RESEARCH ARTICLE

Environment and social psychology: A good nexus

Brij Mohan*

School of Social Work, Louisiana State University, Baton Rogue, LA 70803, USA

Abstract: A paradigmatic search for human-environmental-social-development calls for bio-global civility. This article is a modest attempt to signify social psychology as a discipline that promotes environmentally conducive transformative behaviors. Premised here is worldwide environmental toxicity, which breeds injustice, bigotry and mayhem.

Keywords: human-social development, bio-global civility, human behavior, environmental justice

*Correspondence to: Brij Mohan, School of Social Work, Louisiana State University, Baton Rogue, LA 70803, USA; Email: brijmohan128@gmail.com

1. Introduction

On the cusp of growth and development, humanity confronts a crisis of confidence. Dualities of success and catastrophes abound. A deadly drought in Texas, followed by devastating floods in Austin and Dallas, Texas is not a freaky natural calamity. Human complicity is both hidden and underrated. Paradox of boom and gloom characterize the crisis of biodiversity compounded by environmental injustice.

Environment and people have co-existed since the dawn of human evolution. Vagaries and invincibility of nature forced humans to adapt and evolve. The advent of civilization is a triumph of human imagination and ingenuity to cultivate and exploit natural resources. Reason prevailed over instinct. Still, humans remain humans. The *social animal* (Elliot, 1999) is not a fictional conjecture.

Advancements in science, technology, and global economy have raised hype and hope. Environmental consciousness is a global phenomenon; so is pollution, not to mention rampant abuse and innate greed. Global free market economy thrives on these attributes. But it does not resolve existential issues: poverty, inequality and violence against both man[2] and nature. Noble laureate economist Angus Deaton says, "If poverty and underdevelopment are primarily consequences of poor institutions then, by weakening those institutions or stunting their development, large aid flows do exactly the opposite of what they are intended to do" (*Bloomberg*, 2015: 18).

The Deaton theory is convincing but overstated. There has always been a politics in foreign aid. Yes, we must build institutions rather than destroy. Our social, political, and economic institutions are in the throes of meltdowns. Catastrophes that challenge our will, tools, and convictions warrant nations to rethink what they wish for. The *good nexus* seeks to explore possibilities that may save us from ourselves.

Green Jihad[3] in Africa is practicing what Pope Francis lately admonished us to do for the environment. Socio-hydrology, a construct turned into a cool branch of environmental sciences[4], like 'socioviolen

---

[1] Founding Editor-in-Chief, Journal of *Environment and Social Psychology*. This article will serve as a rationale for exploring the nexus of environmental linkages and human behaviors. Much of relevant research is rooted in the outcomes of bio-socio-psychological investigations. Neglected dimensions of human psyche, behaviors and motivations have assumed special significance in light of advancements in environmental and social sciences. Largely, his piece was written months before Pope Francis delivered his homilies in Washington, DC, New York and Philadelphia (September 2015). The fact of the matter is: It's all about "Climate, Economy and Justice" (Mohan, 2015). *Environment and Social Psychology* presciently underscores the need for a new mantra: *Bio-global civility* encapsulated in *ESP*'s mission.

[2] I will use 'man' in an unbiased, non-judgemental generic way as a social scientist.

tology'[5], is bridging the gaps that a new culture of environment stands for. The human condition rests on the outcomes of a good nexus that synergizes the forces of nature, physical and human.

Environment and Social Psychology (*ESP)* is both a platform and a movement to capture the new wave so well captured in Pope Francis' four words: *right of the environment.* Psychology's evolution as a science of human psyche posits both inner and external social worlds in a symbiotic relationship that make people more human. The nexus of environment and social psychology is thus inherently evolutionary and organic.

2. The Symbiosis

Environment and *social psychology* are two symbiotic entities. A civilization rising on the waves of monumental changes calls for transformative adaptations to harmonize productivity, creativity, and overall global-human well-being.

Foul environment does not merely pollute civil life; it corrupts the conscience of a society that manufactures mayhem and madness, not to mention 'civilized' numbness to such monstrosities. President Obama lamented "'routine' mass shootings in America" and addressed the nation in response to the 15th mass shooting that had occurred during his presidency, saying "the U.S. has become numb to them"[6]. The politics of mental illness, gun ownership and mass murder in America is a case in point[7]. Environmental injustice is perpetrated against the victims of an irresponsible culture that enchants the mantra: "Guns don't kill people, people kill people". While liberal mental health industry reaps benefits in the name of a better mental health system, gun owners, their advocates, the invincible National Rifle Association (NRA), and the conservative politicians—with racist proclivities —

perpetuate their mundane interests at the expense of public health and social well-being. This nefarious nexus in a culturally polluted environment highlights the power of evil that impacts human psyche.

