

# Review of: "Social context of the brain and law: Is consciousness social?"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

On the positive side, the author has clearly given much thought to the issues discussed in the paper. There are numerous citations to diverse sources. The topics introduced may be of interest in multiple domains.

On the negative side, the paper comprises a long and rambling discussion. The language (use of English) is unclear in many places. The exposition is not well organized or focused. The paper contains quite a number of seemingly significant statements, but the logical connections among these are not articulated. Some important claims are not supported by references. The applications and contributions of the work are not made clear.

I was intrigued by the title of the paper. Then I read the abstract and was totally confused. But after reading the paper I can see that the abstract is actually quite appropriate. Unfortunately, this is to say that the paper is as wide ranging and confusing as the abstract suggests. Regarding the keywords, the ones given reflect the text, but I believe that some others could be added, such as neuroscience, bias, and law.

I do believe that the question asked in the title is answered in the paper. There is no point at which the answer is explicitly presented, but supporting arguments are discussed, and a social aspect or element of consciousness is presumed for some of the important issues addressed (e. g., legal systems and decolonization). The question of whether consciousness is social could well serve as the focal topic of a research paper, but this paper seems to me to be more about the implications of social consciousness, so the title should probably point to some other topic (pending potential revisions to the paper).

I suspect that too much ground is covered in this paper to be clearly presented in one publication of this length. I believe that the author should break the themes apart and treat them in more focused papers. In this way, a more elaborate argument can be built up from several parts, giving an opportunity to improve the organization of each part. This will be beneficial both for the author and for readers. Just to give some examples of possible themes: Is Consciousness Social?; Social Consciousness and the Judicial System; Social Consciousness and the Problem of Decolonization; The Role of Neuroscience in Judicial Consciousness; and so on. (You can pick your own favorite topics.)

I do believe that important points are raised and meaningful assertions are made throughout the paper, but it was not clear to me how these fit together, or what their individual and collective significance should be in my thinking and action going forward. (In other words, too little "Ah ha!" and too much "So what?")

I recommend that any paper on this topic (or from this collection of topics) should have a specific overall focus; it should

provide necessary background; it should address clearly stated and well-motivated questions or problems; it should make a clearly expressed contribution; the development should be systematic and logical; assertions should be supported; and the conclusion directly drawn from the work and ideas presented in the paper.

You might also work with an editor, or perhaps a non-Indian colleague, to improve the use of English in the paper.

To conclude, I believe there are some potentially interesting ideas in this work, and they might well be pursued, but I can't really recommend that anyone should read the paper in its present form.