

## Commentary

# Particular Sexual and Ambitious Attitude Threatens the Global Societal Functioning and Individual Wellbeing

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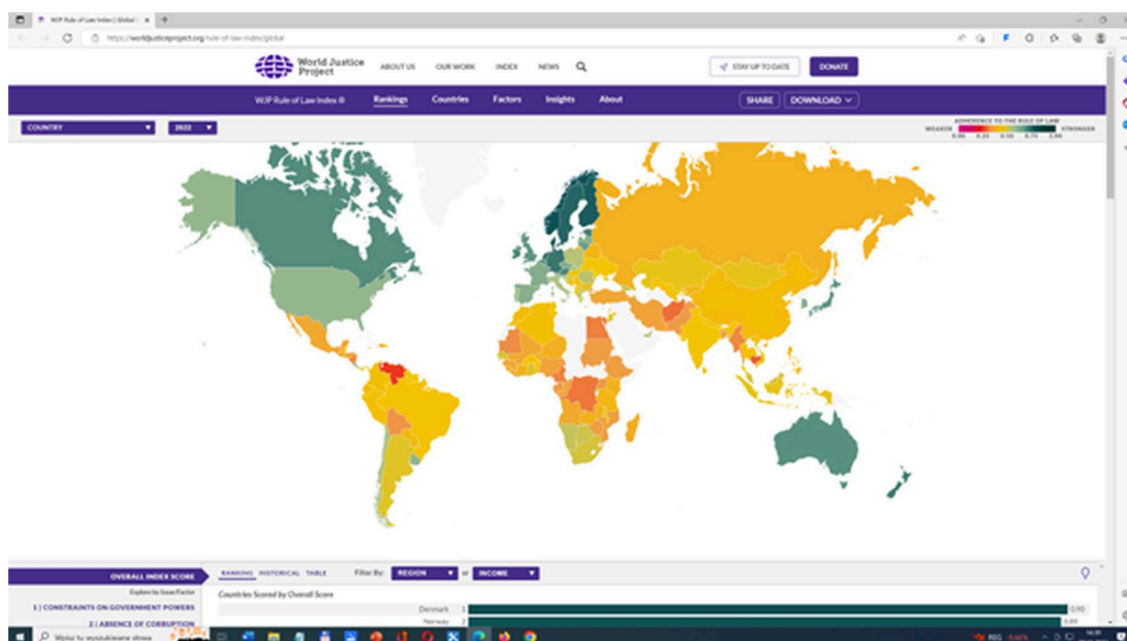
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The authors begin with the premise that mental well-being, and even the quality of life in many countries worldwide, is not satisfactory. They further assert that the current state of welfare in individual countries can be objectively evaluated, citing the World Justice Project as an example. Objective data relating to the exercise of power reveal that many societies are governed in an authoritarian manner. The authors then recall findings made by Jonathan Haidt and other neuroscientists, who demonstrated that people with conservative attitudes differ from those with liberal-democratic orientations in five psychological traits defined by the terms: harm, fairness, authority, ingroup, and purity. Their own interpretation of these findings leads the authors to formulate a hypothesis explaining why there is a constant tendency for authoritarian regimes to emerge. In the next step of their arguments, the authors state that authoritarian regimes usually maintain a patriarchal social structure, based on the traditional system of customary taboo, adhering to religious mandates. This psychological and social situation leads to vast variations in legal regulations in individual countries regarding dilemmas such as the legality of adultery, pornography, prostitution, the permissibility of abortion, and sex education, which can be illustrated by maps available on Wikipedia. The authors then devote much attention to the links between religious views and the realm of sexuality and their influence in maintaining the patriarchal structure of many societies. In their opinion, the freedom, freedom of speech, and well-being of citizens are often limited from two sides: by oppressive power and by a strict, purist system of taboo. The authors also ponder what can be done to counteract the described social situation. They believe that a persuasive educational program should be developed.