When Pope Francis talks about the *rights of environment*, he posits environment as a victim of human greed and rapaciousness[8]. I am in full agreement, but environment is also an oppressor. The politics of expedience make it a fearsome adversary. It is in this context, that we find people and their behaviors adversely impacted. The duality of environmental stressors partakes of a new dimension in social psychology. It is not merely a 'culture of waste'; it is also a culture of greed, guns, and gods that perpetuates poverty, draught and mayhem at the same time. What we see today is environmental duality in theory and practice.

It is our endeavor to explore, investigate and discern variables and co-dependents that are immeasurably invaluable to comprehend patterns of human actions and reactions in relation to a host of milieus around their lives. Social psychology owes its existence to human consciousness of its immediate and remote environments. Psychology is not a perfect science; it need not be so as humans are humans. Environmental consciousness is enlightening the world asleep with cognitive dissonance. Contextually, this posits environment-psychology nexus that we seek to explore with obvious implications for public policy, social practice and scientific research.

How will people behave hundred years later is uncertain. Some conjectures, however, are in order. "Which current behavior will be most unthinkable 100 years from now? *The Atlantic* raises certain Big Questions: Taking the pill? Sadness? Driving? Fossil Fuels? Emails? Unsupervised Home Schooling? Snail Mail? Playing Football?"[9] It is anyone's guess how forces of

---

[3] Cf. Fareed Zakarian GPS, October 18, 2015. In late seventies, I developed a concept of *socio-violentology, which*, I regret, did not get any traction. Its logic, however, survives.

[4] Personal communication with Professor Vijay P. Singh, October 17, 2015 (Editorial Board*, ESP*, 2015).

[5] A concept that I developed in late seventies (*See* Mohan, 1987, Ch. V: 53–54).

[6] http://time.chtah.net/a/tBWDmClBASRffB84oq1NvHKqJFa/time5 (viewed October 2, 2015)

[7] In reference to the Mental Health Reform Act of 2015, a bill sponsored by U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy (*See* Roberts, G. 2015:7B).

[8] "First, it must be stated that a true "right of the environment" does exist, for two reasons. First, human beings are part of the environment. We live in communion with it, since the environment itself entails ethical limits which human activity must acknowledge and respect. Man, for all his remarkable gifts, which "are signs of a uniqueness which transcends the spheres of physics and biology" (Laudato Si', 81), is at the same time a part of these spheres. He possesses a body shaped by physical, chemical and biological elements, and can only survive and develop if the yr water is coming? therefore, is harm done to humanity. Second, because every creature, particularly a living creature, has an intrinsic value, in its existence, its life, its beauty and its interdependence with other creatures... . The misuse and destruction of the environment are also accompanied by a relentless process of exclusion." (http://www.newsweek.com/read-full-transcript-pope-francis-speech-united-nations-general-assembly-376606; viewed November 2, 2015).

emerging environments will impact our lives as individuals and collectivities. I suspect—fear?—100 years from now humans will be using 3D-printer technology for desired procreation. Social mores, institutions and belief systems are in a state of flux.

The new 'hangout' culture is a forerunner of devolving marriage as a dated social institution. A woman in Afghanistan is stoned to death for 'adultery.'[10] Family as we knew has new definitions. Communities that we grew up in do not exist anymore. Toxicities of varied hues have nearly destroyed environmental character. The technology behind bitcoin's blockchain ledger "could transform how the economy works."[11] In other words, you can only "trust machines". Nietzsche famously wrote in *Beyond Good and Evil:*

> "All psychology so far has got stuck in moral prejudices and fears; it has not dared to descend into the depths. [...] Never yet did a deeper world of insight reveal itself to daring travelers and adventurers, and the psychologist who thus 'makes a sacrifice' – it is not the *sacrifizio dell' intelletto*, on the contrary! – will at least be entitled to demand in return that psychology shall be recognized again as the queen of the sciences, for whose service and preparation the other sciences exist. For psychology is now again the path to the fundamental problems."[12]

As 'queen of the sciences', psychology is rooted in its father's ambivalence about science and truth. I could perhaps say the same about 'environment'. The ambiance of two embodies *Environment and Social Psychology* (*ESP*) — a modest endeavor to unravel the nexus of current and future contours of psychodynamic, cognitive and motivational behaviors that help us understand the dynamics of human-environment interactions. Holistic linkages between environment and social psychology, the foundation of a sociological offshoot of psychology, is conceptualized here as a disciplinarity that unravels the human experience in its varied dimensions involving conditions, interactions and behaviors at different levels of existence. Explorations of human-social interaction and development situate Social Psychology (SP) as an independent field of study and research beyond Cartesian dualism and interdisciplinary hybridism. Mon-

strosities like war, gun violence, racism, extremism, xenophobia, and global terrorism cannot be comprehended in isolation from inequality, injustice and oppression.

