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# Social Knowledge: The Study of Three Processes of Metamorphosis

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## Abstract

Social knowledge is more dynamic than natural science. A full recognition of this character is the precondition for upholding the validity of statements in social knowledge. In order to maintain the validity of such statements and to avoid the metamorphosis of social knowledge into other theoretical constructs, this paper, based on referring to the ideal type of social knowledge, aims to describe and explain three processes whereby social knowledge is metamorphosed into theoretical dogmatism, theoretical alienation, and theoretical slavery.

**Keywords:** Historical Validity, Sociological Validity, Functional Validity, Dogmatism, Alienation, Theoretical Slavery.

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## Introduction

According to the viewpoint of some outstanding philosophers of social sciences and some salient sociologists of knowledge, social knowledge is a form of knowledge directed toward a historical and social context. Also, such knowledge has a special function in society (see: Alizadeh *et al*., 2004; Soroush, 2005; Glover, David *et al*., 2004; Schutz, 1967 & 1980; Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Braybrooke,1986; Hollis, 1994; Little, 1991; Rosenberg, 1995). Based on this point of view the ideal type of social knowledge is required to have an updated historical, sociological, and functional validity. Due to such characteristic of social knowledge, the main aim of this essay is to clarify and explain one the most important challenges in regard to the preserving of social knowledge validity. This challenge includes three processes through which the above-mentioned types of validity are undermined. These three processes lead social knowledge to transform into the other forms of theoretical constructs: Theoretical dogmatism, theoretical alienation, and theoretical slavery.

## Theoretical Dogmatism

In general, it should be noted that social knowledge is closely situated in its historical time and therefore carries an aura of specific temporality. This means that the present knowledge is hardly applicable to a past historical period. Similarly, the past knowledge can hardly solve the problems and challenges in the present time. As Karl Mannheim contends in *Ideology and Utopia*, social knowledge is the product of a specific historical condition. Accordingly, any form of knowledge which is decontextualized from its historical condition and considered valid for other periods is most likely liable to turn into a type of theoretical construct known as "Dogmatism". It seems that describing and explaining this process sheds more light on the historicity of social knowledge.

Social knowledge becomes transformed into dogmatism whenever it's cognitive and motivational basis changes in the course of history while the social knowledge itself remains unchanged and therefore becomes ossified. Substantiating this claim requires asking two important questions. Firstly, what is exactly meant by cognitive and motivational basis of social knowledge? Secondly, how is the mechanism of the relationship between the changes in those basic assumptions and the transformation of social knowledge into dogmatism?

With regard to the first question, it must be noted that different human communities face various forms of issues, problems, challenges, and chances in their historical evolution. These conditions can be categorized into theoretical and practical levels. Among the many reactions to these conditions, the reactions of the thinkers and scientists of a society are most

significant. They try to reflect and react to the conditions in a most efficient manner. Therefore, it can be maintained that the theoretical and practical conditions constitute the motivational foundation for producing a set of ideas, more accurately, social knowledge. The reality and reliability of such forms of social knowledge are closely related to the existing general human understanding and knowledge. Accordingly, this variable can be considered the cognitive basis for ideas and knowledge. It is clear by now that there are two variables in the production and formation of social knowledge, namely, types of problems, and the level of human knowledge.

It should be also mentioned that there are occasions when ideas produced by thinkers become guidelines for social understanding and praxis by some social groups. The acceptance of these ideas is dependent upon certain cognitive and motivational assumptions too. In fact, these assumptions held by the society's thinkers to the production of ideas and then the same assumptions held by social groups to select and consume the recently produced ideas. In general, when some social groups accept these ideas in terms of their explanatory and normative aspects and use them as the blueprint for social praxis, those ideas turn into ideology. To put it more accurately, ideology is a type of idea or knowledge which works as the basis for social understanding and praxis by some social groups. Accordingly, it can be said that given the variables influencing ideas, ideology is the product of problems and a specific level of knowledge. Then from a logical perspective, the validity of ideology depends on the credibility of the basic assumptions.[2]

