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Review Article



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Criticism and Analysis of the Psychological Reasons of Utilitarians on Childbearing

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Abstract

Today, adoption and having children is one of the important issues, the expansion or non-expansion of which is the subject of conflict between supporters and opponents. Proponents have mentioned arguments such as reviving childhood days for parents, creating mental peace due to economic-social growth for themselves and society, happiness of parents, fulfillment of parents' motives, etc. in order to spread adoption. On the other hand, the opponents also put forward arguments about the heavy responsibility of having children, physical and mental problems for the mother, environmental dangers and lack of mental peace for the parents. The explanation and analysis of this issue in normative ethics with a utilitarian approach is also of particular importance because the basis of this view is more profit and pleasure for most people. If an action such as having children results in more benefits for most people, it is morally right, and otherwise it will be wrong. Since one of the most important benefits for humans in any matter is its psychological benefit and it is the basis for persuading a person to do an action or not, in this research the psychological consequences of having children from the point of view of utilitarians who are in favor and against having children have been investigated and criticized in a descriptive-analytical way.

Keywords: Childbearing, Consequentialist Reasons, Moral theories, Psychological Consequences.

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Introduction

One of the branches of moral philosophy, i.e. normative ethics, has extensively dealt with this issue in some societies. In normative ethics, attention is paid to the investigation of normative principles and rules and moral dos and don'ts. The purpose of normative ethics is to defend general judgments of value and to present a comprehensive theory to explain them, and its task is to acquire ethical standards for determining right and wrong (Dabbagh, 2008, pp. 2-3). The theories related to normative ethics can be presented and investigated in three areas: virtue-oriented, duty-oriented and utilitarianism. Virtue Ethics is a point of view that emphasizes virtue and considers having the right intention and motivation as the criterion. In this view, virtues have intrinsic value and moral principles are derived from virtues, so virtue ethics does not examine the correctness and necessity of the matter, rather virtue is the criterion of practical ethics (Sadeghi, 2008, p. 15). Another school is duty-based, based on which judging the goodness of a moral action is not based on its goal or result, but based on its harmony with moral norms. In fact, if human actions are performed based on their compliance with the task, they are considered good (Pincoffs, 2012, p. 49). Based on consequentialism, which is one of the most common and widely used ethical approaches, we have only one moral obligation, and that is to do everything that leads to the best results; the type of work in itself is not important, but what is important is to maximize the benefits with whatever we do (Gensler, 2010, p. 317). The attention and focus of this theory is on the effects and consequences of the action, and the criterion of judgment about the moral value and obligation, such as the good and bad and the right and wrong actions, is based on their results and effects (Frankena, 1389, p. 245). Consequentialism includes egoism, altruism, and utilitarianism. In moral egoism, the criterion of rightness and wrongness of action is the most desirable outcome for the agent. On the other hand, altruists believe that the only criterion for the correctness of an action is the most desirable results for others. But utilitarianism considers the criterion of rightness and wrongness of each action to be greater good for most people (Williams, 2013, p. 18). Based on "principle of profit" or "principle of maximum happiness" or "principle of pleasure" which utilitarianism uses, the right action is the action that brings the greatest happiness, benefit and pleasure to the greatest number of people, and on the basis of this, it is a wrong action that causes a decrease in happiness, and an increase in unhappiness or suffering (Geoffrey, 1998, p. 439). In today's societies, with the loss of many functions of the family institution and psychological disorders, what is considered as an important function is the satisfaction of psychological needs, which can be a motivation for the survival of the family. In order to encourage the family to consider the issue of "is having children useful or not?", utilitarians have investigated the reasons for the supporters and opponents from the psychological point of view of having children. Each of these reasons, based on utilitarianism, has presented a positive or negative attitude regarding childbearing,

and with the help of examining and criticizing these views, the main criterion of childbearing can be extracted. Therefore, in this research, with the help of a rational method, they are explained and the proposed reasons have been discussed, evaluated and criticized.

Main Body

Some psychological reasons for utilitarians in favor of having children are as follows:

- 1) Having children and reviving the childhood days for the parents
- 2) Having children and creating mental peace due to economic-social growth for oneself and the society
- 3) Argument of having children and happiness of parents
- 4) Argument of having children and fulfilling parents' motivations.

On the other hand, some opponents of having children put forward psychological reasons that are grounds for persuading not to have children:

- 5) Argument of having children and accepting its heavy responsibility
- 6) Argument of the possible physical and psychological risks of childbearing for the mother
- 7) Having children, environmental hazards and disrupting the psychological balance of humans

Conclusion

According to the conditions, arguments of "advocating having a child" become less and more. The preliminary results indicated that all human beings are morally obliged to be willing to have children and take practical action, although there may be less attention to this issue in certain situations where the population explosion has occurred or the human race is not on the verge of extinction. There is a moral assumption in this context that having children is beneficial, so that not having them is problematic and not morally neutral. Sometimes even the circumstances indicate a direct personal duty to have a child. Therefore, it is possible to explain and analyze the issue of having children by resorting to the bases corresponding to the duty-oriented basis. Also, with adjustments in issues such as having children, the benefits of children can also be justified in addition to dutifulness.

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