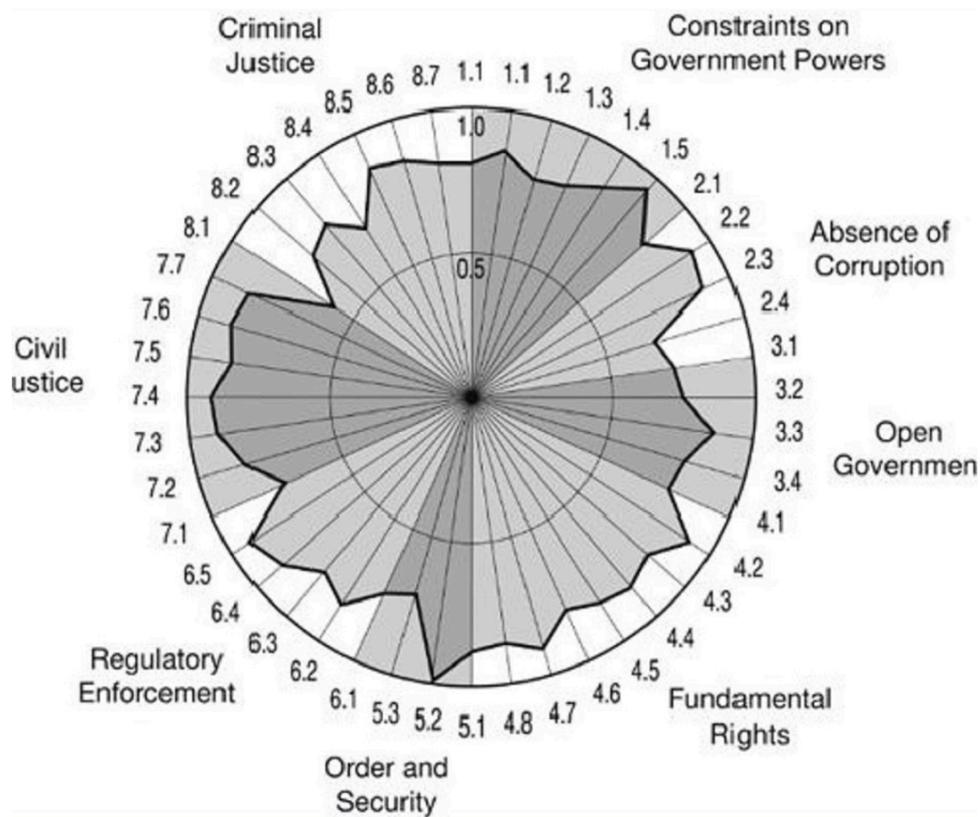
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## Introduction

Currently, in many countries around the world, the wellbeing and mental state of most citizens are not good. The wellbeing and mental health status of the public is now objectively evaluated. One such evaluation, for example, is presented by The World Justice Project <sup>[1]</sup>. This organization presents yearly updated scores determining the quality of life based on data obtained from numerous, usually anonymous, citizens of countries through answers to detailed questions in a meticulous survey. In Figure 1, we present a chart showing the ranking of 140 countries worldwide compiled based on these scores calculated from data obtained in 2022. It is easy to familiarize oneself with the essence of these scores for 140 countries by looking at the examples of graphs presented in Figures 2 and 3.

