

Peer Review

Review of: "Should the Struggle Against Authoritarian Regimes Be Based on Aristotle's or Freud's Psychology, or Rather on Neuroscience?"

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The article by Brodziak and Abram offers an ambitious interdisciplinary review that seeks to explain the emergence and persistence of authoritarian regimes by synthesizing classical psychological theories with contemporary neuroscientific insights. The authors juxtapose Aristotle's concept of virtue ethics with Freud's psychoanalytical constructs—such as “totem” and “taboo”—and extend the discussion to include Jung's ideas on the shadow and collective inferiority, as well as modern findings from political neuroscience (notably Jonathan Haidt's work on moral foundations). This broad theoretical integration is employed to examine how conservative personality traits and patriarchal, religiously influenced taboos may predispose societies toward authoritarian leadership.

A notable strength of the paper is its comprehensive scope. By drawing on historical examples (e.g., Nazi Germany and post-revolutionary Soviet Russia) and referencing current geopolitical shifts, particularly the transition from far-right to liberal democratic governance in Poland, the article makes a compelling case for understanding political phenomena as deeply rooted in both individual psychology and collective neurophysiological processes. The inclusion of a survey instrument to gauge public perception of authoritarian tendencies further illustrates an effort to translate theoretical insights into practical tools for social assessment and political intervention.

However, while the synthesis of classical and modern theories is thought-provoking, the article largely relies on secondary sources and theoretical arguments rather than presenting extensive new empirical research. This approach, while useful for framing the debate, suggests that further quantitative studies and rigorous field research are needed to substantiate some of the proposed

connections—particularly the analogies drawn between cerebral hemispheric functions and geopolitical blocs. In conclusion, Brodziak and Abram’s work is a valuable contribution to the discussion on authoritarianism. It challenges readers to consider how long-standing psychological mechanisms—ranging from Aristotelian virtues to Freudian neuroses—interact with contemporary sociopolitical dynamics. For scholars and policymakers alike, the article provides a rich conceptual framework, supported by a wide array of sources for exploring new strategies to counter authoritarian regimes and promote democratic resilience.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.