

EXPLICIT OR IMPLIED 'EASTERNISATION': THE CASE OF SITUATIONAL FORCES IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Conventional West/East convergency theory tends to either emphasise the East's westernising process, or confines discussion to the West's adoption of Eastern cuisine, medicine and health practices. This article expands the discussion on the West's easternisation. It elaborates on the increasing importance assigned to the situation in the West particularly in social psychology – a traditionally Western discipline adopting a seemingly eastern-oriented notion as its central focus. I demonstrate how the notion of situational forces has gained increasing acceptance in social psychology, how its popularity has spread to other disciplines such as philosophy and into general public discourse. I examine the origin of this evolvement (particularly whether it manifests any conscious appropriation of Eastern thought) by tracking the influences on its key figures. The findings suggest that this case of 'easternisation' does not result from a conscious uptake of Eastern philosophy, but rather seems to be a separate, independent development within the West. I propose that this may be a natural result of Western dualism and the tendency to swing between perceived opposites, as well as of the Western insistence on observation and empiricism as the primary sources of knowledge.

Keywords: convergency; easternisation; situational forces; social psychology

Most literature on modernisation, and West/East convergency theory assumes a western-centripetal nature of the globalisation process (Guillén, 2001; Nisbett, 2005). Fukuyama's view "capture[s] those of many in the west . . . who tend to assume that everyone is really an American at heart, or if not, it's only a matter of time until they will be" (Nisbett, 2005, p. 220). There are abundant empirical examples to

testify to this claim, from Eastern consumers' attitude shifts towards material goods such as clothing; popular brands like Nike and Coke; to Western music, movies and TV programmes. Philosophical and psychological cultures have also shifted considerably, as witnessed through the uptake of the English language; stronger emphasis on analysis and logic in formal education; and increasing importance assigned to cultivating independence and competition.

This article examines the West/East convergency theory from an alternative lens – the West's easternisation. I ask a similar question that prompted Colin Campbell's (2007) seminal book, *The Easternisation of the West: A thematic account of cultural change in the modern era*: What happens to the West itself in this process of globalisation? Focusing mainly on the post-1960 counter-culture 'revolution' period, Campbell examines domains such as astrology, mythology, intuition, Feng Shui, fantasy literature, the whole-foods and vegetarian movement, the concept of human potential, holistic health, environmental and animal rights and the New Age movement¹. In this article, I explore beyond these comprehensive examples and focus on the case of situational forces – another seemingly 'Eastern' notion but not featured in Campbell's or any other West/East convergency analysis.

The article starts with a theoretical discussion of the distinction between West and East and of whether 'situational force' is indeed an Eastern concept. I then examine the concept of situational force (or 'situationism') as it emerges in Western social psychology – a discipline accepting this seemingly eastern-oriented notion as its central focus. I demonstrate how this notion has increasingly been accepted in social psychology, spread to other disciplines; and how it has extended into general public discourse, as is evident in the many bestselling psychology books in the past few decades advocating this situational perspective. Thereafter I examine the major influences on the key figures within social psychology in order to determine any trace of conscious uptake of Eastern philosophy. I conclude by proposing that our inability to detect any conscious appropriation of Eastern philosophy by these key figures is an example of implied (unconscious or unintended) rather than explicit (conscious or intended) 'easternisation'.

THE WEST AND EAST: AN ARBITRARY DISTINCTION?

The West and East dichotomous typology as set out by Max Weber at the turn of the 20th century mainly emerged out of his attempt to define and explain the distinguishing features of Western civilisation (cited in Campbell, 2007). This inevitably requires the re-examination of the concept of the West itself, which in turn, invites the concept of the East, as 'West' is a 'compass' concept (Campbell, 2007) and "it would make no sense to have a west without an east" (Campbell, 2007, p. 45).