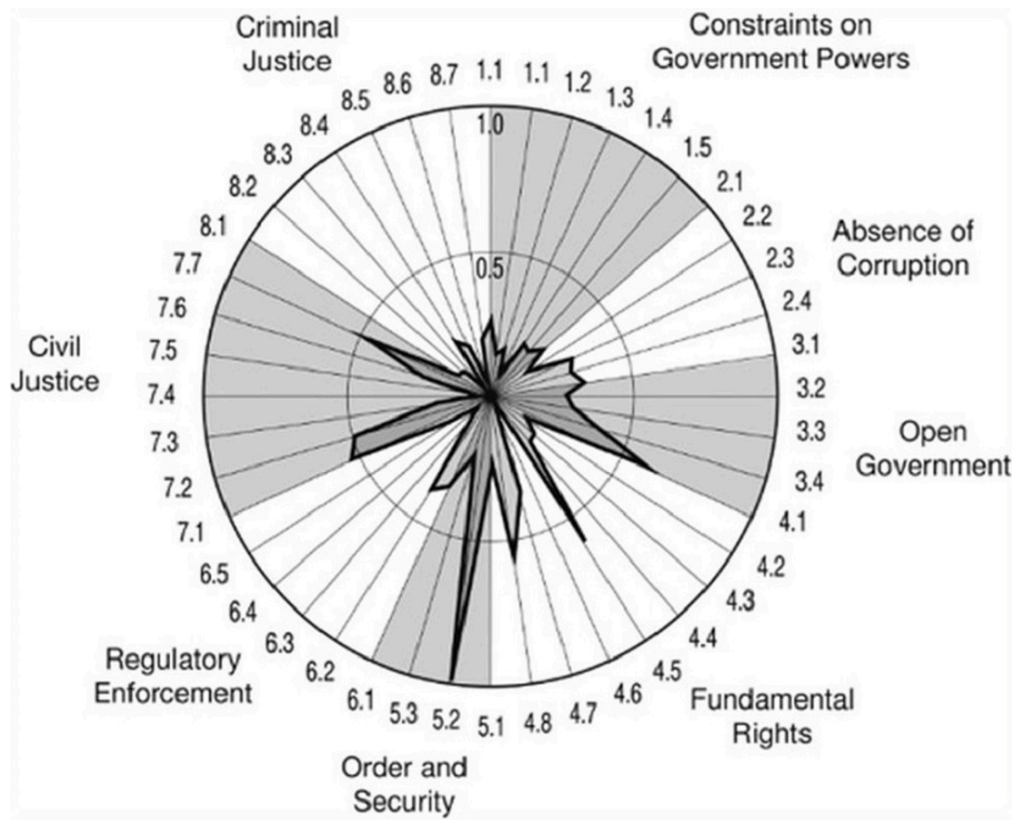


**Figure 1.** World Justice Project – Rule of Law Index – Global Insights. Legend: Red color – very low adherence to the rule of law, green color – high adherence. Source: <https://worldjusticeproject.org/>



**Figure 2.** Scores of Rule of Law Index for Germany in the year 2021. Factors 1, 3, 4 reflect the way in which power is exercised.

Source: <https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/WJP-INDEX-2021.pdf>



**Figure 3.** Scores of Rule of Law Index for Venezuela in the year 2021. Factors 1, 3, 4 reflect the way in which power is exercised.

Source: <https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/WJP-INDEX-2021.pdf>.

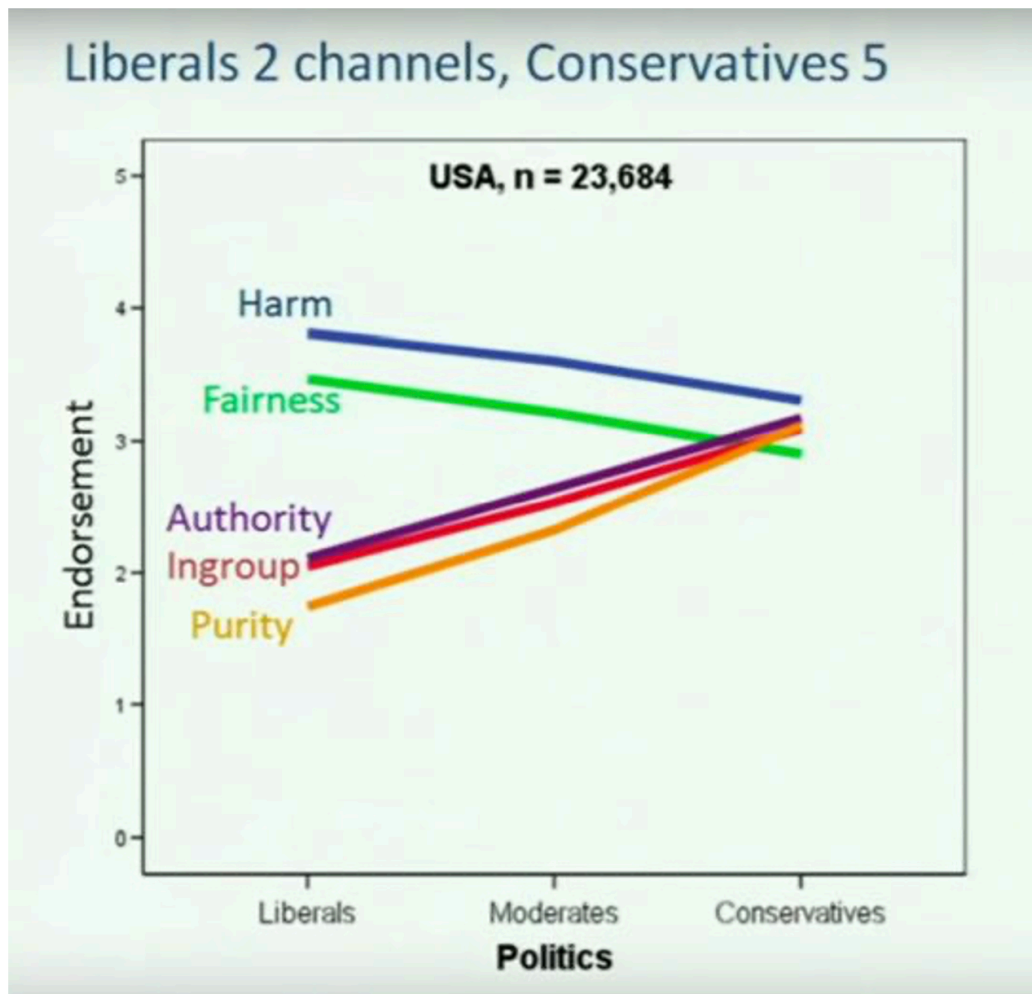
The explanation of the interpretation of these graphs is presented on the World Justice Project website <sup>[1]</sup>. We can read there: "The WJP Rule of Law Index® presents scores and rankings for eight factors and 44 sub-factors.... These factors are organized around eight primary indices: Constraints on Government Powers, Absence of Corruption, Open Government, Fundamental Rights, Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice... Scores range from 0 to 1. So, looking at factors such as 'Constraints on Government Powers, Open Government, Fundamental Rights,' one can quickly and intuitively gauge the quality of life and wellbeing in a considered country.