Let us now turn to the second question, namely, the relationship between the changes in the basic assumptions and the transformation of knowledge into dogmatism. In this regard, it should be noted that theoretical and practical problems, as well as the level of human knowledge under the influence of different factors, are changed. Such changes are stronger and more extensive in the contemporary world. These changes create conditions which are by nature different from previous conditions. Therefore, the existing ideas fall short of dealing with the challenges of the new conditions. In such cases, a group of the society's thinkers embarks on producing new knowledge or tries to adjust and modify the existing knowledge. These theoretical, practical, and cognitive changes logically necessitate changes in the ideology which is based on previous conditions so that it can adapt itself to the new changes and reconstruct itself again. In other words, the proponents of a certain ideology need to update their configuration of social understanding and praxis in the light of new changes. In

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[2] It is clear that this is not the only possible definition of ideology. (For some other definitions, see, Mannheim, 1976; Soroush, 1996; Winsent, 1999; Bashiriyeh, 1993; Akhavan Monfared, 2002. Also About the relationship between sociological conditions and socio-political ideas, see Eftekhari, 1991; Razavi, 1992; Spragens, 1998.

fact, by accepting these changes, they need to translate appropriate ideas from the realm of theory into the realm of ideology. Having done so, social knowledge and consequently ideology would be able to maintain their historical validity and functionality in the face of a new condition. Otherwise, knowledge and ideology would lose their logical validity and become dogmatism. In fact, dogmatism is the result of a condition in which some people present solutions which are either applicable only for problems in a different historical past or are hardly the best possible solutions for the new problems from the perspective of the evolution of human cognition and knowledge. In these cases, social knowledge loses its organic relationship with the changes in realities and cognitive conditions, and although it may carry the name of social knowledge, it is nothing but theoretical dogmatism.

In light of the above questions, the demarcation line between social knowledge and dogmatism is clear by now. Accordingly, the basis of social knowledge is the theoretical and practical problems and the general level of human cognition and knowledge. However, dogmatism is rooted in the other variables which are discussed in the following. In fact, a study of the history of social knowledge reveals their origin and helps us to distinguish between social knowledge and theoretical dogmatism.[3] In other words in the case of dogmatism, knowledge, and ideology have been deprived of their logic and instead of having theoretical and practical efficiency for social understanding and praxis become leant on the other variables.[4] Accordingly, it is necessary to protect social knowledge against dogmatism. This is only possible through a constant evaluation of the validity of social knowledge for other historical periods.

Based on the mentioned points, it is useful to explain the emergence and formation of dogmatism in more details. Clearly, this can help us in finding ways to deal with the problem of dogmatism.

It seems that there are two types of factors in the emergence of dogmatism, namely, objective factors and subjective ones.

The first objective cause is the influence of dogmatists among the circle of social scientists and therefore the reproduction of dogmatist procedures under the title of knowledge and ideology. It should be added that perhaps one of the most important challenges for the ideologies is the infiltration of dogmatist views among the circle of ideologues. The influence

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[3] For a different view, see Soroush, 1996 (a).
[4] It is clear that there is not a hard and fast demarcation line between these concepts. It may be said that there is some level of dogmatism in all social groups. Therefore, such distinctions are made for some analytical aims and they are not exact scientific descriptions.

of such people can make the ideology seem irrational through the detachment of ideology from its motivational and cognitive basis and therefore hinder the process of reformation.

