

The Role of Psychology in Social Governance (Postprint)

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Abstract

Modernizing the national governance system and governance capability represents a general objective of China's comprehensive deepening of reforms. Psychological research can provide crucial scientific support for this endeavor. On the one hand, psychology, as a social science discipline, can elucidate the mechanisms underlying many social processes and social issues. On the other hand, the concepts advocated by the social governance philosophy—multiple actors, deliberative democracy, conflict resolution, and refinement—are all intimately connected with psychology and necessitate a profound understanding of human psychology and behavior. Going forward, the academic community should dedicate greater efforts to psychological research on social governance, with particular emphasis on theoretical localization and methodological diversification, while adhering to a positioning of multidisciplinary collaborative innovation and properly managing the relationships between basic and applied research, as well as between scientific inquiry and humanistic concern.

Full Text

Preamble: Special Issue on Psychology and Social Governance

The 13th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development explicitly calls for strengthening and innovating social governance, with comprehensive deployment dedicated to this goal. Enhancing and innovating social governance cannot be achieved without the intellectual support and contributions from the philosophical and social sciences. As a discipline that underpins these fields, psychology is increasingly demonstrating its theoretical and practical value for social governance. This special issue on "Psychology and Social Governance" invites several outstanding Chinese psychology research teams to collectively present their recent findings on social governance, aiming to showcase psychological perspectives on exploring and interpreting this domain. These

contributions address prominent social governance challenges in contemporary China's development—such as social equity, entrepreneurial environments, urbanization, and aging—through in-depth reflection from theory to practice and from macro to specific levels. This work possesses both international cutting-edge significance and local practical relevance, offering policy recommendations as well as technical approaches, thereby highlighting psychology's unique value for social governance. The issue was jointly guided by Researcher Yang Yufang and Professor Guo Yongyu.

The Function of Psychology in Social Governance

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Abstract

Advancing the modernization of the state governance system and governance capability represents a general objective of China's comprehensive deepening of reform. Psychological research can provide crucial scientific support for this endeavor. On the one hand, psychology possesses the disciplinary nature of social science and can explain the mechanisms underlying many social processes and problems. On the other hand, the concepts advocated by the social governance philosophy—including multiple subjects, deliberative democracy, conflict coordination, and fine governance—are all intimately connected to psychology and require profound understanding of human psychology and behavior. Future academic efforts should devote greater attention to psychological research on social governance, emphasizing theoretical localization and methodological diversity, maintaining a positioning of multidisciplinary collaborative innovation, and properly managing the relationship between basic and applied research as well as that between scientific research and humanistic concern.

Keywords: psychology, social governance, social science, social responsibility

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Since the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee proposed “advancing the modernization of the state governance system and governance capability” as a primary goal of comprehensive reform, the concept and ideology of social governance have frequently appeared in China's political and academic discourse. The shift from the previously emphasized “social management” to today's increasingly prevalent “social governance” represents a single-character change in expression, yet it genuinely reflects innovation in the CPC's governance philosophy and a tremendous determination to transform from a traditional unitary, linear management model to a pluralistic, systematic governance paradigm. Against this backdrop, every relevant discipline must

seriously address and deeply explore the practical problems confronting social governance, providing intellectual support from professional perspectives.

Research on “governance” in foreign social sciences emerged in the 1990s. In 1992, following a proposal by former West German Chancellor Brandt and others, the Commission on Global Governance was established, and the concept of “governance” rapidly spread worldwide. Simultaneously, academia began to position and understand “governance” through an entirely new lens, advocating a distinction between “governance” and “government.” Scholars argued that unlike “government,” which represents top-down management, “governance” should broadly encompass various public and private institutions and individuals, representing the sum of numerous ways these actors participate in managing their common affairs. Its characteristic is reconciling different interest subjects and striving to enable joint action among diverse actors to achieve this goal. Domestic scholars’ understanding of “social governance” is largely consistent with international academia, viewing it as an interactive process in which multiple governance subjects—including the Party, government, social organizations, and citizens—engage in mutual gaming, negotiation, and cooperation on social affairs management based on mutual trust to achieve public interest, encompassing unity across theoretical, technical, and instrumental levels.