This dichotomous typology is nothing short of controversial of course. "Anything

as large and complex as a civilisation” cannot be expected to “contain just one entirely consistent and coherent worldview. . . [instead], it can be expected that the ‘opposed’ worldview will coexist (either as a minority or deviant tradition of thought) within a civilisation in which the other predominates” (Campbell, 2007, p. 15). Still, the view that the East mirrors the opposite of the West can be observed in much of the comparative literature on culture and its implications, e.g., on cognitive patterns (Nisbett, 2005).

I follow this dichotomous typology in this article too, albeit with a footnote. In line with Campbell’s examination of the West’s easternisation, I also treat the East and West as ideal types. As such, “such concepts do not coincide precisely with any existing cultural reality. Rather one is pointing to a construct that is built from elements of that reality to form a logically coherent and systematically organised entity” (Campbell, 2007, pp. 43–44). This allows one to bypass the tangled complex of these civilisations’ reality and do not divert from the central thesis of the intended discussion.

SITUATIONAL FORCES: AN EASTERN CONCEPT?

Few direct assertions establish ‘situational forces’ as an Eastern concept. Most of these direct assertions can be found in literature of comparative culture. For example, in Nisbett, Peng, Choi, and Norensayan’s (2001) comparison of the East (comprising China and East Asia) and the West (as derived from the ancient Greek tradition), they cite psychologist Chiu’s (1972) claim that “Chinese are situation-centred, they are obligated to be sensitive to their environment. Americans are individual-centred. They expect their environment to be sensitive to them” (cited in Nisbett *et al.*, 2001, p. 295). Nisbett also points out a large number of other findings within psychology, all reporting that Chinese explanations of certain events “invoke situational factors more frequently than do those of Americans . . . and Americans . . . more with respect to a target and its properties” (2005, p. 296). Drawing on other psychology findings, Bond and Hwang (1986) make a similar assertion. In line with this position, Nisbett *et al.* (2001) also propose that Americans are more prone than easterners to the Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE), or the tendency of over-ascribing the role of personality and giving insufficient attention to the possible impact of the situation (sometimes also called correspondence or confirmation bias)².

Other references to this link mainly support the East’s greater comparability with the notion of ‘situationism’³ as the consequence of its collective information processing style, as opposed to the individualistic style of the West. Hofstede’s *Culture’s Consequences* (1980) is one seminal publication that firmly establishes this distinction and spurred numerous studies afterwards. Many discussions in this domain see individualism as an integral part of the Western culture, particularly that of America, defining it as a “focus on rights above duties...an emphasis on

personal autonomy and self-fulfilment and the basing of one's identity on one's personal accomplishments" (Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002, p. 4). Thus, in Western society, "it is the individuals who get praise and fame and wealth for achievement and are honoured for their uniqueness, but it is also the individuals who are blamed for the ills of society" (Zimbardo, 2004, pp. 24–25). The association between a stronger focus on individualism and higher economic and social well-being (such as GDP, life satisfaction, self-esteem and optimism, and social capital) is also often pointed out and highlighted (Allik & Realo, 2004; Hofstede, 1980). On the contrary, collectivism is often seen as a typical characteristic of the traditional, poorer and rural societies (Hofstede, 1980). It is often seen as associated with any "cultural group that has not fully adopted the Western/American program of modernity" (Allik & Realo, 2004, p. 33), with a pre-occupation on the "assumption that groups bind and mutually obligate individuals" (Oyserman *et al.*, 2002, p. 5).

Originating from the philosophies of the ancient Greeks who viewed themselves as unique individuals with distinctive attributes and goals (Nisbett, 2005), the Western self is often seen as separate from his or her context, thereby constituting one of the most famous examples of the Western dualistic tradition, namely the division between matter and spirit, or body and mind, human and nature. The same chain of thought also leads to the understanding that the world is a collection of discrete objects; understanding the world therefore should start from understanding individual objects (Nisbett *et al.*, 2001; Nisbett, 2005). Through a meta-analysis of studies on individualism and collectivism from 1980 to 1999, Oyserman *et al.* (2002) also affirm the empirical support for the notion that "European American attribution style focuses more on dispositional and decontextualized reasoning and less on situated reasoning than is true for other groups . . . [they] use an individualistic processing style and find relational and contextual information less informative or compelling than others, even when contextual influence are made salient" (pp. 34–35). They conclude by suggesting that "dispositional reasoning is an American attribution style" (p. 35).