The second objective factor is the impact of power relations. With regard to the role of power relations in the creation of dogmatism, it should be noted that one of the causes behind the emergence of dogmatism includes the strong ties between knowledge and ideology in one hand, and different forms of social and political power of bearers of such knowledge and ideology on the other. It is obvious that all dominant ideologies make power, wealth and social status for some special groups. For most people, the proponents and followers of a certain ideology have the necessary requirements to be deemed as competent enough to possess higher social positions and power. However, when the motivational and cognitive foundation of an ideology changes and ideological transformation becomes a public demand, that is, the ideology of period one requires modifications and readjustments, the proponents of that ideology who used to enjoy certain prerogatives find their positions unstable and at risk. In fact, the legitimacy of their power is questioned in these cases. Therefore, they have three options. The first option is to completely leave their previous positions and be replaced by the harbingers of new ideology (Ideology two). This rarely happens because the proponents of ideology one are hardly willing to let go of their positions, that is, due to many reasons they do not voluntarily step aside from their ideological stances. Second, these people may join the followers of ideology two by recognizing the existing changes and therefore gain legitimacy even in the context of ideology two. This rarely happens given the fact that those in the positions of power and wealth do not have the sufficient time to become aware of the changes happening outside of the circles of power and wealth. The third option assumes that those in positions of power (material, social, and symbolic) can fight the ideological changes in order to maintain the legitimacy of their social positions in the previous ideological context. This latter option is usually opted for. However, since changes in the motivational and cognitive foundations are inevitable, this latter option turns their ideology into nothing but dogmatism.

The last objective cause is the separation of ideology from its environment. There are cases where the rise of dogmatism is the result of the wide gap between the thinkers and ideologists of a society and the changes in the surrounding environment. It is clear that people adjust their actions and behaviors in terms of their relation to the environment in which they live. Accordingly, if they do not interpret correctly the changes in the environment, their reactions will not be based on the realities, and therefore might seem irrational. From this perspective, dogmatism emerges as the result of the insufficient knowledge of people with regard to their environment, as it is called as with regard to the motivational and cognitive changes of the social knowledge and ideology of their time. However, it should be emphasized that given the

growing communication media in today's world few people fall victim to this variable and therefore it may seem as an overstatement to say that dogmatism is the result of this factor in some wide scale.

As for the subjective causes of dogmatism, the first factor is the lack of rational-scientific analysis of the accuracy and efficiency of social knowledge and ideology. As iterated earlier, transformation in the motivational and cognitive foundation of knowledge and ideology logically leads to the transformation of knowledge and ideology themselves. Accordingly, having a rational mindset to the recognition of this necessity is highly significant. However, there are people who contend that ideology can be considered rationally, scientifically, or logically. In this view, it is considered as an eternal truth. Such an understanding of ideology severs the relationship between ideology and its motivational and cognitive foundation. Ideology becomes sacred and instead of adapting the ideology to the needs and demands of the society, the latter is curtailed or even sacrificed in the name of ideology. This is exactly what is meant by the metamorphosis of social knowledge into dogmatism.

The above problem indicates the existence of a set of wrong assumptions about ideology and the consequent transformation of ideology into dogmatism. This is even more evident in the case of religious ideologies because religious ideologies are naturally based on sacred texts. Accordingly, including the parameter of time in understanding and interpreting these texts may be labeled as distortion, misinterpretation, and deconstruction, evoking harsh reactions. However, different studies strongly support the idea that religious ideologies and on a broader level all religious texts are interpreted and understood in relation to our motivational and cognitive assumptions. Therefore, if these assumptions change, religious ideology will change too. Resisting the openness to new interpretations is against the teachings of religious belief itself (Soroush, 1996 b).

The second subjective cause addresses the issue of the mental tendency for stability and resistance to change. The subjective willingness to maintain the stability of knowledge and ideology may lead to dogmatism. This is usually because of the fear of making mistakes. With regard to the way in which this variable may cause dogmatism it should be noted that whenever an ideological agent reaches the conclusion that his/her ideological stance needs some adjustments due to some changes in its motivational and cognitive principles, certain emotional and mental pressures will be imposed on the agent including his/her fear of mistake. The agent might think that if he/she the agent tries to change his/her ideological stance, it is possible to make a mistake and consequently there will follow some irreparable damages. Therefore, subjective dilemmas and doubts will undermine the determination of the agent in changing the ideological stance he/she used to believe in.

