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REVIEW ARTICLE

Science in a World on Fire: The Impact of Donald Trump's Anti-Climate Policies on Social Psychological Research

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ABSTRACT

On January 20th, 2025, United States President Donald Trump signed an executive order seeking to dismantle and halt all federal funding producing research and programmatic applications along any intersection of "diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility" (DEIA), as well as programs and research on "environmental justice." Policies such as the January 20th executive order, as well as the directives to halt all grant funding and research at large governmental agencies such as the National Institute for Health (NIH), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), have direct implication for social psychology research on climate change, namely for those who use data from these governmental- and NGO- level agencies. These directives, even if not fully realized, carry unprecedented potential to directly undermine the ability of social scientists to engage in the critical scholarship necessary to understand the complexity and severity of negative social outcomes induced by anthropogenic climate change. For example, much of our research on the casual relationship between climate change and human violence comes from research produced by governmental-level data on crime, war conflict, resource accessibility, immigration, and weather disasters. Without the systematic intention and efforts across disciplines and federal-level agencies to produce, report, and share this data, we would not be able to raise awareness of the existential social and psychological threat posed by the climate crisis. This article outlines the severity of the impact of such policies on understanding the holistic nature of the social and ecological threat of climate change, and the ability for scientists to help aid policymakers in being proactive and prepared to address these issues. Additionally, we discuss the historical role of suppressing social psychological research to create sociological consent for the oppression and neglect of materially and socially marginalized people, such as racial outgroups, immigrants, and refugees.

1 | Introduction

On January 20th, 2025, United States President Donald Trump signed an executive order seeking to dismantle and halt all federal funding producing research and programmatic applications along any intersection of "diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility" (DEIA), as well as programs and research on "environmental justice." While some may question the relevance of executive policies to social science research, many scholars and activists consider such actions as incredibly damaging to the disciplines, individuals, and policies that rely on social scientific research (Ahart 2025). Of importance is not only the direct attack on scientific funding and academic freedom, but also the intersectional nature by which anti-scientific and anti-educational policies operate. The focus of this article considers one particularly important area of intersectional and cross-disciplinary research: the impact of climate change on human behavior. By highlighting the case of climate change and aggression literature, we can better understand the larger impact of anti-science policies on social psychological research.

We (the authors) are both social psychologists by training. However, our work on how a rapid warming planet impacts not only human behavior, but also social systems, requires building off of the empirical and theoretical work and scholarly rigor of scientists and thinkers across many disciplines, including but not limited to, earth science, climatology, meteorology, history, anthropology, biology, neuroscience, criminology, political science, and even genetics. Without the superb work done by scholars who were funded by grant agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the ability to access the robust and routinely produced data from government funded agencies like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the ability for us and like-minded scientists to research the relationship between a host of outcomes related to climate change is severely hampered. Of course, one could argue that this is exactly the outcome intended by the President and his administration.

Our goal with this article is not only to outline the main framework that we as aggression scholars have used to describe the intersection of a rapidly warming environment with risk factors known to increase the likelihood of aggression and violence but to highlight the various levels of data collection, theory, and empirical thought that have helped shaped our observations and understanding of such psychological effect. Furthermore, by outlining how many of the current political policies will severely hamper our ability to expand the knowledge base of the interaction with the environment and human behavior, we aim to demonstrate to scientists and policymakers the urgent need to reverse the stoppage of vital data bases and funding pipelines. We will begin by describing the state of literature in this specific area of social psychological study and how these studies required the national and multi-national level data from governments, NGOs, and cross-disciplinary teams of scholars.

1.1 | The Climate Change-Aggression Model

Figure 1 outlines a model that we have used to describe the relationship between climate change and aggressive behavior (Miles-Novelo and Anderson 2019, 2022, 2023). The main thesis here is that, as the climate rapidly warms, we are increasingly exposed to both individual-level and group-level stressors, aka "risk factors," known to be associated with aggressive and violent behavior. The first path, known as the "direct path" emerges from social scientific data that has consistently shown that heat itself acts as an "irritant" that increases reactivity and takes up cognitive resources for behavioral appraisal, thus making it more likely for individuals to engage in aggressive behavior. This is known as the "heat-aggression hypothesis" (there are other ways that heat contributes to aggressive behaviors and cognition—such as leading to habit changes that increase the likelihood of conflict, see the Routine Activity Theory (RAT; Anderson and Anderson 1984; Miles-Novelo and Anderson 2019).