Dispositional analyses are one of the central operating features of cultures based in the West, treasuring individualistic values (Triandis, 1994) and assuming individual responsibility and accountability. This is most notable in understanding the phenomenon of 'evil'. In an historical examination of perceived sources of evil, Zimbardo (2004) points out the widespread use of the dispositional perspective (to locate evil within particular people) throughout history, started in 16th and 17th century Europe and in the domain of theology. Zimbardo quotes Maleficarum's handbook of the German inquisitors from the Roman Catholic Church who argued that evil originates in the Devil and is transferred through intermediaries, namely demons or witches, the justification often used for witch hunts and witch trials characterising the period. These early efforts within the West to understand the origin of evil, Zimbardo (2004) claims, "exemplifies the notion of simplifying the

complex problem of widespread evil by identifying individuals who might be the guilty parties, and then making them pay for their evil deeds” (p. 23) . Similarly, Zimbardo (2004) also points to the primary focus of psycho-therapy, especially during the earlier period post-Freud, “psychodynamic theory, as well as most traditional psychiatry, also locates the source of individual violence and anti-social behaviour within the psyches of disturbed people, often tracing it back to early roots in unresolved infantile conflicts . . . [and linking] behaviours society judges as pathological to pathological origins – defective genes, ‘bad seeds’, or pre-morbid personality structures” (Zimbardo, 2004, p. 3).

In a collective culture, the person is understood as a relational being who is inseparable from his or her social environment. As such, individuals are defined within socially situated and interactive contexts and in relation to one another (Bond & Hwang, 1986). Therefore, the self is only completed among appropriate social relationships. The Chinese word for person (*ren*) contains “all its overtones of connectedness and reciprocal relations” (Redding & Yong, 1986, p. 285). “The emphasis is on attending to others, fitting in, and harmonious interdependence with them” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 224). This emphasis on relationships naturally leads to the acknowledgment of greater external influences (such as norms, group pressure, and perceived roles), “thus, one’s actions are more likely to be seen as situationally bounded, and characterisations of the individual will include this context” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 225). More recently, neurology studies have provided further proof from a biological point of view: babies’ brain synapses (neuron connection) are greatly shaped by their early environmental and social interactions. These synapses are pruned or eliminated if they are not stimulated by those sensory experiences (Balbernie, 2010).

The notions of relativism and holism are two other features, often attributed to the East, that also suggest the East’s situational stance. Relativism, originated from Taoism, subscribes to multiple points of view that change with time, location and audience for each person (Kim, Lim, Dindia, & Burrell, 2010). In this sense, concepts only come in comparative and situational terms. Similarly, the holistic worldview acknowledges multiple perspectives, appreciates and embraces contradiction, incompatibility and the existence of opposites (Lim & Giles, 2007; Nisbett *et al.*, 2001).

The above examination shows that these two approaches – acknowledging the force of the situation versus the will of the individual – are additional instances indicating a division between Eastern and Western understanding (as in ideal West and East stance). What the following section shows is the evidence pointing to the shift in Western discourse towards a more situation-oriented perspective. This shift is especially evident in the discipline of social psychology.

SITUATIONAL FORCES: THE DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

The notion of situationism makes its first appearance in Western psychology in Kurt Lewin's writing in the 1930s and 1940s (Reis, 2008). Lewin attributed two original causes to all human behaviour: the person and the environment (as shown in his famous equation, $\text{Behaviour} = f(\text{Person, Situation})$). One other early reference specifically to the power of situational forces was Max Weber's writing on bureaucracies (1958). In Weber's view, bureaucracies could induce situational powers that constrain individual behaviour and render personality and expression irrelevant.