In fact, it is obvious that there are people who have a strong tendency for stability. To achieve ideological change, these people need to reconsider such a subjective inclination for stability. It is axiomatic that remaining committed to the principle of stability will prevent ideological readjustment and therefore will lead to dogmatism. Readjusting and updating one's ideology requires not only brave decision, toleration of negative reactions, keeping one's mind open to the true information, fighting one's subjective and personal tendencies for maintaining the ideological benefits and questioning the legitimacy of an ideology, it also requires overcoming the fear of making mistakes. However, this should not mean the impulsive change of ideology without considering the correctness of one's decision. Rather, it means that when after investigating the motivational and cognitive changes of an ideology, one should not hesitate to change his/her previous stance because of conservatism or fear of making mistakes. The damages caused by dogmatism are much more serious than the possible damages caused by one's fear of making mistakes. To prevent dogmatism, one needs to overcome the fear and accept the responsibilities of making a decision to initiate ideological reforms.

So far, we have sufficiently discussed the process whereby social knowledge is turned into dogmatism. In the following section, the process in which social knowledge is transformed into theoretical alienation will be taken into consideration.

**Theoretical alienation**

One of the characteristics of social knowledge is its close relationship with the sociological condition. Taking into account of the correspondence of social knowledge with a local situation and a specific group, that is, the little chance of universal social knowledge is important in analyzing and understanding this type of knowledge. Accordingly, sociologists of knowledge usually emphasize the links between social knowledge and a specific social condition. Emile Durkheim has defined knowledge as the reflection of social conditions (Hamilton, 1998; Kafi, 2004: 248-249). Sociologists like Max Scheler have made a distinction between the form and content of knowledge and have argued that the construction of form is influenced by social variables (Alizadeh, 2004: 187-200). Karl Mannheim has argued that one of the conditions for the validity of social knowledge is its symmetry with the socio-cultural context in which it is produced (Azhdarizadeh, 2004: 211-229).

As mentioned earlier, it seems that the relationship between social knowledge and its sociological context can be considered from two aspects. The first aspect concerns the correspondence of knowledge with the place in which it is produced. The second aspect

concerns the relationship between social knowledge and the groups about which the knowledge is produced. According to this view, a specific type of social knowledge may be applicable to a certain place or group while it falls short in explaining the conditions of another place or group. Therefore, in addition to historical limitations, social knowledge has sociological limitations and only applies to a specific condition. This means that we need to evaluate the validity of social knowledge in terms of its sociological applicability.

As the above discussion implies, the weakening of the sociological validity of social knowledge leads to the problem of what is known as theoretical alienation. To define theoretical alienation, it can be said that it happens when the motivational and cognitive basis of social knowledge in terms of sociological context changes while the knowledge itself does not readjust itself in relation to these changes and tries to remain attached to the previous social condition. Given the fact that we have already discussed the notion of motivational and cognitive basis of knowledge, a description of the process of the transformation of social knowledge into theoretical alienation would suffice in this case.

It should be mentioned that when the theoretical, practical, and cognitive problems of human life change and the existing ideas fall short in coping with the new condition, some thinkers propose the adaptation of solutions from similar contexts as a way of overcoming the problems and issues of their own context. Influenced by such thinkers of the society, some people may select what they have adapted from another context, as an updated or even a new ideology. Consequently, there will be a favorable, low-cost, and short-term transformation in knowledge. However, since there are always major differences between societies and the social conditions of groups, such an adaptation is hardly successful. It may only be successful when the similarities between the local and communal contexts of the societies are examined in details. Therefore, if done without sufficient study, there will emerge as a consequence a type of knowledge which does not have any exact correspondence with the problems, issues, and cognitive difficulties of the new place or group. In short, it will not be able to solve the existing problems. This is the reason why instead of using the term "social knowledge" the concept of "theoretical alienation" can be used. In this view, alienation is the result of the decision of some people who think that appropriating a solution belonging to a different social place or group, could be able to solve the problems and issues of their own. It is clear that similar to the process whereby knowledge is transformed into dogmatism, also in this case knowledge is severed from the changes in problems and evolution of cognition. Although it may still be considered as "knowledge" it is in reality a form of theoretical alienation.

