

# Review of: "Particular Sexual and Ambitious Attitude threatens the Global Societal Functioning and Individual Wellbeing"

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This paper claims that there has been a global increase in authoritarianism and suggests the main indicator of this is the patriarchal ideology that significantly constrains sexual freedoms in many parts of the world. The paper's data include a world map showing that the rule of law is adhered to much more in the west than in the rest of the world and another map that portrays the different levels of the legalisation of pornography globally. There is clearly considerable overlap between the two maps that suggests that places that do not value the rule of law are socially conservative, as well as having a tendency towards authoritarianism, testified to by their outlawing of pornography.

While this is an interesting viewpoint, it would be more convincing were it demonstrated through indepth empirical data of a qualitative nature. The validity of the premise upon which this paper seems to be predicated is that 'conservatives do not ... appreciate freedom of speech and respect for the rights of all citizens'. Conservatives appear to be understood as those who wish to constrain sexual freedoms with the implication that this applies to all freedoms, including freedom of speech, often hampered by religious constraints, while liberals are in favour of both sexual freedoms and free speech, and are presumably free from religious constraints too.

I suggest that better datasets would show that there are considerable issues here. Among the states where pornography is at least partially legalised is the Russian Federation. This could hardly be said to be a bastion of liberal democracy or sexual freedoms. Among those that have fully legalised it is the USA. Here there are interesting contradictions between conservatives (most of whom vote Republican) and liberals (most of whom vote Democrat). The former are largely against sexual freedoms, as the responses to the removal of Roe vs Wade in many Republican-dominated states demonstrate, while strongly supporting freedom of speech and minimalist government. A glance at those who objected to the loss of freedoms of multiple kinds during the COVID emergency, including free speech, provides ample evidence. Liberals on the other hand generally do support sexual freedoms--most are pro-choice and in favour of gay marriage for instance--but seem to have little appetite for freedom of speech more generally. Consider in this respect the Biden administration's pressuring of social-media sites into removing all postings that do not match the government's policies, something that has recently been revealed in several court cases. In what ways does this support freedom of speech? Similarly, over the last few years the UK, also supposedly a major upholder of liberal democracy and the rule of law, has been passing multiple bills to curtail both freedom of speech and the right to protest against government policies.

Moreover, the fact that the national governments of both countries support sexual freedoms needs to come under scrutiny. Is it the case that such support is really about the well-being of citizens or is it a sop to conceal the lack of democracy in other areas. Consider Jasbir Puar's *Homonationalism* and Sara Farris' *The rise of Femonationalism* for instance. Both volumes make the point that the emphasis on sexual and gender equality appears less aimed at benefiting those concerned than at diverting attention from other kinds of social problems such as increasing economic inequalities and the rising power of the super wealthy and major corporations.

In order to make its case this paper needs far stronger empirical evidence that then uses appropriate theories to drill down into it. Using a psychological model as the sole analytical framework for analysing political issues is limiting. There is plenty of good political-science theory that could be drawn upon, depending on the kinds of data to be analysed. It is crucial to set out from good data and then to discover what theories will help elucidate it rather than setting out from the theoretical and seeking data to verify it.