However, it was only in the 1970s that the causal attribution debate on whether behaviour is caused by a dispositional or a situational attribution (also called the 'person situation debate', Kenrick & Funder, 1988), became a central issue among social psychologists (Krueger, 2009). A landmark development in this debate was the publication of *Personality and Assessment* by Walter Mischel (Mischel, 1968). Through a survey of several decades of research, Mischel claimed a 0.3 upper limit of correlation between character-related behaviours across dissimilar situations, indicating that less than 9% of the behaviour variance can be explained by character-related variables⁴. The publication rejected the traditional personality theory dominating the field at the time and was a turning point in the development of personality psychology, sometimes even believed to have led to a paradigm crisis for trait researchers (Endler & Parker, 1992). The concept of the Fundamental Attribution Error also quickly gained popularity; the same period also saw a booming of a diverse body of empirical experiments that gave rise to increasing recognition of the importance of situational forces in explaining behaviour. These included Milgram's obedience experiment and Zimbardo's Stanford prison experiment on eliciting cruelty; Darley and Batson's Good Samaritan experiment and Isen and Levin's dime experiment on suppressing helpful behaviour; Latané and Darley's experiment on the bystander effect; Asch and Sherif's group conformity experiment; and Hartshorne and May's experiment on honesty among school children.

Milgram and Zimbardo's experiments were especially significant in this period (besides turning psychology into a household word, according to American Psychological Association president Levant (Levant, 2007). Designed and executed shortly after the trial of Adolf Eichmann, these experiments confirmed the power of the situation and its various sources. In Milgram's case, it was the pressure of authority and peers; in Zimbardo's experiment, the stereotype people hold for a certain role. Other studies have also since solicited notable powerful situational sources: peer loyalty; overlapping and confused nature of authority and lack of clarity in rules, particularly for prison tortures (Einolf, 2009); de-individuation and anonymity (using masks and other disguises); dehumanisation (arbitrary labelling of

others as enemy or animals); distorted promotion of honourable images (such as of suicide bombers as heroes (Zimbardo, 2004, 2007).

Not long after Mischel's publication, many social psychologists started to evaluate the effect size of situations (a statistical calculation of the power of explanation) too. Their conclusion is similar dismay: with an effect size of 0.2 to 0.3, situation exerts no greater than the effect size of persons (Bower, 1973; Funder & Ozer, 1983; Richard *et al.*, 2003, all cited in Krueger, 2009). Other criticisms of the sudden fame of the situational force also surfaced (Annas, 2003; Arjoon, 2008; Slingerland, 2011), including methodological flaws (many of the experiments had limited examination of longitudinal traits and personality, therefore artificially promoting the situationism findings); misinterpretation of the famous 0.3 correlation – a 0.3 correlation does not necessarily mean a weak correlation (Sabini & Silver, 2005); over-emphasis on behaviours (and insufficient focus on inclination and reasoning); and the assumption of a dichotomous view that, using the metaphor of a machine, it is either the design of the machine that is incorrect or one of the parts is defective, with a zero sum assumption (Mischel, 2009).

Thus the debate continued, with a partial consensus reached that behaviour is the product of both personality and the situation (Endler & Parker, 1992; Mischel & Shoda, 1995; Weiss & Adler, 1984). Funder (2006), one of the leading proponents for personality psychology, however, maintained that situationism still thrives. Krueger (2009) concurs: "After decades of research that did not properly separate situation, person, and interaction effects, a strong situationist attitude prevails in social psychology" (p. 129).

The developments around situationalism in social psychology also influenced other disciplines and discourses. For example, many popular psychology bestsellers in the past few decades promoted the situational perspective: *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (1984); *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (2000); *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (2006); *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions* (2008); and *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard* (2010). In the field of philosophy, just as the debate was 'dying out' (Kristjánsson, 2011) in social psychology (nearly 30 years after it started), it was taken up, with the debate drawing primarily on the work of social psychologists (more specifically Ross and Nisbett's *The person and the situation: perspectives of social psychology* published in 1991, Annas, 2003; Sabini & Silver, 2005). Harman and Doris, two famous proponents of situationism, proposed to discard the notion of character within philosophy altogether, while philosophers following the Aristotelian virtue ethics tradition kept their eyes on the weakness of those findings and defended the strength of the concept of virtuous character (Arjoon, 2008; see also Kamtekar, 2004; Prinz, 2009; Sabini & Silver, 2005).