The Creation of Inequality (Flannery and Marcus, 2012) reveals how hunter-gatherer societies evolved into empires. Rousseau's study of 'state of nature', as noted by Flannery and Marcus, was premised on conjectures of non-western, traditional societies. Now that we have archives of anthropological data, the archaeological evidence becomes irrefutable.

New Goliaths are masters of manipulating technology to collect data and control the people. "Google can identify flu outbreaks using search queries; America's National Security Agency (NSA) aspires to do the same to find terrorists. But at the same time people are under constant surveillance by companies and governments, since the rules protecting privacy are hopelessly out of date" (Schneier, 2014). Too much power with invincible techno-digital empires cannot ensure global equality and justice, let alone a peacefully progressive world. Perhaps it is a contradiction to aspire for progress and freedom at the same time. Freedom entails heavy responsibilities; constrains on freedom impede progress.

David and Goliath have been in conflict since Biblical times. While the mythical moral still holds water, it is uncertain if continued conflict can still sustain the essence of adversity and suffering. "Three thousand years ago on a battlefield in ancient Palestine," Malcolm Gladwell writes, "a shepherd boy felled a mighty warrior with nothing more than a stone and sling..." (Gladwell, 2013). It's a counter-factual, wish-fulfilling, romantic fallacy that underdogs will always win. Look at: *Nation of No Beasts* in Africa; Palestinian kids revolting in the land of David! A time-tested lofty ideal is being shredded by cruelties of perceptions, politics of faith, beliefs and motivations.

Philosophy has been the fount of knowledge. From times immemorial societies have developed cultural norms that continue to regulate human behavior. Each culture's worldview offers a perspective on life. Human societies, both as abstractions and congregates, embody primordial philosophical paradigms that help the *construction* and *deconstruction* of Social Psychology. Between Aristotle and Hegel, western phi-

---

[9] *The Atlantic,* June, 2015, 315, 5: 96.

[10] http://news.yahoo.com/graphic-video-shows-afghan-woman-stoned-death-eloping-071332458.html (viewed November 3, 2015).

[11] *The Economist,* October 31, 2105: 13.

[12] https://www.facebook.com/eduardo.carlidemoraes/posts/677071259008177 (viewed November 4, 2015)

losophy has sought the triumph of reason and truth. Nirvana actually escaped the western psyche until Nietzsche reminded us that 'god is dead.'

It is a tragic irony that philosophy as a discipline is losing ground while techno-material specialties are riding the tide of success. The sections that follow will attempt to spotlight some issues that might reinvigorate the spirit of *ESP*.

2.1 Archeology of the Human Mind

"Man is by nature a social animal, an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally, is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something in nature that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or god."

<div align="right">Aristotle, Politics, c.328 B.C.</div>

9/11: The most infamous day in recent history. I was in the midst of a doctoral seminar in Room 356 talking about *Tipping Point* following on an earlier discussion on the subject before Malcolm Gladwell's book (2000) was published[13]. As the towers came rolling down like a monstrous dark grey cloud of fire and dust, I unwittingly uttered, "It's the end of a free society." The hell that broke loose is history in the making. Flight 9268 suspiciously broke apart in sky, killing 223 passengers returning from vacation in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. History is made of environmental miscarriages of justice.

A 21-year-old young man named Dylann Roof whose Facebook picture displays him attired in abominable flags of apartheid in Rhodesia and South Africa guns down nine innocent people in a black church in Charleston, SC. This "absolute hate crime occurred without any cause but deep rooted vestiges of bigotry, hatred and terror that characterized slavery in bygone days cannot be overstated in a gun culture. In his confession he said he "wanted to start a race war"[14]. Almost the whole world is appalled at America's insatiable hunger for guns and more guns. Mr.

Roof used the same pistol that his father had given him on his birthday. Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old child with a BB gun was shot down by a white cop in Cleveland, OH[15]. Carnage and mayhem, almost daily occurrences, reflect on a lingering legacy of confederacy — Jim Crow, slavery, and racist terror — in the United States[16]. "Stuff happens!" said Jeff Bush. "Somehow this has become routine," lamented President Obama[17].

Society is an abstraction. I doubt if any society preceded humans. Also, we must, at the very outset, question the Aristotelian premise that man is a "social animal'. Perhaps, man is a political creature, sociopsychologically. From times immemorial societies have developed around cultural norms that continue to regulate human behavior. Each culture's worldview offers a perspective on life. Human societies, both as abstractions and congregates, embody primordial philosophical paradigms that help the *construction* and *deconstruction* of Social Psychology.

Psychology got prefixed with *social* mainly in the post-war era of the 20th century. New realities of the 21st-century call for transformative reflection on the nature and scope of both *social* and *psychology*. My contention is that in light of visible social-cultural meltdowns, the subject warrants redefinition. The factors that account for this new direction are related to: (i) inequality in a technologically globalized culture, (ii) anti-state counter-revolutions and (iii) breakdown of social institutions that defined individual, family, marriage, and community as primordial bases of the social contact that does not exist anymore.