Similar to dogmatism, the basis of alienation is different from the basis of social knowledge. Theoretical and practical problems and the level of human cognition are the origin of

knowledge. However, alienation is rooted in something else which will be discussed in the following.

With regard to the factors influencing the transformation of social knowledge into theoretical alienation, it should be mentioned that they are remarkably similar to those factors involved in the transformation of social knowledge into dogmatism. These factors can be divided into two groups, namely, objective, and subjective.

Similar to the causes of dogmatism, the objective causes of theoretical alienation consist of three variables. First, the influence of alienated thinkers and intellectuals into the circle of social thinkers and ideologists and the consequent reproduction of alienated constructs in the form of knowledge and ideology. As explained in the discussion of dogmatism, welcoming those who accept a certain knowledge or ideology without a rational or logical reason can have dire consequences. It should be highly emphasized that the infiltration and growing influence of such people may make knowledge and ideology digressed from its rational and logical course. In fact, when the link between the motivational and cognitive basis and knowledge and ideology is severed, there will be little hope for reformation.

The second factor concerns the influence of power relations. Regarding the role of power in the creation of knowledge or theoretical alienation, it should be noted that a certain group of intellectuals, social theorists, and ideologists who are usually not in positions of power may assume that by replacing their local and communal ideology with the popular ideologies from around the world, they can dispossess power from their opponents and possess it themselves. In fact, this group adopts the line of thought that considers dominant global discourses as a way of providing legitimacy and social power for themselves. Doing this for possessing power separates the relationship between ideology from its motivational and cognitive basis. The kind of knowledge which is produced as a consequence of this process is not able to bring about ideological change and instead turns knowledge into theoretical alienation.

The third objective cause concerns the separation of ideologists from their social environment. Alienation happens when due to the lack of accurate understanding of the social groups the ideologists and intellectuals are not able to effectively connect themselves to the society. Therefore, they are not able to make an appropriate reaction to the incumbent changes and by suggesting solutions which are cut from the motivational and cognitive basis of their social condition, they produce ideological alienation. However, as mentioned earlier, given the fact that information as become easily accessible in today's world, such variable does not have far-reaching influence.

With regard to the subjective causes of alienation, we could focus on two factors. The First one is the lack of rational-scientific analysis of the accuracy and efficiency of social knowledge and ideology. Whenever there is not sufficient critical examination of the applicability of some adapted ideas, or they are not evaluated with empirical, historical, and interpretive methods, one logically can expect alienation. To put it differently, such ideas should be evaluated in terms of their relation to a specific place and social groups so that their appropriateness and applicability becomes clear. However, the problem is that instead of choosing this critical approach, some people ignore the differences for the sake of similarities. This methodological error gradually leads to the production of theoretical alienation instead of effective knowledge and ideology.

Similar to dogmatism, the second subjective cause is the tendency for stability and resistance to change. Occasionally, the tendency to import ideas belonging to another place and social groups is the result of the fear of making mistakes. How this variable creates alienation is almost clear. If the ideologists are aware of the differences between their own context and the context from which their ideas are adapted, but believe that modifying the adapted ideas may distort its totality, they would eschew from changing them and therefore alienation will most likely be produced. Accordingly, having the courage to think critically and to have the determination for bringing innovation, when the differences between two social contexts are clear, is an important factor for being able to effectively and appropriately deal with the problems of one's own social conditions.