The other two paths in the model have to do with these more "indirect" changes that rapid global warming is causing, that increase other factors we know contribute to conflict at a group/state level, and that are risk factors in the development of aggression-prone individuals. For example, because of rapid global warming, there are more severe and frequent droughts that can cause political destabilization, malnourishment, and resource scarcity—factors that are all known to predict aggression in individuals and between groups (Anderson and DeLisi 2011; Barnett and Adger 2007; Cramer 2003).

Additionally, we can conceptualize the indirect paths as intersectional and compounding, such as knowing that communities that are under-resourced and socially marginalized are often the ones who are systemically placed in the most environmentally risky areas of society. A good case study is that of New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, where most of the damage from the deadly Hurricane Katirina was concentrated in poorer and non-white areas of the city (Green et al. 2013). Furthermore, in the aftermath, reconstruction policies were designed in a way to discourage the displaced black and brown working-class residents from returning, and to favor wealthier and whiter residents to replace them (Craemer 2010; Thiede and Brown 2013). These kinds of oppressive social dynamics and inequities are also predictive of violent behavior emerging in populations and individuals who feel as if there is no other response to alleviate their marginal material conditions (Bartusevičius and van Leeuwen 2022; Miodownik and Nir 2016; Pauwels and Heylen 2020).

One danger in the recent politicization of science in the United States is that, empirically-sound solutions (anti-discrimination policies, resource redistribution, social safety nets) to these

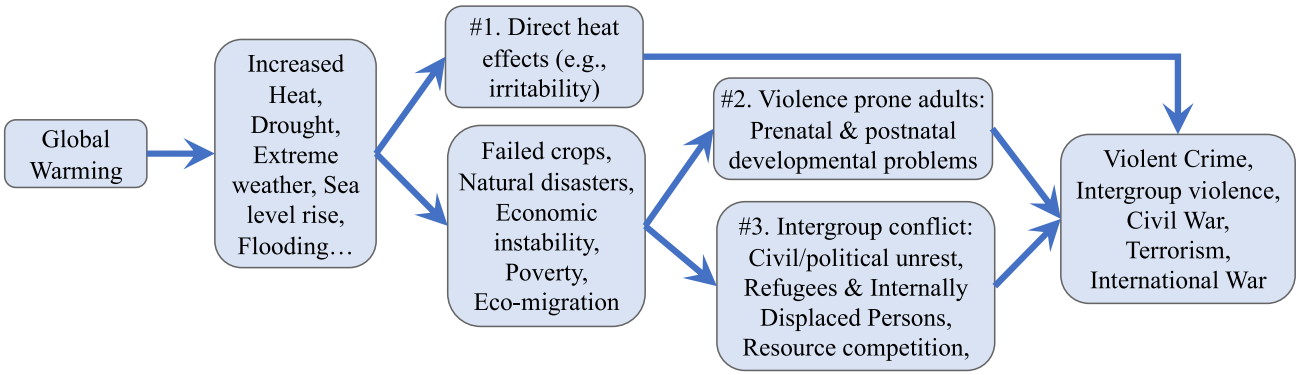

FIGURE 1 | How rapid climate change increases violence. From Miles-Novelo and Anderson 2019.

major social problems would be defined by the current policy as "DEI" and "environmental justice," which have been explicitly removed as research topics to receive funding and are being censored from classroom curricula and discussion (Salkin and Taranto 2025; Sobre and Orbe 2025). If we are to truly understand the relationship between humans, our social systems, and the earth's ecosystems, we have to able to discuss these problems from a holistic and intersectional manner, but the new political policies are directly inhibiting scientists from continuing this work and engaging dialog around the implications of these findings and how they tie into other relevant social issues (such as racism).

With this basic understanding of our overarching framework, we next describe the three individual paths in our model and discuss the research behind them—and how recent policies will impede the ability to further understand these research questions.

