

Abstract

Authority and conformism; social psychology of Nazism

This thesis attends to Nazism from the perspective of social psychology. Its aim is to analyze Nazism by using chosen theoretical concepts of social psychology, namely authority and conformism.

The work begins with the presentation of the concept of totalitarianism, when in the first instance the term totalitarianism is generally defined and then the great part of this chapter deals with the concept of totalitarianism in Hannah Arendt's conception. At the end of this chapter there are mentioned some limits of Hannah Arendt's conception.

The ideology of Nazism is the content of the next chapter. There are terms ideology and Nazism defined and subsequently there is the goal and basic characterization of Nazi ideology given.

The third chapter deals with the authority and the conformism as social psychological phenomena. The first part of this chapter defines conformism, lists the possible resolution of its causes and basic typology of its consequences. Furthermore, there are presented the most important classical studies in the field of the scientific study of conformism carried out by laboratory experiments and briefly outlined the problems of dispositional and situational approach. Next a brief treatise on modern individualism as a possible aspect of conformism. The following part of this chapter defines the basic conception of authority, mentions its three ideal types, as were defined by classical sociologist Max Weber, and the issue of obedience to authority, and explains the concept of authoritarian personality. The last part of this chapter focuses on chosen manifestations of authority and conformism in Nazi Germany. Among other things, this part includes the presentation of leader's cult and Adolf Eichmann.

The last chapter of the thesis discusses briefly the law and its role in Nazi Germany with emphasis on defining the specific sources of law, their interpretation and implications of the application. The chapter ends with a treatise on Radbruch's formula and its criticism.