**Theoretical slavery**

Social knowledge, like other forms of human knowledge, is ultimately at the service of specific goals and objectives. There are certain ideologies and social ideas which are primarily produced for achieving specific goals. However, it should be pointed out that the functionality and purposiveness are more significant in social knowledge because it has very strong influence on the social theoretical frames. When the goal and duty of knowledge are not authentic at the time of producing, the possibility of using this knowledge for achieving authentic goals and functions is almost ruled out.5

It should be noted that according to some point of views the authentic function and goal of social knowledge is to help the human being to reach the perfection via solving theoretical and practical problems. If social knowledge lacks this aspect, it does not have one of the

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5 For example, whenever an economic system like capitalism is based on the principle of increasing capital, it is hardly possible to use it for achieving sublime goals like human dignity and ethical perfection.

important factors for the validity of social knowledge. According to Max Scheler knowledge has three parts. First, it is the knowledge of control and achievement of goals and objectives. Second, it is knowledge of essence and culture. Third, it is the knowledge of the reality of salvation. The first part of knowledge is found in science, the second in philosophy and metaphysics and the third in religion. Scheler believes that there is a hierarchy in the types of knowledge. The knowledge of salvation is at the top, and then comes knowledge of essence, and finally knowledge of control. In this view, each type of knowledge serves a higher order of knowledge (Alizadeh, 2004 a: 183-184).

Based on Scheler's idea it can be argued that the ultimate purpose and authentic function of knowledge are nothing but human salvation. Accordingly, such purposiveness and functionality can be used as significant criteria for evaluating the accuracy of social knowledge. However, it is clear that in many instances the purpose of social knowledge is determined by power relations. Therefore, more often than not, social knowledge is governed by the interests of people in positions of power. The prevalence of this phenomenon has convinced thinkers like Michel Foucault to conclude that knowledge is basically at the service of power (Alizadeh, 2004 b: 322-329). Given this important phenomenon, it is necessary to discuss the ways in which the functions of knowledge change and how it is possible to prevent the equation of knowledge and power.

As mentioned earlier, social knowledge is the product of some motivational factors and cognitive assumptions. The content of these factors and assumptions has shown two different paths during history. On the first path, certain issues and problems have drawn the attention of social thinkers whose solutions would either satisfy their theoretical concerns or would contribute to the improvement of public welfare. Contrary to this, on the second path, solving certain issues and problems would, in fact, serve the interests of people in the position of power. In fact, most of the social thinkers have often faced this dilemma. The irony is that concerning oneself with the public issues and problems would hardly result in any real rewards for the social thinkers. On the contrary, serving the power interests would always end up in considerable privileges and rewards. True social thinker would choose the first path, that is, dealing with the problems of the people. For them, social thinking should always maintain its legitimacy. However, there are also social thinkers who have served power.

To be able to have a logical evaluation of the above dilemma it can be said that what the first group of thinkers do has stronger basis in the logic of social thinking. For this group, the condition for the validity and truthfulness of knowledge is its legitimate function. In this view, the ultimate objective and function of knowledge and therefore its validity depend on serving human values (Habermas, 1987 quoted in Soroush, 2005). In contrast to this, the second

group of thinkers who serve the interests of power relations, distort the logic of knowledge in terms of its objective and function and therefore imprison thought in the cells of power.

The above phenomenon can be referred to as "theoretical slavery". To illustrate the working of this process, it is to be said that the motivational and cognitive basis of knowledge. Idealistically, is intended to bring about human salvation and perfection by producing knowledge, including social knowledge. This knowledge is then transformed into ideology through social acceptance. However, in the course of time, in addition to the ideal motivational and cognitive basis of knowledge, other types of motivational and cognitive bases emerge which are at the service of power. With the appearance of this new phenomenon, social thinkers diverge into two groups. The first group remains committed to the true objective of knowledge, namely, human salvation. The second group chooses to serve the interest of people in power and help produce what is known as "instrumental knowledge". This latter type of knowledge is used as an instrument by the people in power to reach their own goals. The social thinkers may gain certain privileges by doing so; however, they pay a high price by imprisoning their thoughts and minds in the web of power relations. In such conditions, theoretical slavery takes the place of an ideology based on true knowledge. While carrying the name of social knowledge, this type of knowledge is nothing but theoretical slavery in the interests of people in power.