In the process of providing intellectual support for China’s social governance reform and innovation, researchers from different disciplines have offered numerous theoretical and practical discussions and suggestions. However, an increasing number of scholars have discovered that psychology plays a unique role in social governance. As previously noted, social governance is a process of multi-subject participation that emphasizes benign interaction and communication among different interest groups through grassroots democracy to prevent and resolve conflicts. Therefore, it cannot be detached from concrete individuals, nor can it ignore the mentality, appeals, social behaviors, and interaction processes of specific individuals, groups, and social strata—precisely what psychology is dedicated to exploring and examining. Can psychological research respond to social reality needs? What essential connections does it have with social governance philosophy? How can future psychological research better serve social governance? This article will address these questions.

1. Psychology Research for Social Needs: Why Psychology Can Respond to Social Reality

1.1 The Social Science Nature of Psychology

Psychology studies human mind and behavior. While mental and behavioral processes have physiological and biological foundations, as social beings, human psychology and behavior are inevitably constrained and influenced by specific historical, cultural, and social realities. Therefore, psychology possesses dual attributes of both natural and social sciences. In this regard, contemporary international psychology has reached broad consensus, as evidenced by the In-

ternational Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) simultaneously belonging to both the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Council for Social Sciences (ICSSU).

However, examining the century-long development of scientific psychology, the natural science aspect has consistently received greater attention from researchers, while the humanities and social science aspects have often been more or less neglected. In fact, over a century ago, pioneers like Wundt and McDougall emphasized psychology's social science attributes. McDougall even argued that psychology should occupy a foundational position among all social sciences. Yet in reality, psychology has not achieved this status (although an increasing number of social science researchers have begun to emphasize psychology). To some extent, this is because for a long time, psychologists habitually regarded psychological phenomena as purely natural phenomena. They reduced complex, variable human psychology to simple physiological or physical facts through relatively well-established empirical target systems, treating human mind and behavior as natural objects of cognition. While these studies hold important methodological value, they are clearly insufficient for understanding complex human nature. In reality, human psychology represents the unity of neurophysiological foundations and social-historical culture. It is subtle and implicit, variable and subjective, originating in individuals yet constrained by social contexts. Zhang Chunxing explicitly noted that "physical nature" and "human nature" differ in many respects, with research on "human nature" being far more complex. Exploring "physical nature" can provide safety and convenience for humanity, while investigating "human nature" can fundamentally promote harmony and happiness in human society. In summary, the unity of human natural and social attributes creates psychology's complexity. To comprehensively understand humans, psychology requires not only natural science-oriented research but also humanities and social science-oriented research.

1.2 The Social Value of Psychology

To fully reveal human psychology, attention to its social science attributes is indispensable. Similarly, to analyze social processes in detail and provide theoretical support and practical guidance for social development and transformation, research on social psychology and behavior is essential. Although psychology has not yet achieved status as a foundational social science discipline, contemporary academia has increasingly recognized psychology's role in many social issues. Scholars at least partially consider many social problems to be psychological in nature, emphasizing the need for psychologists to identify the underlying psychological processes and propose corresponding solutions through psychological interventions.

Walton and Dweck from Stanford University further analyzed psychology's current social value. They argued that while psychology's participation in social-level research represents an inevitable trend, a problem exists: most such

psychological research aims to provide complete answers to minor social issues, while few studies attempt to offer potentially promising—albeit imperfect—suggestions for grand social problems. Although the former has research value and represents a more familiar approach for scholars, Walton and Dweck view the latter as the important innovative direction for psychology’s future development. We fully endorse this perspective. On the one hand, engaging with larger social problem domains represents an excellent opportunity for psychology’s self-renewal and development. On the other hand, history shows that many major social issues have ultimately been identified as psychological problems, fully demonstrating the critical mechanisms underlying psychology and behavior.

Research on the rise of Nazism provides an excellent example. After World War II, many scholars reflected on why anti-Semitic and ethnocentric ideologies swept across Germany in just a few years, becoming state ideology. Initially, many researchers focused on economic explanations. However, psychologists led by Adorno astutely recognized that psychological factors must have played important roles. After prolonged reflection and research, they ultimately identified the authoritarian personality as a key psychological factor, an explanation that gained unanimous academic recognition. To this day, authoritarianism remains a hot research topic, playing important roles in eliminating group prejudice. Similarly, regarding U.S. racial conflicts, academia once did not consider this essentially related to psychological levels, believing that improving racial conflict focused on material and environmental improvements. Today, after years of effort by psychologists, the academic community has widely acknowledged the important role of stereotype threat as a psychological factor. Based on this psychological mechanism, researchers have further developed effective stereotype intervention techniques that have significantly improved group relations and enhanced performance among disadvantaged groups in practice. Increasingly many such successful cases in psychology’s development history demonstrate that psychological and behavioral factors play crucial roles in at least some major social issues. We should have the courage to explore and raise psychology’s voice in these significant social processes.