2 | Path #1—Direct Effect of Heat on Aggression

The relationship between direct exposure to heat and aggressive behavior is one of the most studied physiological and psychological links in modern science (Lynott et al. 2023; Miles-Novelo and Anderson 2022; Cane et al. 2014) [1]. Research has consistently demonstrated that, independent of other mediating factors, that heat by itself is an antagonistic factor for inducing aggressive behavior. The main theory behind this is that, when people are uncomfortably hot, homeostatic mechanisms automatically kick into operation, diverting cognitive and physiological resources to try and compensate—leaving fewer resources to think through our behaviors, to critically assess the actions of others, and therefore making us more reactive—and in turn, more aggressive. In layman's terms, people become more irritable.

Not only does this manifest behaviorally, but this has cognitive implications as well. One early experiment (Anderson et al. 1995) showed that participants in an uncomfortably hot room perceived videos of a couple having discussion as more hostile than did participants in a comfortable room. This shows that when under the "stress" of heat, we not only become more reactive ourselves, but we perceive the actions of others in a way that makes us more likely to trigger a "fight" response (Anderson and Bushman 2002). This research has not only been demonstrated in experiments, but also in longitudinal sociological, psychological, and criminological data (Anderson et al. 1997; Barlett et al. 2020; Cane et al. 2014). Decades of research consistently show that hotter areas of the globe, hotter days of the year, and warmer parts of the day all are predictive of more instances of violent crime and even sociological conflict, such as war (Anderson 1989, 2001; Anderson et al. 1997; Carlsmith and Anderson 1979; Chersich and Wright 2019). Even more "innocent" forms of aggression increase during hotter weather, such as more baseball pitchers hitting batters (Larrick et al. 2011), and vehicle drivers using their horns (Kenrick and MacFarlane 1986). Domestic violence incidents also increase with the temperature (Van de Vliert et al. 1999; Auliciems and DiBartolo 1995), as do forced admissions to psychiatric care (Bulbena et al. 2009).

To do this kind of work, access to datasets such as historical and geographic weather data, city-and-state-level crime data, and geographic conditions are essential. Thus, the cutting of funds and staff at agencies that monitor weather and climate data, and deleting web sites that report such data will hamper the ability of social scientists to understand the relationship between heat and violence.

Halting Funding for Environmental and Climate Research and Monitoring: It becomes clear that this kind of work is only possible with the collaboration and access to data provided by governmental and NGO-level agencies that are severely impacted by the current political policies that cut funding and staff for this kind of data collection, analysis, and public reporting. For example, the Trump administration fired the staff of the National Climate Assessment who were working on a 2027 report and took down the portal and webpages of their past data collection (Milman 2025). Additionally, some of the cuts made by the Department of Governmental Efficiency (DOGE) cut the round-the-year data collection of offices like the NOAA (Mackintosh 2025), which historically collects and synergizes weather data from weather stations across the USA, allowing for scientists to have sensitive and accurate historical records of weather data, thus allowing the testing of research questions such as if violent crime is positively correlated with increased temperature. NOAA is simply one example of a top-level agency harmed by these political decisions; there have been other agencies and data-collection sources that have already halted collection and deleted data related to climate and weather such as the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, Climate.gov, the National Weather Service, and NASA (Smith 2025; Dance 2025). It will become impossible to effectively test the direct effect of heat on human behavior if we do not have accurate weather and climate data on which to conduct analyses and theories.

Furthermore, not only are there direct cuts to funding to the collection and monitoring of the climate and weather generally, but there are directives and policies in place to directly stop any research that overtly looks at *climate change* as a casual change agent on our environment, ecosystems, weather, and behavior (Dance 2025; Shah 2025). Scientists have been warning of how industrial activity and pollution is rapidly raising the global temperature for nearly a century, but we will have a far less comprehensive understanding of *how quickly* it is rising and the *patterns of weather changes* associated with it if these agencies, groups, and scientists are not able to effectively and comprehensively monitor the climate. Therefore, it will be impossible for social scientists interested in how climate change is impacting human behavior to fully understand what it is taking place, because scientists will not have the weather and climate data necessary to test those questions, and because scientists will not receive funding and support necessary to ask such questions in the face of continued politicalization of the topic. It is impossible to try to understand a problem that you cannot ask questions about or that you cannot directly assess how conditions are evolving.