It may be useful to discuss the causes of process whereby social knowledge is transformed into theoretical slavery. The factors causing this problem can be divided into two groups, namely, objective and subjective.

The objective causes of theoretical slavery consist of three important variables. Similar to the two other explained processes, the first variable concerns the influence of theoretical slaves into the circle of social thinkers and the consequent reproduction of theoretical slavery in the form of knowledge and ideology. Theoretical slaves accept a certain type of knowledge and ideology. However, their approach to knowledge and ideology is instrumental and irrational. For them, knowledge and ideology should serve power and can be used as an instrument to gain and exert dominance over others. A disproportionate level of such influence may marginalize true knowledge and ideology. In such a context, theoretical slavery is camouflaged as true knowledge and ideology.

The second variable concerns the influence of the relationship between power and knowledge. Those in power have always tried to dominate the minds of social thinkers and use them for instrumental purposes. This is intensified by the material and economic needs of the thinkers. Those in power can enslave the social thinkers through economic means. There are also social thinkers who have ambitions to gain power themselves. However, it should be noted that in

most cases these social thinkers are not only enslaved themselves by the instruments of power, but they also deprive the other people from the possibility of reaching true knowledge. Because under the impact of their cooperation with the people in power, such people get an opportunity to suppress true thinkers and then introduce the instrumental knowledge as a true knowledge. Therefore, in this condition, the only knowledge which will be produced is instrumental.

The third objective cause refers to the contemporary socialization of the social thinkers in terms of the ultimate aim of the production knowledge. Nowadays, universities around the world hardly ever address the question of the ultimate aim of knowledge. Most people are educated with the notion that knowledge is only limited to the understanding of the phenomenon and the reality of the world. In this view, the goal, use and function of knowledge do not matter and is only a personal matter. Therefore, there is no systematic education about the use and function of scientific discoveries which lead to arbitrary appropriation of knowledge by everyone. In this condition, knowledge can be purchased by those in power and there seems to be no problem in the enslavement of knowledge to power.

With regard to the subjective causes of the emergence of theoretical slavery, we can mention two things. The first cause concerns the prevalence of irrational evaluation of the ultimate goal of knowledge. This phenomenon is the result of illogical socialization of the modern thinkers which has been already discussed. However, it is not limited to socialization process. The point is that when we rationally accept that the ultimate goal of knowledge is human salvation and perfection, theoretical slavery becomes a kind of digression from the principles of rational thought. Accordingly, following rational thinking is the precondition for resisting slavery by power instruments. Therefore, one of the important factors in the emergence of theoretical slavery is the lack of rational evaluation of the ultimate goal of knowledge.

The second subjective cause in the emergence of theoretical slavery is the fear of power. This is especially evident in totalitarian societies. In such conditions, social knowledge is not allowed to go beyond the limits imposed by the instruments of power with regard to official forms of knowledge. Therefore, autonomous and free thinkers may be repressed. Fear of repression and persecution demotivates most thinkers. It is clear that such conditions only lead to the production of instrumental knowledge and theoretical slavery.

## Conclusion

The aim of the present essay was to briefly discuss and explain the processes whereby social knowledge is turned into negative forms. This does not mean that all aspects of the issue have been examined. Rather, an introductory remark was intended to initiate further researches. Since social knowledge is historical and situated in a specific socio-cultural context, the emphasis of the present essay was on the necessity of continuous evaluation of the historical, sociological and functional validity of social knowledge. It was argued that lack of attention to this issue may lead to processes whereby knowledge is transformed into theoretical dogmatism, theoretical alienation, and theoretical slavery. As explained, there are various subjective and objective causes which lead the social knowledge to transform into mentioned negative forms. So, these causes necessarily should be controlled in order to reach a valid social knowledge.

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