1.3 The Social Responsibility of Psychology

The profound connection between psychology and social reality forms the foundation for psychology’s response to practical problems. However, beyond the “is” dimension, psychology’s response to social issues also has an “ought” dimension—namely, the social responsibility of psychologists and psychological research.

By the mid-20th century, Western psychology increasingly recognized the practical responsibilities that psychological research should undertake. In 1967, the authoritative journal *American Psychologist* published a special column exploring psychology’s role and function in social public policy formulation, arguing that psychological research must concern itself with human welfare and take helping realize human civilization’s development and progress as its mission. Driven by this advocacy, some researchers, represented by the American Psycho-

logical Association (APA), began attempting to influence social policy through psychological thinking and research findings. They identified deficiencies in social policy through psychological research, aroused policymakers' and other social sectors' attention to psychological issues implicit behind policies, called for integrating psychological research with social policy formulation, and promoted social development. By 1988, APA began establishing the Awards for Distinguished Contribution to Research in Public Policy to encourage the emergence of psychological research with high social responsibility and good practical value. Today, various academic and non-academic psychology organizations have extensively and deeply participated in public policy formulation, accomplishing much that other disciplines cannot, playing crucial roles in public health, justice, environmental protection, social security, and many other areas.

This developmental trajectory in Western psychology offers valuable insights for Chinese psychology researchers. Our research can and should be grounded in social problems—this is a responsibility that the era has entrusted to contemporary Chinese psychologists. Chinese society is currently experiencing unprecedented transformation. As Liang Qichao quoted Li Hongzhang' s description of “the unprecedented great transformation in three thousand years,” this transformation remains incomplete even today. Over 30 years of reform and opening up have achieved remarkable accomplishments that have attracted worldwide attention, but China also faces complex contradictions and challenges. Against this backdrop, employing holistic, systematic, and pluralistic social governance thinking to sort out social problems and adjust social contradictions is undoubtedly far-sighted. In specific governance processes, at least a considerable portion of issues relate to individual or group psychology. Therefore, only by paying more attention to social problems and responding to the needs of the times can psychology researchers better highlight the social responsibility of psychological science.

2. Psychological Issues in Social Governance: Why Social Governance Cannot Do Without Psychology

As a modern governance philosophy, social governance differs significantly from traditional social management thinking: in terms of participating subjects, it advocates pluralistic co-governance; in governance methods, it relies more on democratic consultation; in governance objectives, it emphasizes resolving social contradictions; and in implementation, it attaches great importance to promoting refined thinking. These four aspects are all intimately related to psychology. Therefore, we will proceed from these points to discuss psychology' s value in social governance.

2.1 Multiple Subjects: Social Trust and Its Construction

Multiple subjects are considered the most core characteristic distinguishing social governance from social management. The so-called multiple subjects refer

to the diversification of governance actors, meaning that different groups should jointly participate in addressing social problems rather than having a single government monopolize them. Foreign scholars believe governance subjects should include public institutions, private institutions, and various non-profit organizations. Domestic scholars have also proposed that governance subjects should at least include central government, local governments, enterprises, public welfare and mutual-benefit social organizations, individual citizens, and various forms of citizen self-organization. Although academic definitions of the scope of multiple subjects vary slightly, the consensus is that diversity in legitimate power sources should be permitted. This pluralistic co-governance thinking based on the rule of law represents both a profound summary of China's practical experience over the years and an objective requirement posed by future governance environments.

Since social governance requires participation from different groups, mutual trust among these subjects—particularly public trust in other governance institutions—becomes an important condition for effective governance implementation. Trust is a complex value-based psychological representation referring to positive expectations about others' or other groups' behavioral performance formed by individuals based on cognition of the trusted object's competence, integrity, and goodwill. Extensive psychological research shows that trust can promote mutual assistance and cooperation among organizations, while trust deficits lead to serious social problems. In natural disasters like the Wenchuan earthquake, high levels of trust and good coordination among government agencies, medical personnel, and social groups provided an excellent prerequisite for effective disaster relief. In governance areas such as environmental protection, food safety, and targeted poverty alleviation, the government increasingly values the role of various social forces. However, in many cases, a mentality of distrust has widely spread among the public and between organizations, turning ordinary people into "old doubters," seriously affecting governance effectiveness and greatly increasing governance costs. In future multi-subject governance, enhancing mutual trust among multiple parties will inevitably become an important topic, and this is clearly a psychological-level issue.

