in adjusting and adapting to the surrounding environment. These people more tend to dogma and inflexibility (13). In explaining this, it should be said that, given that the individuals with foreclosure identity accept the reference group's ideology in the absence of an identity crisis without exploring and reviewing it, there are no reasons to defend their point of view, and in order to challenge the conflicting views They drag their minds on all opposing views and reject them all without debate. Therefore, they develop some inflexible and drastic forms of thinking and in contrast to others show unethical behaviors (13).

3- Decrease of well-being

Dogmatism is one of the factors that has a negative influence on well-being. Dogmatism has various forms and the dangers one is the religious dogmatism. Dogmatic people develop a rigid and inflexible pyramid of cognition and it will be used as a constant personality trait in each situation then it decreases the adapting ability in interaction with environment. As it was said, the roots of such cognitive system are searchable in adolescent stage and identity crisis. People with foreclosure identity may use closed mind way in their interactions. They may experience more adapting problems because of their inability in thinking and solving problems creatively. Since cognitive and emotional dimensions of happiness are significantly affected by individual adaptation, dogmatic people who have low level of adaptation experience a decrease in their cognitive and emotional well-being

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inevitably. The result of such process is the decrease of well-being (13).

4- Increase of violence

Dogmatic thinking, along with a decrease in happiness, increases violence. Violence, which is the consequence of loosening the moral foundations in society, teaches the person that human values do not have meaning and for surviving we need to do any moral or immoral activities. Developing of such perspective leads to the recent global violence and corruption. Religious dogmatism and the resulting violence, by creating insecurity, present a violent face of our world (14).

5- Decrease of trust and social cooperation

Human being is a social animal. It means that, we need to communicate with each other and such communication leads to the emerging cooperation concept. Human social society is related to the social cooperation and interaction. From the very beginning of his life, man needs to cooperate with others, and in the course of history, social participation in political systems is one of the most important issues. Social participation is a process that the social personality of humans is formed through it and prepares them for collective work.

Social participation has different faces in societies, and undoubtedly the growth and excellence of each social system is probable in the light of social solidarity and participation of the people of that society. Sociologists believe that correlation and social cooperation in each society is resulted from factors like shared feelings and believes and balances between values and believes. They also believe that lack of material facilities is the main cause of humans' divergence (15). Undoubtedly, one of the main consequences of dogma is the reduction of social participation. The dogmatic throws the balance between beliefs and values in society in such a way that they interact only with his sympathizers and looks at people with different thoughts with a pessimistic view and called them as an enemy. Therefore, they do not cooperate with people with different ideology and it can be said that they have their own separated world. They have tended to accept their own principles without considering the reasons and thoughts of others.

6- Growth of inequality

Inequality is one of the general and permanent aspects of human societies. Individual differences such as intrinsic, motivational, and individual aspirations of individuals and social differences, such as the difference in lifestyle, rights, opportunities, rewards and privileges that society places on individuals present this inequality. Importance of equality as a right is stressed in all political and social thoughts. When equality has no executive insurance, it is no applicable. Inequality is always an annoying fact above all existing mottos about equality.

When dogma is institutionalized in a society, and especially when governors are dogmatic, inequality increase seriously and there is no way to perform equality in that society (16).

Conclusion

The dogmatism is a non-critical, metaphysical, and non-historical way of thinking, which a person accepts in his ideology (a set of firm that thought to be true at any time or place), without basing them on the foundation of the knowledge and without challenging them against opposing views. The dogmatism is an ideology that does not need to be reasoned and must be accepted without constraint. Two concepts of "close mind" and "open mind" can clearly explain the meaning of dogmatism. Every human has a "belief-disbelief" system. This system is the result of thoughts towards his material and social world. The dogmatic person has a set of well-formed thoughts based on his/her closed mind; they do not change them in any way and they consider their transformation very unpleasant. The excessive emphasis on self-beliefs and the rejection of any change in it, or having a closed mind against beliefs and views of others is "dogmatism." If dogmatism thrives in society, well-being may replace with violence and autarchy. In such societies, truth, adaptation and social cooperation would be decreased. Therefore, the certainty in

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the subjects and sciences and the giving of a dogmatic judgment is contrary to the freedom of human thought, and the human beings with dogmatism constraint themselves in the chain of thoughts deliberately.

Ethical consideration

Ethical issues (Including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, redundancy, etc.) have been completely observed by the authors.

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