It is a tragic irony that philosophy as a discipline is losing ground while techno-material specialties are riding the tide of success. These advancements, we contend, cannot liberate humanity from its innate trappings. As Sartre famously said, "Success is not progress."

2.2 Transformative Social Psychology

Social psychology's reconstruction calls for re-examination of the nexus of environment and human

---

[13] An article written by Malcolm Gladwell appeared in The *New Yorker* (June 3, 1996: 32). Dr. Frank Raymond, one of my students in the premier class, discussed the issue with the author and the colloquium analyzed social psychological implications for social practice and research. http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1996/06/03/the-tipping-point (viewed March 10, 2015).

[14] http://news.yahoo.com/charleston-shooting-suspect-identified-21-yr-old-dylann-141932147.html   (June 19, 2015)

[15] http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2850234/Video-released-showing-police-shooting-Tamir-Rice-12-carrying-BB-gun.html (June 19, 2015).

[16] http://news.yahoo.com/familes-of-charleston-church-shooting-victims-to-dylann-roof--we--forgive-you-185833509.html (June 19, 2015)

[17] 44 school shootings took place in the US President Barak Obama lamented the tragedy. http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/01/politics/oregon-shooting-obama-response/index.html (viewed October 4, 2015).

behavior. This thrust is embedded in three basic connections: (i) sustainability and human-social development,

(ii) trans-disciplinarity of approaches and (iii) paradigmatic perspective on full behavioral spectrum. *ESP*'s inception is an acceptance of a daunting challenge. We seek to:

1. Examine the possibilities of human and social development as a credible paradigm for scientific inquiry and dialogue that promote world peace, prosperity and progress in a dangerously complex world,

2. Transcend dualities and contradictions of contemporary ideologies and methods toward a unifying framework for enduring social psychological research,

3. Promote scholarly pursuits for the advancement of knowledge in search of empirical evidence and truth, which support environmental justice as a viable paradigm conducive to human-social development,

4. Unravel social psychological barriers—beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes, prejudices, habits, and politico-cultural practices—that thwart quality education and learning beyond the contemporary dogmas of behavioral schools,

5. Interface pathways to understand and resolve contemporary nihilism that incubates psychopathologies of self-destructive addictions—sexual abuse, substance and drugs, interpersonal violence, and anomic dysfunctions—and breeds mayhem, mass murders and terror[18].

The Age of Anxiety has morphed into an age of sudden terror. How did this social transmutation occur? What forces triggered this strange metamorphosis? Was it ontogenesis or phylogenesis? Which of the two principles—pleasure or reality—prevailed? Can we scientifically ascertain the future of human race given the circumstances that are at work? It is my assumption that a paradigm shift is long overdue to construct afresh a 'third' way of studying science, humanities, and social sciences. As such, *environmental justice* is postulated as a fulcrum of futuristic pathways to un-revealing ecological, attitudinal and behavioral transformations.

"Of all branches of social psychology, none seems to have as much intuitive appeal as does social psychology" (Baron and Graziano, 1991). Initially, fundamentals of social psychology are embedded in the interdisciplinary study of three intertwined aspects of "humanology and technology" undergirding the interactional processes of (i) communication, (ii) socialization and (iii) individuals in the group (Hartley and Hartley, 1961). Social psychology has thus traditionally dealt with inter-personal relationships in a societal context with emphasis on beliefs and attitudes, perceptions and realities that impact social functioning of people in a particular culture. Implicitly, social conflict, change, accommodation, and cooperation are invisible and invincible forces that impact human behaviors and interactions. No essentialist theory of social psychological process can be formulated.

Construction of social psychology involves "creative and critical processes" (McGuire, 1999). William J. McGuire studied attitudes, persuasion and social influences that undergird his learning theory underlying ephemeral aspects of human thoughts, behaviors and actions encompassing the whole spectrum of critical processes. He sought to study "the magical experiments on attitude inoculation showing that small doses of a persuasive message can increase resistance to later larger doses; the construction of self in terms of its distinctive and atypical features; the content, structure, and processing of thought system functioning by balancing logical consistency, realistic coping, and hedonic gratification; persuasion by Socratic questioning that selectively directs attention; and the process of doing research as an exciting and infinitely rewarding activity" (1999: cover).

The "social problem" approach to scientific social psychology involving individual, interpersonal and group processes (Baron and Graziano, 1991) seems to signify SP's role from a logical and pragmatic viewpoint. Symbolic interactionism along with internalization and differentiation, socialization, power and deviance has added depth and authenticity to comprehend and resolve complicated aspects of social psychology (Lindesmith, Straus and Denzin, 1975; Backman and Secord, 1966).