Psychology has accumulated rich research on trust construction. For example, social identity theory proposes that people distinguish others as belonging to the same group (in-group) or different groups (out-group) based on identity information, with trust toward in-group members being significantly higher than toward out-group members. By emphasizing common group interests, constructing new shared group identities, and weakening intergroup boundaries, mutual trust among parties can be effectively enhanced. Increased intergroup contact is another method found to effectively improve trust—through enhanced interaction in appropriate contexts, suspicion and hostility between groups can be significantly reduced. These conclusions obviously provide excellent insights for governance practice. In community governance, for instance, disputes often arise due to lack of trust among community streets, residents' committees, property management, and all owners as plural governance subjects. To ad-

dress this problem, besides institutional regulation and guidance, we can also start from strengthening clearer common interest relationships and conducting diverse activities to enhance positive interaction among subjects, thereby establishing or rebuilding mutual trust at the psychological level and solidly laying the psychological foundation for pluralistic co-governance. [33]

2.2 Deliberative Democracy: Psychological Appeals and Their Mediation

In terms of approaches to social problems, social governance emphasizes deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy is a new democratic thought emerging in Western political science following representative democracy and participatory democracy. It advocates citizen participation, dialogue, consultation, and rational communication in governance decision-making, believing that through this approach, people can express, negotiate, and reflect on their views and appeals, deepen understanding of discussed matters, and thereby achieve interest optimization. In recent years, China's advocacy and implementation of deliberative democracy thinking have somewhat changed the traditional administrative model that previously emphasized "concentrating resources to accomplish major tasks" and relied mainly on administrative power to solve problems, providing citizens with more direct avenues to pursue their legitimate interests. Although many challenges remain in practice, deliberative democracy has become a primary method for promoting social governance innovation and will play an increasingly important role in future governance work.

The advancement of deliberative democracy systems and methods similarly cannot be separated from foundational psychological support. Because democratic consultation emphasizes promoting mutual understanding among dialogue and negotiation parties, identifying and valuing all subjects' needs and interests, it requires consultation subjects to consider not only their own group's interests but also make decisions based on principles for resolving differences after considering other participating groups' interests. This process involves complex social psychological processes.

First are the psychological appeals of consultation parties. Psychology holds that human needs are multi-layered. Particularly with China's economic development, social contradictions have begun to emerge, and public needs have become diversified, highly standardized, and group-differentiated. Sometimes these needs are relatively implicit, not necessarily clearly perceived by individuals themselves, yet they still significantly affect their social decision-making. This requires researchers to start from psychological roots to deeply depict contemporary people's psychosocial needs structure, including its demographic differential characteristics—this is the basic condition for psychologically ensuring smooth deliberative democracy. Second, we must deeply explore the dynamic characteristics of individuals' and groups' emotions and cognition during consultation and dialogue processes and their influence on game decision-making, and based on full understanding, design more stable consultation plans to avoid

opinion polarization and expanded differences. Additionally, to enhance deliberative democracy's effectiveness, psychology needs to conduct multifaceted work, such as exploring the psychological mechanisms and intervention strategies for public participation in deliberative democracy, uncovering the formation process of tolerance and compromise among different interest groups, and preventing grassroots masses from experiencing "deindividuation" due to diffusion of responsibility. [39]

2.3 Conflict Resolution: Social Mentality and Its Guidance

Preventing and resolving social contradictions is an important objective of social governance practice and another typical feature distinguishing social governance philosophy from traditional management models. Social contradictions are widespread, arising from uneven resource possession and distribution as well as differences in ideology and values, creating tense relationships among social groups, strata, and organizations. However, for a considerable period, China's social contradiction resolution mechanisms had some common problems, not only failing to effectively alleviate contradictions but actually increasing their intensity. Many local governments could not correctly understand contradictions in problem handling, exhibited rigid thinking patterns, adopted inappropriate methods such as forceful suppression, and one-sidedly emphasized the erroneous approach that "pacification equals competence, resolution equals stability, and no incidents equal capability," causing the public to be unable to express their will through legitimate channels and ultimately leading to escalated contradictions, intensified confrontations, damaged government image, and a series of negative consequences. Based on some past negative cases, the new governance philosophy more explicitly proposes safeguarding people's interests, preventing and resolving contradictions from their roots, and particularly emphasizes listening to public opinion and guiding public social mentality.