The reasons for formulating this article stem from the fact that we believe we have correctly observed a regularity, not emphasized by other researchers, regarding the likely cause of the steady emergence of authoritarian regimes.

Moreover, upon examining the social organization and the collective spirit of societies characterized by a low quality of life, we arrive at the conclusion that the oppressive and authoritarian nature of the ruling authorities in these countries is not sufficient to explain the root causes of such a situation. It is imperative to consider also the prevalent customs and the system of taboos that exist in these countries.

## **Attitudes, behaviors, and psychological and cognitive traits distinguishing liberals and conservatives**

The formulation of our theses is based on the well-known findings of Jonathan Haidt and some of his followers [\[2\]\[3\]\[4\]\[5\]\[6\]\[7\]\[8\]\[9\]\[10\]\[11\]](#). The essence of his theory is effectively revealed in Figure 4, presented in his highly renowned presentation [\[2\]](#).



**Figure 4.** The essence of Jonathan Haidt's findings related to the main preoccupations of liberals and conservatives.

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Haidt-political\\_morality.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Haidt-political_morality.png)

Haidt maintains that liberals are more open to new experiences, while conservatives prefer familiar and traditional things. He distinguishes five moral foundations (behavioral attitudes):

1. apprehension of harm and appropriate care, 2. appreciation of fairness and reciprocity, 3. reverence for traditional authorities (authority), 4. a sense of group affiliation and alignment with its members' beliefs (ingroup), and the maintenance of so-called 5. bodily purity (purity) [2][4][5]. Liberals primarily focus on the first two foundations, while conservatives value all five. Liberals are more likely to devalue the remaining three moral foundations, seeing them as related to xenophobia, authoritarianism, and puritanism.

The classic description presented here of the differences between the attitudes of liberals and conservatives leads, in our opinion, to an important conclusion regarding social and political consequences. Namely, we believe that from this description emerges the thesis of the inevitability of the constant emergence of authoritarian regimes.

## **The probable cause of the steady emergence of authoritarian regimes**

The foundation of our argument is that the key attitudes defining conservatives do not contain features that appreciate freedom of speech and respect for the rights of all citizens, that is, the need to maintain democratic interpersonal relations. On the contrary, they believe in the need to respect tradition and conform to the views of the leader and his supporters <sup>[2][4][5]</sup>. Consequently, it is almost inevitable that within a group of conservatives, a leader will arise, eager to seize power and reluctant to relinquish it.

Such a leader often manages to rally numerous followers, as they are similarly conservative in mindset and see no issues with the dissolution of democratic societal oversight. Further, both the leader and their conservative supporters endorse, and may even favor, what is referred to as "strong-arm rule." Intrinsic to the conservative persona is a bias towards tradition, including religious customs, and a resistance to liberal attitudes, which contributes to the preservation of a patriarchal societal structure.

