

## DOGMATISM, TIME PERSPECTIVE, AND ANOMIE<sup>1, 2</sup>

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The construct of "dogmatism" which has been theoretically and operationally dealt with in a series of papers by Rokeach and others, has generally been defined as "(a) a relatively closed cognitive organization of beliefs and disbeliefs about reality, (b) organized around a central set of beliefs about absolute authority which, in turn, (c) provides a framework for patterns of intolerance and qualified tolerance toward others" (8, p. 195). Dogmatism, then, is considered to be a form of general authoritarianism, a cognitive state which transcends the boundaries of racial, religious, or political intolerance or prejudice.

The present study is concerned with the relationship between dogmatism and time perspective only. Rokeach has stated that the relatively closed cognitive system of the dogmatic individual is characterized by a narrowing of time perspective, manifested, in part, by a tendency to deny the importance of the present (8, 9). For example, the dogmatic individual will tend to agree with statements such as: "The present is all too often full of unhappiness. It is only the future that counts," and "It is by returning to our glorious and forgotten past that real social progress can be achieved" (9, p. 8).

However, Rokeach has not unambiguously specified the relationship between dogmatism and time perspective. Two possibilities emerge from his writings: First, the high dogmatic individual may be future-oriented; that is, he will show "an increasing confidence in the accuracy of one's understanding of the future, a generally greater readiness to make predictions, and a decreasing confidence in the predictions of the future made by those adhering to disbelief systems" (8, p. 200). This hypothesis can be more or less tested by comparing high and low dogmatics with respect to confidence in their predictions concerning the future.

Second, the high dogmatic individual may be characterized by an imbalanced or inadequate time perspective; that is, his cognitive sys-

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<sup>2</sup>Opinions and conclusions contained in this paper are those of the authors. They are not to be construed as necessarily reflecting the view or endorsement of the Navy Department.

tem is organized "in a relatively future-oriented or past-oriented direction rather than in terms of a more balanced orientation of past, present, and future" (8, p. 196). Thus we should expect high dogmatics to differ from low dogmatics not in the mean of measures of certainty about the future, but rather in the variability of these measures; i.e., some high dogmatics should be more certain of their predictions of the future, others less certain, as compared to low dogmatics.

Further, if this second relationship obtains, we might predict that high dogmatics would show a significantly greater degree of anomie than low dogmatics. While anomie is a sociologically oriented variable, originally formulated by Durkheim (1), and dealt with further by Merton (4), Srole (10, 11), and others (3, 5, 6), it is psychologically represented by inability adequately to anchor oneself in the past, present, or future. For Durkheim, the highly anomic individual was one whose future time perspective, in the extreme, is so abysmal as to precipitate self-destruction.

This study, then, is concerned with testing two alternate hypotheses: (a) High dogmatics are more future-oriented than low dogmatics and will show greater confidence in the accuracy of their understanding of the future, or (b) high dogmatics will have less adequate or more imbalanced time perspectives than low dogmatics, and will show greater variability of confidence in the accuracy of their understanding of the future, greater variability in their readiness to make predictions of the future, and a significantly greater degree of anomie.

#### METHOD

The subjects were 191 graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Denver summer school who took the 40-item Rokeach dogmatism scale (9). From this sample 26 high scoring and 29 low scoring subjects participated in the experiment. All subjects were white, American-born, with no significant age or sex differences between the two groups. With respect to difference in religion, Chi Square reaches the five percent level of confidence when Catholics are grouped with Protestants, showing a preponderance among the low dogmatics of the "other" category, e.g., Jewish, agnostic, atheist, none (Table 1).

TABLE 1. HIGH DOGMATIC (N = 26) AND LOW DOGMATIC (N = 29) SUBJECTS, ACCORDING TO DOGMATISM SCORES, AGE, SEX, AND RELIGION

	Dogmatism		Age		Sex		Religion		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Male	Female	Prot.	Cath.	Other
High dogmatic	175.1	14.82	30.5	9.05	10	16	22	3	1
Low dogmatic	103.6	11.35	34.0	7.41	10	19	19	2	8

High and low dogmatic subjects were randomly assigned to two male experimenters with the restriction that each experimenter administer the dependent variable tasks to an equal number of male and female subjects, and to an equal number of high and low dogmatics. The experimenters were unaware of the dogmatism scores of the subjects. Unless otherwise specified, the results of the experiment were derived from analyses of variance designs which were broken down by dogmatism, sex, and experimenter, wherever appropriate. The following dependent variable measures were administered to all subjects:

*Certainty-Uncertainty (C-U) Scale.* This scale consisted of 50 items designed to measure how "certain" the subject was of his predictions concerning future events. Each item asked the subject to make a prediction (e.g., "Name the person who you feel will be the next President of the United States;," "How many children do you expect to have in ten years?"), and then to indicate how certain he was of each prediction on a scale ranging from 1 (pure guess) to 7 (absolute certainty). The scale was scored only for degree of certainty; content was ignored. A pre-administration to 102 undergraduate students showed an odd-even reliability of .94.

*Gambling-Certainty (G-C) Task.* In this task which used a gambling device, the subjects were asked to wager chips upon the outcome of an uncertain event. Each subject was permitted to make six wagers, and the device was rigged so that all subjects lost on all trials except the fourth, on which all subjects won. The task was billed as a test of judgment, and subjects were asked to win as many chips as they could. The apparent odds of winning on each trial were one in five which has been found to be closest to the neutral point with respect to preferred odds for most subjects (2, 7).