Some have argued that situationists have misunderstood classical or Aristotelian virtue ethics, and so have been attacking the wrong target when they propose or

recommend an alternative which is already part of classical virtue ethics itself. Others believe that the lesson to be learnt is substantially narrower than the social psychology movement seems to believe. Situationists have found a reasonably small number of previously unrecognised aspects of situations that tend to make it difficult for people to live up to their own moral aspirations (Arjoon, 2008).

Some defenders of Aristotle's concept of virtue ethics highlighted its potential compatibility with some claims made by situationists too: that Aristotle has in fact suggested that few can reach the level of full virtue, therefore inconsistency in people's behaviour and traits is to be expected (Sabini & Silver, 2005); that Aristotle's concept of virtue doesn't refer to rigid habit which is fixed, unified and indifferent to circumstances, but instead is highly sensitive to changes and new demands of each situation (Kristjánsson, 2008); and that sometimes, there is also a need for strategic manipulation of changes in behaviours so that others will not be able to take advantage of a perfect predictability (Krueger, 2009). A comparison with Confucianism is also sometimes drawn into this debate (Hutton, 2006; Kristjánsson, 2008; Slingerland, 2011), often in order to highlight that Confucianism also "perceived the ethical importance of rationality and will power" (Slingerland, 2011, p. 416); that it also acknowledged the ideal of full virtue (yet admitted that few can achieve that ideal); and allowed that the situation plays an important role when one progresses towards full virtue.

However, even within this emerging discourse in the West, the understanding still seems to tend towards a more 'Western' (i.e., individualist) approach. For instance, whereas the Eastern view advocates the achievement of full virtue through the situation (e.g., through a carefully controlled physical, conceptual and social environment), the Aristotelian virtue ethics followers suggest to cultivate virtue through the enhanced personal ability to rationalise and reflect on situations (Hutton, 2006; Kristjánsson, 2008; Slingerland, 2011).

ORIGIN OF THE WEST'S INCREASING EMPHASIS ON SITUATIONAL FORCES

Is this increasing popularity of situational forces in Western thinking, particularly within academia, a manifestation of the West's conscious "easternisation"? The following section examines the acknowledged influences of the key figures in the field (namely Walter Mischel, Milgram and Zimbardo)⁵.

Mischel in his reflection of 40 years of his 1968 book (in a special edition of *Journal of Research in Personality*, 2009, p. 43) revealed that his main motivation for his famous book was none other than through his preparation of a survey course in the personality programme on the state of personality psychology and assessment in Harvard in 1960s. He became struck by the discrepancies between what the personality theories assumed and what the data showed, for both the then-dominant trait and psychodynamic-psychoanalytic approaches.

After a year of trying to make sense of this, I shared the researcher's unhappy conclusion, and tried hard to forget it. Soon, however, I became a consultant for personality assessment to help select the first volunteers into the Kennedy administration's new Peace Corps projects, and I came face to face again with the same dilemma. Our effort to predict behaviour and make effective assessment decisions were much like those piling up in the literature, and motivated me again to try to make sense of the finding. I spent most of the next 7 years at Stanford University writing Personality and assessment. (Mischel, 2009, p. 283)