We live in a global community of nations where no feature of community has survived. Concepts of family, marriage and community are changing; institutions that built societal structures are crumbling. Meltdown is not limited to only usually derided 'underclass' and 'developing nations'. Ideologies have disappeared. "Capitalism's unlikely heroes"[19] are emerging form the shadows of the Wall Street gloom. Communist
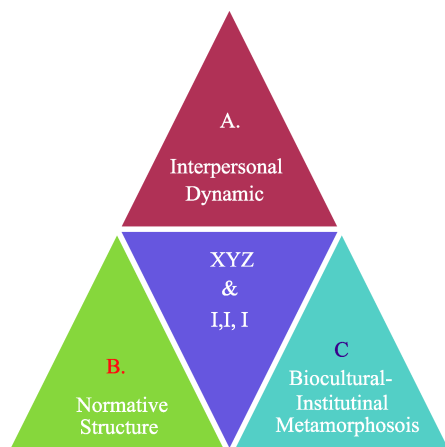
---

[18] *Environment and Social Psychology* published by Whioce Publishing, Singapore, due out in February 2016 (http://esp.whioce.com/index.php/ESP/index; June 1, 2015).

China is the world's most successful free market. In midst of this new world situation, it is hard to ignore certain aspects of life that expand as well deepen the nature and scope of social psychology. Emerging individual-societal relationships (EISR), I posit, define the new frontiers of social psychology.

2.2.1 Paradigm Shift

The 'new world order' is fraught with ambiguities of hope and despair. A three-dimensional paradox of this emerging phenomenon may well be the focus of all *ESP* research as follows:

Figure 1 seeks to interface three intertwined bases of bio-socio-environmental roots of human behavior corresponding to (i) interpersonal dynamic (A), (ii) normative structure (B) and (iii) cultural-instinctual metamorphosis (C). The womb of this bio-interactional design of human-social development is embedded in socio-cultural whole that shapes, modifies and manipulates the raw trappings of one's intra-psychic world. The major streams of psychological and sociological thought broadly underscore this formulation as illustrated in Figure 1.

Emergence of a Discipline: A Framework
A = Interpersonal Dynamic (ID)
B = Normative Structure (NS)
C = Cultural-Instinctual Metamorphosis (CIM)
X. Frontiers of a Discipline: Social Psychology
Y. Contexts: Social, Cultural, Political and Economic
Z. Development and Techno-Digital Revolution
Figure 1 Exhibit I and framework for an emerging discipline.

Instinctual, Institutional and Intellectual (I,I,I) (Figure 1)—rational and irrational—motives and impulses are embedded in evolutionary and developmental phases of human experience. Social Psychology's frontiers are variegated with limitless possibilities to transform the culture of fear and terror into a

new culture of sustainable peace and development. In other words, if A, B, C and X, Y, Z, contextualized above within I, I, I (Figure 1), posit of *ESP* as a paradigm that unravels the parameters, principles and promises of a new frontier of knowledge.

In my sixth trilogy on *Human-Social Development* (Mohan, 2007; 2011; 2015), I have endeavored to synthesize overlapping disciplinarities, which otherwise exist as islands in the vastness of oceanic knowledge (Mohan, 1999). *ESP* is a modest paradigmatic attempt to signify this viewpoint.

2.2.2 Genealogy of a Discipline

In 1694, Steven Blankaart seemed to have used Social Psychology for the first time in English, implying soul in a body. Psychologiá is owed to a Latinist named Marko Marulié. Wilhelm Wundt initiated his scientific work as a founder of psychology. Hippocrates, Plato, Thales, Manu and Chankya had alluded to mind and soul in relation to feelings, thoughts, dreams, and behaviors in ancient literature. Social psychologists had traditionally studied their behaviors and internalized norms in relation to inter-personal relationships and interactions in situations that are crucial to unravel feelings, attitudes, beliefs, cognitions, persuasions and motivations. Post-war developments in behavioral sciences underscored the significance of such an approach with emphases on individual (American) and group (Continental) dynamics. Thus intra- and inter-personal contacts, relationships, social-psychological interfaces within environmental contexts constitute the main realm of this field of study and research. As elucidated and conceptualized, the foundation of a discipline is premised on certain notions that are validated by specific, even though abstract, empirical evidence of its need and relevance. 'Social' and 'psychological' phenomena forged a unified cognate realm of study to unravel human interactions, transactions, and relationships. Human and social development (Mohan, 2007) implies environment as an incubator. While psychologists still continue to study mind and psyche and social scientists remain preoccupied with social processes, Social Psychology has forcefully emerged as a cognate discipline. Post-war scientific strides have signified dynamic contexts welding social, economic, mental, cultural, historical dimensions of human development and social environment.

Sigmund Freud is dated. Karl Marx is dead. Mao Tse Dong is diminished. Gandhi and Buddha have

---

[19] The Economist, February 7, 2015: 11.

become irrelevant. Ideology that once tainted intellectual discourse has now become expedient functionality. However, race, religion, class and gender continue to fuel the engines of academic discourse. Frederick Nietzsche was perhaps right: there are no facts; only interpretation. This juxtaposition of ideology, science, and self-interest is perhaps the most single factor that has shaped the *construction of social psychology* as a discipline of the human condition.