This has impact for our conversations around polices as well. The executive order mentioned at the beginning of this article directs all agencies to cease funding and investigating research on "environmental justice." This comes after a swatch of research has demonstrated not only that our climate has a direct role on human behavior, but that we have historically been structuring society so that politically and economically marginalized groups are the ones who experience the most harm from the climate and industrial pollution (Domínguez et al. 2025; Burningham and Thrush 2003), and thus, from climate change. For example, recent research has found that poorer and less-white areas of urban cities have less tree cover, thus exposing more of the residents to heat stress (Kondo et al. 2017). This results not only in higher ambient temperatures in those areas but also results in more heat-stress related illnesses and death, violent crime, and illegal substance abuse (McDonald et al. 2021; Medina et al. 2022). Environmental justice advocates and scholars have pointed out such work, saying that it is vital to understanding the intersection of social forces, environmental circumstances, and material outcomes. If work like this cannot be done, then not only can we not understand the science of what is happening, but we also will fail to adequately address societal issues such as poverty, crime, racism, and class division.

Additionally, the lack of funding in this area hurts our ability as scientists to help inform the government about how to prepare and help alleviate the environmental harm experienced by some of our most vital economic and social sectors. For example, without proper weather monitoring and tracking data, our ability to help the agriculture industry become more resistant to rapid warming is hampered. Per a recent Environmental Protection Agency report, economic instability in rural areas of the United States is already increasing due to climate change (US EPA 2025), and our ability to better understand and offer alleviation and prevention solutions is harmed by the cuts to vital data sources.

Halting of funding for crime data: Not only have recent policies begun to strip scientists of accurate weather and climate data, but also of crime and conflict data as well. The Trump administration has cut grants looking into crime prevention (Castellano 2025; Clayton 2025), as well as on crimes related to gender- and race-based violence (Friedman 2025; Sable-Smith 2025), which has also harmed the ability to understand violence that is often underreported. Without substantial funding and direct initiatives to look into these types of violence, they are most likely going to continue to be underreported and not fully understood, thus limiting the social scientist's ability to holistically understand violence and aggressive behavior. This is something we explore further in the next section.

3 | Paths #2 and #3—Increased Exposure for Risk Factors for Group Conflict and Individual-Level Aggression

The second and third paths focus on how rapid global warming is increasing the frequency and intensity of known *risk factors* for violence. The outcomes of the climate crisis are almost too many to list, but include more frequent and severe natural disasters, such as floods, droughts, wildfires, and other increasingly erratic weather patterns. All of these put strain on already fragile social systems, such as famines and eco-migration, and often are correlated with increased instances of violence (Barnett and Adger 2007; Gleick 2014). As mentioned earlier, the material consequences of the climate crisis are currently being disproportionally experienced by communities and countries that lack the resources to be effectively resilient, and who do not receive additional support from government and organizations in order to develop resilience. Therefore, this raises additional risk for conflict between groups as those who feel disproportionally harmed by rapid global warming—especially if there are not preventative policies and means of equitably distributing resources. As noted in the direct heat section, the defunding of agencies that track environmental, weather, and climate data directly undermine our ability to test the relationship between environmental changes and social behavior.

Halting of Funding for prevention-related criminological research: Recent budgetary cuts also have hurt governmental-level collection and analyses related to violence prevention. DOGE cuts at the Centers of Disease Control (CDC) have directly harmed the operation, collection, and analysis of data on violent crimes in the United States (Mandavilli 2025). These directives also led to cuts in funding and staff in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the defunding of millions of dollars of grants awarded to track and better understand domestic terrorism and hate crimes (Clayton 2025).