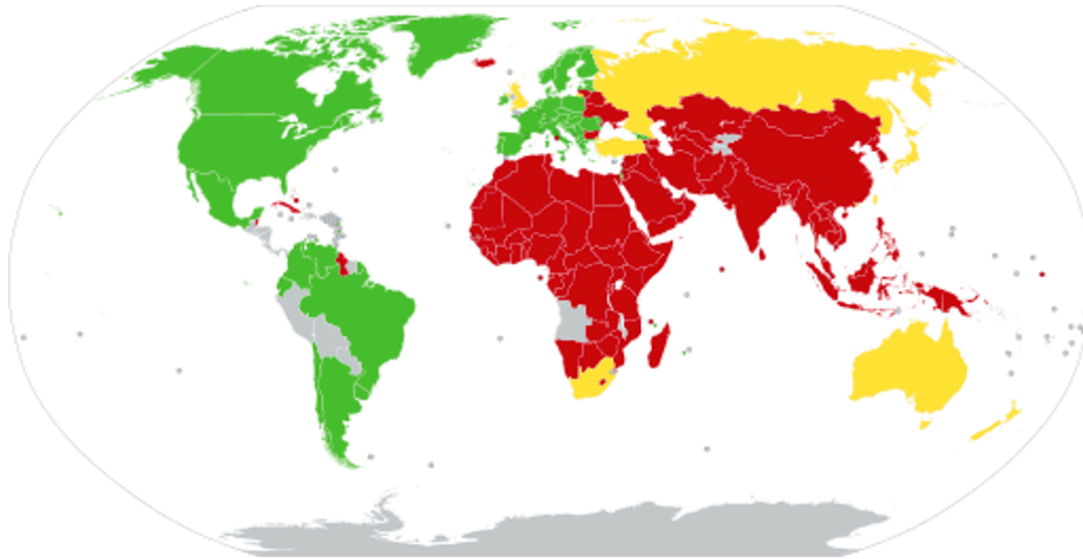
The above explanation becomes readily apparent when closely examining the key diagram included in Jonathan Haidt's lecture <sup>[2]</sup>, which we reproduce here as Figure 3. We believe that the oversight of this particular neural (psychological) pattern led to what is referred to as Fukuyama's mistake <sup>[12][13]</sup>.

## **Authoritarian regimes usually maintain a patriarchal social structure based on the traditional system of customary taboo, adhering to religious mandates**

Typically, in countries where authoritarian regimes govern, power has been established by a group of people characterized by conservative attitudes <sup>[14][15]</sup>. Therefore, it is not surprising that, in line with the observations of Jonathan Haidt mentioned earlier, such individuals adhere to traditional behavior patterns. Adhering to customary traditions usually implies advocating for the *obeisance* of religious-derived principles <sup>[16][17][18][19][20]</sup>. In all three major monotheistic religions, the imposed moral

principles are puritanical. Freedom and liberty in these societies are limited not only by the strictures established by authorities but also by the prevailing system of taboo.

As a result, this leads to significant variations in the application of legal principles for many important social processes. This can be illustrated by maps sourced from Wikipedia, showcasing this legislative diversity determining the legality and permissibility of: adultery <sup>[21]</sup>, pornography <sup>[22]</sup>, prostitution <sup>[23]</sup>, the permissibility of abortion <sup>[24]</sup>, and sex education <sup>[25]</sup>.



**Figure 5.** Legal regulations concerning pornography: [Green] Pornography legal, [Yellow] Pornography legal, but under some restrictions, [Red] Pornography illegal, [Grey] Data unavailable

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pornography#/media/File:Pornography\\_laws.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pornography#/media/File:Pornography_laws.svg)

We present here as an example one of these maps <sup>[22]</sup>, although our argument becomes more persuasive if one also examines the other figures indicated here and compares them with the map of life quality diversity discussed at the beginning, presented in Figure 1, compiled by the World Justice Project <sup>[1]</sup>.

If one ponders where the generally astonishing stability in adhering to customs and moral prohibitions comes from, it is necessary to articulate principles that are not often discussed.

Indeed, there is an undeniable feature of human mentality referred to as shame <sup>[26][27][28]</sup>. The inclination to feel shame, however, depends on the above-discussed attitude that places great importance on the trait termed "purity", sometimes described as "adherence to chastity" <sup>[29]</sup>. Feelings of shame and prescriptions for purity are shaped in the minds of children largely by parents who, in turn, hold views



consistent with the prevailing system of taboo [29][30]. According to the views of Sigmund Freud, the essence of the phenomenon of conscience primarily results from the internalization of parental beliefs [31][32]. The taboo system of Western societies was established in the distant past at the beginnings of the Abrahamic religions [33]. It was a time of thoroughly patriarchal societies. This is written about, for example, by Carol Meyers [34], Susan Ackerman [35], and Stephani Lynn Budin [36].