A phalanx of authors including Backman and Secord (1966), Baron and Graziano (1991), Hartley (1961), Lindesmith, Strauss and Denzin (1975), Lindzey (1954), McGuire (1999) and Parker (1998) have contributed much to our understanding of *ESP*. None of their texts, however, surface on the radar of current Social Psychology horizons. A casual Google search revealed 50 most important books written on social psychology[20]. The subjects mainly included in these "most important" books include human behavior and social being embedded in our habits, motivation, persuasion, belief, attitudes, prejudices, likings, attractions, disliking, aggression and deviance that make us "social animals" (Brooks, 2011).

In the new age of information revolution where media, mass communications, and opinions matter in both public and private sectors, it is imperative that Social Psychology be accorded the status of a discipline that is intuitive and proactive. From hostage crises to geo-political issues to presidential elections, one cannot underestimate the power of social psychological methods. No one exemplifies this better than the real estate mogul Donald Trump who is changing the political landscape of American politics (as I write this article).

2.2.3 The New Reality

If "80% of adults will have a supercomputer in their pocket" by 2020, realties of the "planet of the phones" will change dramatically (*The Economist*, February 28–March 6, 2015). Still no one knows if this might amount to a return of 'planet of the apes'. New realities call for more dynamic synthesis of art and science, body and soul, and values and facts. When Carl Djerassi, 'the father of the Pill', taught on biosocial aspects of birth control, he was actually predicting a new frontier for all social psychologists. "Observing the future from his sofa...he saw humans decisively uncoupling sex from procreation," (*The Economist*, Obituary Carl Djerassi, February 7, 2015: 86).

Djeraasi's brave new world is an unfathomable realm of human-social complexities. "This baby" (*Time*, February 23, 2015: Cover), "could live to be 142 years old" (Carstensen, 2015: 69–70).

It seems 'frontiers of longevity' are no more scientific fiction. If marriage and 'family' are dated institutions and 'hangout' is the hallmark of a neo-consumerist-hedonist civilization, society and inter-societal interactions—inter-personal relationships included — are on the cusp of a social revolution.

"Promiscuity and fidelity," writes *Science and Technology*, "seem to be specific biological adaptations. And their manifestations in men and women are not as different as you might expect." (*The Economist,* February 7–13, 2015: 75). Human sexual behaviors, mores, and mating strategies constitute a primordial focus of Social Psychology's new frontiers. Man "has to be promiscuous which will promote caddishness". But humans are unusual in that a father often helps care for his offspring. Those offspring are (at least, on a state of nature) less likely to survive and thrive without him. That will promote caddishness." (*The Economist,* February 3–17, 2015: 75).

Modernity, innovation and technology will play havoc with traditional mores, vales and patterns. Look at how smartphones and social media have changed institutional needs and behaviors. Their impact transcends personal-instinctual boundaries. ISIS is using new technologies to re-establish medieval institutions including slavery, crucifixion, and beheadings as given mandates of Caliphate. Any apostate is liable to be punished in line with the religious doctrines of war. Graeme Wood writes: "Nearly all Islamic state's decisions adhere to what it calls, on its billboards, license plates, and coins, 'The Prophetic Methodology'" (Wood, 2015: 83). What do 9-11, ISIS, *The Return of Khilafah,* and i-Phone have to do with Social Psychology? They all deepen and expand — unbearable challenges — of both 'social' and 'psychological'. The ramifications of this development unravel human-social development in light of progressive dimensions of evolutionary processes.

Our culture wars often are extended-reflective-ramifications of human conflicts and conundrums that validate socio-biogenic bases of human propensities, proclivities and perceptions. One can witness cultural warriors practically in every departmental unit on a university campus that allows dissent and diversity but

[20] http://www.sparringmind.com (viewed January 23, 2015)

ignores bigotry against the marginalized people of color, LGBT, 'aliens' denigrated as apostates of an established order.

This reality is what I propose to be the most fascinating and challenging frontier for all social psychological undertakings. This partakes of concerns that destabilize established social-personal norms, values, and structures. Elsewhere, I have illustrated comparative scenery of psychosexual behaviors that unravel both social and psychological aspects of human experiences, fundamentally the same but culturally wrapped in different packages (Mohan, 2015a). I believe the hybrid blind spots is the new frontier of social psychology. Human sexuality, in post-Kinsley era, has mostly been a subject of masculinity. FDA just disapproved a female libido pill.[21] Sexism seems to be an alleged reason for the neglect of this aspect of human sexuality.