Additionally, the administration has begun deleting already-published data. For example, hundreds of pages related to state-level crime statistics were deleted from the Department of Justice (Singer 2025). This kind of data is invaluable to researchers studying patterns of violence, and what used to be easily accessible to social scientists everywhere is no longer accessible or being cataloged. The administration has also reallocated funds not only immediately, but for future work as well, to scale back and potentially even dissolve some agencies that track and prevent crime. This includes the Federal Breau of Investigation (FBI), the Breau of Alcohol, Firearms, Tobacco, and Explosives (ATF), and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA; Rodriguez 2025; Monyak and Wise 2025). Although there might be legitimate reasons to cut law enforcement funding (such as devoting more funds to other types of emergency response, such as medical and mental health crisis management), the blanket cutting of funds—and the specific cutting of research grants - from these departments and agencies also impacts the resources being used to monitor violent behavior, and for social scientists to understand and offer potential solutions to help reduce crime and identify harmful practices such as racial profiling.

In the April 2025 executive order cutting grant funding, hundreds of millions of dollars of grants were cut by the DOJ for research specifically aimed at violence prevention (Bredesen 2025). This has halted hundreds of active projects that were working to better understand how to limit violence—research that helps inform social scientists like us to better articulate how and why environmental factors influence violent behavior. Without this foundational research, downstream theorization

and observations such as our Climate-Change Aggression Model cannot be reasonably done, and that will limit the ability of scientists to better inform the public and policymakers about the societal-level ramifications of rapid global warming and the actions we can take to prevent mitigate those many harmful outcomes. To add, it is the stated goal of current political officials to reduce crime and lessen the material impacts of crime (Katz 2025); to do this effectively, scientists need funding and access to the kind of data that is no longer being collected on crime. These kinds of cuts not only hurt scientists' ability to satisfy their own research questions, but for the government to understand the social problems it is hoping to solve.

Restriction on dialog around causes for terrorism: Additionally, the administrations' stance on terrorism and budgetary priorities to affirm their own perspectives of how to prevent terrorism create risk and challenge for social scientists studying it. For example, the directives directing scientists away from "environmental justice" (Randolph and Trotta 2025) discourage social scientists from articulating how rapid changes to our climate are contributing to the social conditions that make terrorism more likely (Benningstad et al., 2025). Additionally, funding has been cut to study domestic terrorism specifically (Silverman 2025).

Lack of support for developmental research: Part of the directives to severely reduce scientific funding was a push away from work that looks into developmental psychology. For example, DOJ cuts also included cuts to research tracking juvenile detention and perpetration of crimes. Without a substantial database that scientists can access, we cannot fully understand what developmental factors are correlated with the risk of engaging in aggressive behavior. Research such as this has helped understand that malnutrition is a major risk factor for the development of risk for aggression later in an individual's life (Liu et al. 2004). With rapid global warming and the increased severity, frequency, and erratic nature of natural disasters such as droughts and wildfires, the risk for being exposed to malnutrition is getting higher for more of the global population. Without full awareness of this, and support from governments to better understand and disseminate this work, then social scientists cannot effectively contribute to conversations about the importance of creating preventative and forward-thinking policies about how to prevent hunger and malnutrition. Additionally, although scientists understand what risk factors are associated with aggressive and violent behavior, more work is needed to fully understand *why* some of these risk factors are correlated with aggression; additionally, more research on the kinds of policies that could prevent violence from occurring as more populations are exposed to these risk factors.

As it has become clear, the current set of policies and actions by the Trump administration are causing significant roadblocks in scientists' ability to advance our understanding of climate change's impact on aggressive behavior. It also impacts scientist's ability to investigate solutions and offer proposals about how to best mitigate the social consequences of rapid global warming and other social issues.

4 | Additional Roadblocks

In addition to the concerns outlined about the defunding of data related to crime, violence, and the climate and weather, there are other issues in current policies that will harm social psychological research.

Attacks on Scientific Infrastructure and Higher Ed: One of the biggest challenges faced to social psychology by the administration is their antagonistic stance toward higher education. Recent policies have directly stifled the much relied upon granting systems that fund most large-scale social scientific research programs (Broad 2025). Budgetary cuts also put strain on universities who often look to cut costs by eliminating "less profitable" programs, many of which are social sciences and humanities (Boyd 2024).