Social mentality refers to macro, dynamic, and universal social psychological states that diffuse throughout entire societies or certain social groups during specific periods. It encompasses structures across multiple levels including social needs, cognition, emotion, values, and action, comprising both stable social psychological characteristics and temporary social psychological conditions, reflecting the most macro-level psychological relationship formed through mutual construction between individuals and society. The spread of negative social mentality currently serves as a breeding ground for many contradictions and conflicts. For example, sudden mass incidents, vicious assault cases, and online condemnation events frequently reported in recent years all reflect complex social mentality with collectivity and dynamism. According to relevant research, although China's overall social mentality remains relatively stable, it is still permeated with high levels of unfairness, insecurity, official resentment, wealth resentment, and other negative mentalities and emotions. These social mentalities may remain relatively static and stable in normal social life but can easily be triggered by originally minor events, evolving into intense contradictions and

crisis incidents.

Therefore, resolving social contradictions must consider the foundation of social mentality. From a psychological perspective, social mentality should play an important mediating role between governance measures and their effects on social contradictions. Only when social governance work can truly grasp social mentality, respect its objective laws, and focus on regulating and guiding social mentality can contradictions be better prevented and resolved. This requires government departments to improve public opinion expression mechanisms and smooth channels for expressing public sentiment on one hand, and requires psychology to intensify research on social mentality and its influencing factors, mechanisms, and intervention strategies on the other, clearly defining the objective and subjective conditions needed for constructing positive social mentality, and providing practical and feasible reference suggestions for guiding social mentality and resolving social contradictions. [43][44][45][46][47][48][49][50]

2.4 Fine Governance: Psychological Techniques and Their Application

Fine governance represents another prominent feature distinguishing social governance from social management. Based on new forms and contradictions emerging from China's social transformation, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee specifically emphasized the thinking of fine governance in further advancing social governance modernization. This not only proposes new requirements for strengthening social governance but also points out new directions for innovating it. Influenced by traditional management thinking for a considerable period, some local governments have become accustomed to experiential, extensive, and omnipotent management approaches in administrative work, resulting in many drawbacks that increasingly fail to meet the demands of the social governance modernization era. Addressing existing deficiencies, the fine governance thinking explicitly emphasizes adjustments in several aspects, including specialization of governance techniques, standardization of governance processes, economization of governance costs, and significant governance effects. In short, the connotation of social governance refinement is achieving higher quality, more detail-oriented, and more humanized governance effects with lower costs and more professional governance methods.

It is evident that implementing fine governance depends on multidisciplinary collaborative research and technical support, yet psychology's importance in this regard should not be underestimated, primarily reflected in changing human psychology and behavior. With breakthroughs in psychological research in recent years, particularly the emergence of increasingly more psychological intervention techniques, we can now achieve effective governance through psychological factor interventions. These techniques, developed based on profound understanding of human nature, mainly target non-adaptive psychological and behavioral characteristics common among ordinary people, deploying convenient and situational micro-intervention measures to regulate certain groups' habitual

thinking and behavior unintentionally.

For example, in Kenya, many citizens have low willingness to purchase necessary hygiene prevention products, which has become a social problem. However, when researchers provide them with a lockable box and an account book listing necessary hygiene prevention products and prices, citizens' consumption in this area increases substantially. The implicit logic of this method is to use a tangible form (the lockable box and account book) to place money in a specialized "mental account" for purchasing such products, establishing an automatic thought process (this money is specifically for buying hygiene prevention products) to promote fund allocation and regulate consumption behavior. Another example involves micro-intervention techniques for poverty populations implemented in many countries in recent years, which have also achieved noticeable effects. Psychologically, poverty is not only an objective situation but also profoundly affects the poor' s psychology, increasing cognitive burden and making it difficult for individuals to think deeply about many important issues, consequently leading to a series of unreasonable consumption and financial decisions. Based on this characteristic, researchers attempt to have impoverished individuals avoid their poorest periods when making major decisions or simplify cognitive tasks required for decision-making as much as possible, finding that the poor' s decision-making improves significantly. In recent years, there have been many such successful cases, which are not only low-cost and highly effective but also excellently embody the essential requirements of social governance refinement, offering promising prospects for application and promotion. [43][58][59][60][61][62]

3. Future Directions for Psychology Serving Social Governance

Psychology is essentially compatible with social governance' s practical needs in terms of disciplinary nature, research methods, research questions, and practical techniques. Applying psychology to social governance practice has already produced some exciting results. Of course, this field of research is still in its infancy domestically, but we have reason to believe it has broad development prospects. We offer the following recommendations:

- (1) **Devote greater effort to psychological research on social governance.** In recent years, many domestic psychology researchers have recognized psychology' s role in social governance issues, and a new psychological research field focusing on social reality and consolidating social responsibility has initially formed in China. However, it must be acknowledged that current domestic academia has not paid sufficient attention to this field, and the coverage of specific issues studied remains relatively narrow. Although research on some individual themes has been relatively in-depth and yielded fruitful results, research on many other important issues remains relatively blank. This requires our scholars to have keen insight to identify problems, a strong sense of responsibility to respond to

them, and remarkable innovation to answer them.

- (2) **Emphasize theoretical localization and methodological diversity.** Currently, when studying relevant social psychological issues, domestic scholars mostly rely on relatively mature theoretical frameworks and conceptual systems from abroad. While human nature is common in many aspects between East and West, China has certain particularities in culture and social systems, making localization of existing Western theoretical frameworks often necessary. Additionally, methodological innovation is imperative. In current psychological empirical systems, questionnaire surveys and experimental methods are undoubtedly the most commonly used research methods. These theory-driven approaches reveal relationships between variables through relatively accurate operation, measurement, and control. However, social governance involves highly complex levels, issues, and variables. Relying solely on single quantitative analysis methods clearly sacrifices research external validity and generalizability. This requires future scholars in this field to enhance interdisciplinary academic perspectives, comprehensively drawing on methodological systems from humanities and natural sciences to explore issues. Gratifyingly, domestic research has already made many innovative breakthroughs in this regard in recent years, such as using big data methods to analyze public opinion, employing virtual reality technology to simulate disaster response behaviors, and utilizing grounded theory research methods to build more macro-level models predicting public environmental behavior. Theoretical and methodological innovation must remain a high priority for researchers in future studies.
- (3) **Maintain a positioning of multidisciplinary collaborative innovation.** Multidisciplinary collaborative innovation refers to research teams or individuals combining two or more disciplines to solve problems that single disciplines cannot address, encompassing both integration of disciplinary thinking and collaboration in research methods. Obviously, social governance research requires multidisciplinary collaborative innovation, and psychology's role should not be overlooked. However, we must also acknowledge that for many practical problems, psychology alone cannot provide complete solutions. Psychology is better at micro-level, individual, and local research but still struggles to handle macro-level, systematic issues well. Social governance requires not only micro-level refinement thinking but also macro-level holistic consideration. Therefore, future psychological research on social governance should maximize disciplinary advantages while objectively and rigorously recognizing its own limitations, implementing collaborative innovation concepts together with other disciplines to offer suggestions for social governance.
- (4) **Clarify the relationship between basic and applied research.** While the ultimate purpose of this field is to face social governance practice, it cannot be said that this field only includes applied orientations

or only emphasizes applied research. Some scholars believe that research without direct purpose and driven intrinsically is basic research, while purpose-driven, extrinsically motivated research is applied research. We consider this view one-sided. Generally, research exploring basic natural and social laws constitutes basic research, while research aiming to directly solve problems and provide guidance constitutes applied research. Therefore, practice also needs basic research, and should even emphasize it more, because only by accurately recognizing objective laws and clarifying relevant mechanisms can more targeted and effective applied guidance be provided. The Kenyan intervention for hygiene product purchasing mentioned earlier worked precisely because it was developed based on researchers' profound understanding of the foundational issue of "mental accounts." Therefore, psychological research for social governance does not necessarily require researchers to provide practical suggestions; conducting solid basic research on relevant psychological issues is equally important.

- (5) **Manage the relationship between scientific research and humanistic concern.** The fundamental starting point of social governance is people's interests. Departing from this point renders governance research meaningless. The 2015 APA scandal shocked the world when several psychologists used professional knowledge to assist the U.S. military in torture and interrogation. This incident sounded an alarm for researchers worldwide, reminding us that scientific and technological progress must be guided by correct research ethics and cannot one-sidedly emphasize technical means while abandoning humanistic concern. Specifically regarding psychological research in social governance, we must respect and properly address the needs of multiple interest subjects, preventing governance from degenerating into mere control. For example, when proposing psychological and behavioral-level governance suggestions for certain existing social contradictions, the focus should be on discussing deepening reform and strengthening social construction rather than solely emphasizing public self-psychological adjustment. Only in this way can psychological research truly make its due contribution to promoting social development.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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