We see chaos compounded by apparently unrelated phenomena. Sex and war have been intrinsically embedded in the history of human evolution (Potts and Hayden, 2008). Since the nature of human conflict has apparently broadened beyond the territorial imperative, one cannot ignore the roots and consequences of war. Pacifism, realism, and jingoism have not substantially reduced the dangers of war in a world that is increasingly well equipped to prevent and perpetuate world conflicts. This environmental paradox of modernity involves a nexus of *social* and *psychological* exchange.

Historian Ian Morris (2013) talks about 'productive' and 'unproductive' wars. Francis Fukuyama, a conservative theorist, seemingly underscores Morris: "War spurs societies to create institutions that limit violence and create social peace," (2014: 42). Is that true?

The operations of hard drug trade in the world are mindboggling to say the least[22]. No one talks about 'war against poverty' which half-a-century ago was the foundation of the Great Society. Terror, violence, drugs, arms, and inequality rise alongside growth and development. The *brave new world* is still naked underneath its glossy façade. Applications of social-psychological methods might not change the direction of its evolutionary transformation; it may well stop its imminent devolution.

American Social Psychology has mostly focused on its micro sociological aspects. The variegated nature of global social climate that permeates our entire civilization, dictates that we macro-cosmesize Social Psychology as a transformative process. Inequality and injustice are global issues. Environmental Toxicity pervades life-threatening existential hazards[23]. The hiatus between people (marginalized ones) and embodiments of power, law, control and order causes murders and mayhems on a routine basis. *ESP* consciousness will help mitigate this global catastrophe.

The persistence of hydra-headed bigotry — racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia—cannot be overstated. The "risks of conflict are rising" in this "new nuclear age" (*The Economist,* March 7–13, 2015). As global insecurity rises along with risks, human-social interactions are bound to be guided by perceptions, not realities. A new perspective on human reality calls for *ESP*'s acceptance as a global issue.

3. Environmental Social Psychology: Aspects and Issues

The contours of life and environmental vicissitudes have drastically changed during the last five decades. This "planet of phones," *The Economist* surmises, "will change everything" (February 28, 2015: 9). Aspects, issues and problems (AIP) that emerge out of this globalized new culture are fraught with unprecedented challenges and several variegated issues. A few observations are in order:

(i) Stereotypes, prejudices, attitudes and beliefs have long plagued humanity with unjust and brutal practices of discrimination and violence. Their banality transcends territorial, parochial and national boundaries[24].

(ii) As the primordial system of inter-and-intra-social communications has broken down, a new *Social*

---

[21] "Female libido pill fires up debate about women and sex"
   http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2015/02/16/384043661/female-libido-pill-fires-up-debate-about-women-and-sex (viewed February 16, 2015).

[22] http://finance.yahoo.com/news/astonishing-maps-show-hard-drugs-122048889.html (viewed February 19, 2015).

[23] "The Justice Department issued a report this week that found that police in Ferguson overwhelmingly arrested and issued traffic citations to black residents, creating a "toxic" environment with its policing practices. That culture of distrust erupted in August, when white Ferguson Officer Darren Wilson fatally shot 18-year-old Michael Brown, who was black and unarmed. The incident triggered months of protest and a national debate about race and police behavior."

Contract is in order. How to achieve this avowed goal is beyond the capacity of world leaders. History can neither be reinvented nor forgotten. An awakening based on reason, acceptance and mutual respect might transform generational evolution at the expense of decadent atavism that has dogged this civilization for thousands of years. *ESP* can be a transformative field. Both smartphones and apes can co-habit this planet without the fear of mutual destruction.

(iii) The construct of environmental social psychology *per se* does not exist. This *ESP* embodies the spirit of a new consciousness that is crucially important for the reinforcement of *Enlightenment Two* (Mohan, 2015).

4. Conclusion

Social psychology has been at the center of actualist and dynamical investigations during the last few decades. How do we know what is really real? Ian Parker aptly says, "We *must* separate the world from our knowledge of it" (1998: xii). The social constructionist's view of reality is a non-essentialist, pragmatic approach to all human interactions and relationships. How objective is this relativist method? Can social psychology be empirically valid? These concerns posit ontological dimensions of experience in both discursive and scientific contexts.

"The terrible loneliness growing up on America," as Robert Putman puts in his new book *Our Kids: American Dream in Crisis* (2015)[25], is a manifestation of the hiatus that divides rich kids from the poor ones with immeasurable social-psychological consequences. Racial and economic inequalities compound the misery of the underprivileged, single parent families who are pushed to the edge. The myth of "culture of poverty" still prevails in the minds of the policy makers

and public. I re-iterate, its moral-analytical opposite: It is the *poverty of culture* that sustains dysfunctional social institutions (Mohan, 2011).

Social psychology's day of redemption has come to weld perceptions with reality. In domestic and international arenas, a corroded structure of communications divides people and nations from each other. It is hard to repair a rusty social fabric of society when race, class or gender continues to dehumanize marginalized people. Education, healthcare and opportunities matter. The bedrock of a civil society rests on sustainable human conditions bereft of fear, insecurity and injustice that demonize "the others" in obsessive-compulsive systems of tyrannies of mistrust fueled by bigoted persuasions.