Policies also have limited the ability to recruit and retain graduate students from across the globe (Rossello 2025). In the United States in particular, costs of higher education are also increasing dramatically, and new policies limit the ability for students to get student loans to pay to go to college and graduate school (Knott 2025; Garisto 2025). Furthermore, attacks on immigrant students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels are leading to decreases in such students applying to and attending U.S. universities, students. In additional to the loss of talent they bring to U.S. universities is the loss of large amounts of tuition, fees, and related funds that U.S. universities need to balance their budgets. The lack of grants and slashing of educational budgets also will mean that graduate students will have fewer opportunities to take the traditional path of working as research or teaching assistants and getting their graduate school tuition waived and receive a small stipend. This means that social scientific programs in the United States are hampered in actively pursuing the most talented and well-equipped students, regardless of their background, as only the select few or those with family-based monetary means to go to graduate school will be able to do so. The puts strain on already under-funded programs and under-staffed projects. Cuts to universities and large-scale grants and projects also limits the number of professional opportunities for graduate-level social scientists, meaning fewer students will be encouraged to pursue working as scientists into disciplines such as social psychology.

Furthermore, recent political policy changes around funding increasingly encourage pursuit of research questions that matter to the Trump administration, rather than motivated by scientists themselves (Barbati-Dajches 2025). This not only is reflected in the policies, but in the personnel staffed at agencies that reward grants and that help create policies around scientific funding, with scientists being removed from those positions for more partisan political appointees (Cohen 2025). These changes also reflect a broader infringement on academic freedom, with current political officials even so much as saying they will seize and halt funds from universities that pursue research and education that is at odds with the administration's perspectives and agenda (Nadworny 2025). Even more alarming, some graduate students and faculty have been deported for participating in protests or

other forms of dissent (Slater and McDaniel 2025). Many of these debated topics are those that fall directly under the purview of social psychological research, such as racism, gender identity, and social inequality, meaning that social psychology as a discipline is disproportionally impacted by the current executive agenda and perspectives.

5 | Historical Parallels

Unfortunately, this is not the first time that social science has been appropriated and undermined in order to advance hostile and misinformed political agendas. In the 1930s, the Nazi Party of Germany spent much of its early time in power systematically undermining academic institutions and researchers, in order to force them to comply with directives and agendas from the fascist government. This included the total destruction of one of the leading gender and sex institutions in the world (Fuller and Owen 2022), and of course, forcing scientists to do inhumane and unethical experiments for the military and promoting fake race science to justify the government's actions (Blacker 1952). These actions famously led to a large exodus of scholars who did not want to be complicit and who were targeted by the Nazi regime. The remaining scientists then were used to help advance the violent agenda of the government, such as conducting unethical experimentation on vulnerable and immigrant populations (Craig and Desai 2015).

Instances of academic freedom and weaponized science have been true in the United States as well. In terms of the later, it is also true that before the invention of research ethics protocols such as creation of Institutional Review Boards, there were inhumane experiments done on vulnerable populations, such as the infamous incident in Tuskegee, Alabama, where residents were told they were receiving treatment for syphilis but were not (Brandt 1978). Junk science has been used to promote racist ideas and policies as well, such as eugenics, misinformation regarding the spreading of AIDS in Queer communities, and banning interracial marriages (Leslie 1990; Winston 2020). We also know that science has been actively withheld by profitable and important industries, such as oil companies knowing about climate change caused by burning fossil fuels in the 1950s and spending millions to promote policies that did not undermine the continued expansion of oil use (Grasso 2019; Dunlap and McCright 2011). To add, there are growing concerns that the current administration's financial backing from fossil fuel companies and placing fossil fuel lobbyists in key administrative positions (Hertsgaard 2025). Additionally, when systems are removed to protect the integrity of the scientific process and institutions, that undermines and erodes the trust the general population has in scientists and scientific discoveries. This then creates a feedback loop where continued erosion of trust leads to more underfunding and lack of support, which increases the odds of bad science, unethical practices, and inefficient progress, and thus, a continued lack of support and trust.

Administration officials have also talked openly about their frustration with the practice of tenure (Marcus 2025). While there are some valid concerns about the tenure process, it would be foolish to forget the history of why tenure exists for academics and educators, and that is to protect their academic freedom. During the Red Scare, many academics were targeted for voicing concern over political policies and scientific misinformation being spread regarding issues such as gender identity and race (Gittleman et al. 2017). The tenure process has been vital in protecting productive educators and researchers from the political oppression being weaponized in order to pursue specific ideological agendas.