Additionally, it should be considered that in the aforementioned three major monotheistic religions, the promise of afterlife is dependent on *obedience* to moral commandments and prohibitions. This can be briefly put as "immortality for purity".

The discussed dependencies thus determine the link between religious views and the realm of sexuality and their impact on maintaining the patriarchal structure of many societies [37].

It is worth noting that people wishing to maintain power or control over others always want to limit freedom of speech and freedom of thought. Furthermore, the more intensified this need for limitation is, the more it interferes with actions that would seem entirely private. It is not surprising, then, that it ultimately also involves the most intimate realms. To illustrate this, it will be helpful to recall the social and mental situation in communities professing Islam. It is known that dogmatic prohibitions, proclaimed there by clerics, also pertain to thought content, and later to social, family, marital, and intimate behaviors. In a nutshell: "If we compel you and you agree to obey moral behaviors, then you will also agree to our authority."

## Threats to Global Societal Functioning and Individual Wellbeing

Countries governed authoritatively cooperate and support each other. Recent events related to Russia's aggression against Ukraine have provided evidence of this. This rule is also illustrated by the map shown in Figure 1. The polarization of views on the desired social organization and behaviors is increasing, which is termed ideological polarization. The spread of social media promotes increasing ideological polarization. Within so-called information bubbles, two different narratives about the further desired and anticipated direction of humanity's development are solidifying. People observing these differing, polarized interpretations feel the threat arising from armed conflicts, the possibility of nuclear war, and differing approaches to the issues of climate warming and the problems of securing energy and food.

People living in authoritatively governed countries experience discomfort resulting from the imposed restrictions and potential reprisals for expressed views and their stance. At the same time, a part of the

population in these countries adopts a passive attitude, which is manifested by a lack of interest in ongoing political processes. A significant or even increasing number of people who are uninformed and uninterested in the situation in their countries partly results from an additional social phenomenon, which involves directing a large part of society's attention to trivial, irrelevant matters. This can be termed "padding socio-technique." We are referring here to routines of many young people, such as complete immersion in the content of their own group of so-called "Facebook friends" or wasting time following, for hours, platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

The question arises: what can be done to counteract, in one's own country or environment, in the face of the experience of the social situation described above, which could be defined as the 'Syndrome of Liberals/Conservatives-Sexual Permissiveness/Prohibitions Dichotomy'?

## **The essence and utility of an educational program countering the syndrome of sexual-political polarization**

On the website we developed, available at <https://basiclearning.angelfire.com/NSA.htm>, we have outlined an educational program that disseminates some elements of neuroscience and sexology and strives to arouse the ambition to contribute to informing friends and adversaries about the causes of the current situation [38]. This educational course encourages the abandonment of a passive attitude and involvement in actions for citizens' freedoms and opposition to patriarchal structures.

In advocating for a comprehensive self-education initiative, we posit that the required content is readily available in global cultural resources encompassing bookstores, magazines, libraries, databases, websites, and various platforms including YouTube, TED lectures, streaming services, and social media. Furthermore, it is unequivocally evident that the precision and potency of persuasion peak when emanating from individuals of elevated artistic prowess. We offer on our website an initial compilation of links to lectures and video presentations, which serve to illustrate and expand upon our arguments.

To illustrate the content we propose to include in the discussed educational program, we list here only a few examples [39][40][41][42][43][44]. The composition of the discussed educational program should be continually refined and expanded. The selection of materials should take into account the transformations of the feminist movement and data on contemporary sources of spiritual power [45].

**We believe that familiarizing yourself with our short educational course offers the following benefits:**

- It allows you to assess to what extent you are limited or even enslaved in your life.
- It enables the assessment of whether freedom is taken away from you by the prevailing regime, or rather by the customs and taboo system that apply to you.
- It allows for an assessment of the level of hypocrisy in your surroundings.
- It facilitates the expansion of your area of freedom.
- It provides the satisfaction of making your – at least – "minimum" contribution and stimulates rethinking whether you can do something more for your community.
- It gives satisfaction from attempts to improve the content of the discussed educational program.

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