Two objective measures were derived from this task: the number of chips wagered as a measure of certainty, and the amount of time taken to decide the amount of each wager as a measure of readiness. Both measures showed a split-half reliability of .64 for the six trials.

*Srole Anomie Scale.* Our final measure was the five-item Likert-type scale devised by Srole to measure "social dysfunction, group alienation, and demoralization" (10). Essentially, it taps attitudes relating to dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs and a concurrent hopelessness concerning the future. Theoretically, anomie might be said to result from an inability properly to integrate one's past and present time perspective with that of the future. Three of the items are: "Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself;" "In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better;" and "It's hardly fair to bring children into the world with the way things look for the future."

## RESULTS

*C-U Scale.* While the high and low dogmatic groups showed no significant mean difference in degree of certainty about predictions of future events, their difference in variability approached significance between the five and ten percent levels of confidence (Table 2). Thus, some high dogmatics tend to be more certain, others less certain, of their predictions than are low dogmatics.

*G-C Task.* Again, there were no significant mean differences between the high and low dogmatic groups. However, on 5 of the 12 measures the high dogmatic group was significantly more variable ( $p < .05$ ), and on an additional two measures approached significance. There were three reversals, but none approached significance (Table

TABLE 2. MEANS, SD'S, AND F-RATIOS FOR THE HIGH DOGMATIC AND LOW DOGMATIC GROUPS, FOR EACH DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Variable	High D (N = 26)		Low D (N = 29)		F <sup>a</sup>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
C-U Scale (score)	197.6	39.56	201.0	30.18	1.72*
G-C Task (chips wagered)					
Trial 1	2.3	1.06	2.8	1.50	.50 <sup>b</sup>
Trial 2	2.3	1.29	2.4	1.04	1.55
Trial 3	2.3	1.47	2.2	.68	4.73***
Trial 4	2.0	1.48	2.2	.83	3.17***
Trial 5	3.0	2.13	3.1	1.88	1.24
Trial 6	2.2	1.32	2.2	.95	1.95**
Total	14.0	7.07	15.0	5.19	1.87*
G-C Task (Decision time in hundredths of a minute)					
Trial 1	7.4	10.42	6.4	7.84	1.77*
Trial 2	10.1	14.30	8.9	8.92	2.58***
Trial 3	6.2	4.99	6.2	6.31	.63 <sup>b</sup>
Trial 4	5.7	5.81	6.9	8.62	.46 <sup>b</sup>
Trial 5	10.8	11.75	10.5	10.42	1.28
Trial 6	10.0	14.85	6.4	6.59	5.09***
Total	50.2	35.29	45.4	31.98	1.22
Anomie Scale (score)	14.2	4.60	8.9	2.35	3.84***

\*Significant beyond the .10 level of confidence.

\*\*Significant beyond the .05 level of confidence.

\*\*\*Significant beyond the .01 level of confidence.

<sup>a</sup> Comparison of variability differences between the two groups.

<sup>b</sup> Reversals.

2). Again, the results tend to support the hypothesis of imbalanced time perspective for high dogmatics.

*Anomie Scale.* The high dogmatics achieved a mean anomie score significantly higher ( $p < .001$  using the Mann-Whitney U Test) than the low dogmatic group (Table 2). Again, these results support the second hypothesis of imbalanced time perspective in high dogmatics.

#### DISCUSSION

While these results are hardly unequivocal, they suggest that Rokeach's general assertion of a relationship between dogmatism and time perspective is correct, and that this relationship is one of imbalance in time perspective rather than future-oriented time perspective on the part of high dogmatics. In operational terms, high dogmatics do not appear to have more confidence in their predictions of

the future than do low dogmatics, nor do they appear to exhibit a greater readiness to make predictions about the future. But they do appear to be more variable, more extreme, than low dogmatics with respect to these measures. The results with the anomie scale further suggest that the high dogmatic individual, rather than using the present only as a means to some future Utopia, tends to be disturbed and hopeless not only with regard to the present, but the future also.

In the present study, the content of belief and disbelief systems was ignored in accordance with the purpose of the Rokeach dogmatism scale, namely, to measure general authoritarianism independently of the specific ideological, philosophical, or scientific content of the belief-disbelief systems (8). It is quite plausible, however, that high dogmatics might show increased confidence in their predictions of the future and increased readiness to make predictions if these were concerned with events about which they had strong beliefs or disbeliefs. Further investigation is necessary to explore the nature of these relationships.

#### SUMMARY

Some aspects of the relationship between dogmatism, time perspective, and anomie were studied. Twenty-six high and 29 low dogmatic subjects were compared with respect to certainty concerning their predictions of the future, willingness to wager chips on the outcome of a gambling situation and amount of time needed to decide how many chips to wager, and scores on the Srole anomie scale.

There were no significant mean differences between the two groups, except that the high dogmatics were significantly more anomic than the low dogmatics. But high dogmatics went to extremes on many of the tasks significantly more often than low dogmatics.

The results support our second hypothesis. High dogmatics tend to have imbalanced rather than future-oriented time perspectives, compared to low dogmatics, and in view of their greater anomie can be said to be disturbed not only with regard to the present, but also the future. The nature of these relationships in reference to the content of an individual's belief-disbelief system still needs to be investigated.

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