The policies, orders, and actions taken by the current administration to remove scientific funding and that undermine academic freedom share unique parallels to the historical examples described earlier. Social psychological work on issues such as inequality, oppression, violence, and social construction, are what authoritarian and fascist regimes attack as they create the conditions to enact their agendas. If there are not substantial changes and safeguards put in place, it is more than likely that the progress science has made to remove itself from being weaponized in similar ways to the past, could easily happen again.

6 | Discussion

The goal of this article has been to specifically outline how current political policies are harming the ability of social psychologists to continue to ask the research questions that are core to the discipline and that will directly help alleviate many of the problems facing society. Although many of these policies do not specifically mention the discipline of social psychology as an explicit target, it becomes clear that the totality of policies being enacted and discussed uniquely impact the work of social psychologists. The ability for us to ask research questions such as, "Does rapid global warming increase the likelihood for violence?" we need *holistic* data from across a wide swath of scientific disciplines and measurement to piece together a very complicated and integrated puzzle.

While the first actional step we hope to inspire is to prevent and revert many of these policy changes outlined, the deconstruction of our current science system also provides a unique opportunity to discuss not simply restoring the "status quo," but to comment on and imagine a better and more equitable system. This has many parallels with how social scientists reimagined their role after WWII and led to policies such as the creation and implementation of the IRB system for human research. That said, this provides an opportunity for scientists such as social psychologists to realize the interconnectedness and intersectionality inherent to the work we do, and how to better create a system that fosters actionable and equitable scientific progress. This will help us not only better advocate for funding and policies to promote our work and research questions, but to also imagine an even better system that promotes transparency, collaboration, and practical application of our research. For example, work such as this can help highlight why agencies like the EPA or the CDC should invest in social scientific work and higher social scientists to their staff, since many areas of work that social scientists to directly intersect with practical applications that traditionally fall under their purview (and thus, get funding and policy support).

We also hope that this article provides an opportunity to critically assess the role of social scientists in our government more broadly. Shortly before his death, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave an address to the American Psychological Association, where he highlighted how social scientists were uniquely equipped to address problems such as racism and social justice:

> Social science is needed to explain where this development is going to take us. Are we moving away, not from integration, but from the society which made it a problem in the first place? How deep and at what rate of speed is this process occurring? These are some vital questions to be answered if we are to have a clear sense of our direction. We know we haven't found the answers to all forms of social change. We know, however, that we did find some answers. We have achieved and we are confident. We also know we are confronted now with far greater complexities, and we have not yet discovered all the theory we need.
>
> King 1967

Dr. King was and is right—we may not have found all the answers to existential issues such as climate change. But what is clear is that although we do have much relevant knowledge, this coordinated attack on social scientists' ability to continue to ask key questions, conduct research, and teach about these topics will severely harm advancement of a nuanced and material understanding of the social challenges facing society (Farmer et al. 2022). In fact, seen in historical examples, such assaults on science create the very conditions by which more harm can be caused, thus undermining the advances social psychological research has achieved. When it comes to topics as important and complex in their intersectional nature, such as the climate crisis, then it becomes obvious the harm that these anti-social science policies have. And although some cuts to science and agencies may seem unrelated, given the interconnectedness of our psychology and behavior to social and environmental conditions, it is clear that it is impossible to undermine one area of research and inquiry without harming all of science. As social psychologists, we must raise awareness of how these policies harm the ability for us to do our work efficiently, effectively, and without political bias, while in search of empirical understanding and proactive material solutions to social issues.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

Endnotes

[1] Some recent reviews have demonstrated mixed results (Lynott et al. 2023). Additionally heat may mediate other behaviors that make aggression more likely (such as promoting more outside social interaction, via RAT; Miles-Novelo and Anderson 2019) conflating a "direct effect," but the goal of this manuscript is not to debate the ins and outs of these effects, and more to highlight that to answering these type of research questions relies on cross-disciplinary data sets and methodologies that current policies no longer promote.

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