Society as a whole is the quintessential lab for theoretical and experimental social psychological inquiry and research. The scope and nature of subjects within individual-environmental spectrum is boundless[26]. The continued duality of micro-macro experience and approach has impeded Social Psychology's potential strengths to resolve variegated issues in a complex world. In a counter-intuitive culture, institutional dysfunctionality breeds intolerance, anxiety, and illusions (of hope).

Sadly, the rebirth of an insane society is a possible conclusion. Reinforcing the 'right of environment' and reconstruction of Social Psychology might serve as a good nexus to salvage an otherwise catastrophic situation. "No one is responsible for a man's being here at all, for his being such-and-such, or for his being in these circumstances or in this environment."[27]

Conflict of Interest and Funding

No conflict of interest has been reported by the author.

---

[24] After horrific terrorist killings of Charles Hebdo and others in Paris, the Islamist fury has bloodied the temples of worship—unrelated to Islam—and terrorized the agencies of free speech, the hallmark of a civil society. Incidents following this pattern abound.

[25] http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2015/03/06/the-terrible-loneliness-of-growing-up-poor-in-robert-putnams-america/ (viewed March 7, 2015)

[26] "Recent debates about human shields in the summer bombardment of Gaza raised the question of how the unarmed human form comes to be regarded as a military instrument. ... To what extent does the racialized structure of the visual field become instrumental to justifying the unjustifiable?"

[27] F. Nietzsche in *Twilight of the Idols, The Four Great Errors* (http://www.lexido.com/QUOTATION_KEYWORD.aspx?KEYWORD_ID=67); viewed November 1, 2015.

References

Aronson E, 1999, *The Social Animal,* New York: Worth Publishers.

Backman C W and Secord P F (eds), 1966, *Problems in Social Psychology: Selected Readings.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Baron R M and Graziano W G, 1991, *Psychology,* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Bloomberg Businessweek, 2015, viewed October 19–25, 2015.

Brooks D, 2011, *The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love, Character, and Achievement.* New York: Random House.

Carstensen L L, 2015, The new age of much older age. *Time, February 23–March 2:* 69–70.

Feld S and Radin N, 1982, *Social Psychology for Social Work and Mental Health Professions.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Flanneray K and Marcus J, 2012, *The Creation of Inequality: How Our Prehistoric Ancestors Set the Stage for Monarchy, Slavery and Empire.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard.

Fukuyama F, 2014, On the spoils of war. *Stanford,* July/August, 42–43.

Gladwell M, 2000, *The Tipping Point.* New York: Little, Brown & Co.

Gladwell M, 2013, *David and Goliath.* New York: Little, Brown & Co.

Hartley E L and Hartley R E, 1961, *Fundamentals of Social Psychology.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Lindesmith A R, Strauss A L and Denzin N K, 1975, *Social Psychology.* Hinsdale, IL: Dryden Press.

Lindzey G (ed), 1954, *Handbook of Social Psychology: Theory and Method.* Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub.

McGuire W J, 1999, *Constructing Social Psychology: Creative and Critical Processes.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mohan B, 1987, *Denial of Existence: Essays on the Human Condition.* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Mohan B, 1996, *Democracies of Unfreedom: The United States and India.* Westport, CT.

Mohan B, 1999, *Unification of Social Work.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Mohan B, 2007, *Fallacies of Development: Crises of Human and Social Development.* New Delhi: The Atlantic Pub.

Mohan B, 2011, *Development, Poverty of Culture.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mohan B, 2015, *Global Frontiers of Social Development: Climate, Economy and Justice.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mohan B (ed), 2015a, *Construction of Social Psychology.* See my Introduction. Lisbon: InScience Press.

Morris I, 2013, *The Measure of Civilization: How Social Development Decides the Fate of Nations.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Parker I (ed), 1998, *Social Constructivism, Discourse, and Realism.* London: Sage.

Potts M and Hayden T, 2008, *Sex and War: How Biology Explains Warfare and Terrorism and Offers a Path to a Safer World.* Dallas: Benbella Books, Inc.

Putman R, 2015, Our Kids: American Dream in Crisis. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Roberts G, 2015, Cassidy tackles the huge problem of mental illness. *The Advocate,* November 2: 7B.

Schneier B, 2014**,** *Data and Goliath: The Hidden Battles to Collect Your Data and Control Your World*. NY: W.W. Norton.

Simmens L, 2015, Bibi Blusters, Boehner Blunders, Another Day in Republican Fantasyland, viewed March 4, 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lance-simmens/bibi-blusters-boehner-blu_b_6797526.html?ncid=txtlnkusaolp00000592

Wood G, 2015, What ISIS really wants and how to stop it. *The Atlantic, March*, 79–94.