Both Zimbardo and Milgram, on the other hand, claimed that their experiments were in part motivated by a desire to deal with the horror of the Nazi era (De Vos, 2010; Slavich, 2009). Noting that the Milgram experiments began in July 1961, three months after the start of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, Milgram is quoted to have devised his psychological study to answer the question: "Was there a mutual sense of morality among those involved in the Holocaust?" (www.wikipedia.com). In this sense, The WWII experience challenged the tendency to explain observed evil by dispositions, and opened the question of how so many "good" people could have become involved in such brutal activities. As Zimbardo summarises, much of the subsequent inquiry and findings were counter-intuitive and 'terrifying': many concluded that ordinary people could become barbarous perpetrators in extraordinary situations (Zimbardo, 2007). For example, in her observation of Adolf Eichmann during his trial in Jerusalem, Hannah Arendt (1963) concluded that Eichmann, a Nazi officer, was perfectly ordinary:

Half a dozen psychiatrists had certified him as 'normal'. . . another had found that his whole psychological outlook, his attitude towards his wife and children, mother and father, brothers, sisters, and friends, was 'not only normal but most desirable'. . . this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together, for it implied . . . that this new type of criminal . . . commits his crimes under circumstances that make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or feel that he is doing wrong. (pp. 25-26, 276)

A similar conclusion was reached by Dicks (1972) and Lifton (1986) after interviewing Nazis directly involved in the Holocaust. Browning (1998), in his examination of the Reserve Battalion 101 (a unit of about 500 elderly family men with no police or military experience that within four months committed mass murder of at least 38,000 Jews in Poland and deported another 45,000), also concludes that these men were as ordinary as can be imagined, "until they were put into a novel situation in which they had 'official' permission and encouragement to act sadistically against people who were arbitrarily labelled as the 'enemy'" (cited in Zimbardo, 2007, p. 286). Another psychologist, Ervin Staub (who as a child survived the Nazi occupation of Hungary in a "protected house") similarly finds that "most people under particular circumstances have a capacity for extreme violence and destruction of human life" (cited in Zimbardo, 2007, p. 286).

As for Zimbardo (2006), besides a direct attribution to the relevance of the Nazi era, Milgram's obedience research had a direct bearing on his experiment too (2006).

In addition, in an interview about his academic career, he claimed to be a situationist early on in his life and attributed his preliminary situational perspective to personal experiences growing up, especially through dramatic changes in his popularity at different schools. This preliminary perspective was later reinforced by his repeated observations of his own students and how, after one semester in the college, the impact of social background differences among the students diminished (Slavich, 2009).

EXPLICIT OR IMPLIED ‘EASTERNISATION’?

Unlike the many examples examined by Campbell (2007) – including the apparent Eastern influence on Aldous Huxley, Christopher Isherwood, Charles Chaplin and the Beatles – the above analysis does not lead to a similar conclusion that the East had a direct or active influence on the development of situational forces in social psychology, or the other discourses it had influence upon. Instead, these key figures seem to have drawn from some central features of the Western worldview, namely Western insistence on observation and empiricism as the primary sources of knowledge, as well as dualism. This does not discount the development of Eastern ideas into Western culture through efforts of Indian Gurus and faith teachers as Campbell (2007) has pointed out. However, in social psychology, the main discipline this analysis focuses on, I could not discern any conscious uptake through available evidence on how its key figures have arrived at their situational stance. In the case of philosophy, the mention of Confucianism did not initiate or direct the ethics/character versus situation debate, but merely provided a point of comparison. In social psychology, none of its three key figures made any specific reference to anything Eastern. In other words, the growing popularity of the notion of situational forces I examined does not support the thesis which Campbell (2007) proposes: that the West is *actively* easternising itself. This of course does not necessarily undermine his entire thesis either, as situational forces is just one example which I have examined.

What my analysis suggests is that the increasing acknowledgement (despite contestations) in the case of the situational forces, in social psychology at least, seems to be an independent process that originated within the West itself. In the case of Zimbardo and Milgram, observations (of the Nazi phenomenon, as well as Zimbardo’s personal observation) seem to be the main trigger for their interest in situational forces. Their observations also informed the design of their empirical experiments to examine their hypotheses about the significance of the situation. This aligns to the insistence on the importance of observation and empirical examination as an appropriate method for scientific examination, both crucial to the definition of science in the West (especially in order to distinguish it from non-science).

In terms of dualism, markedly different from the monism and lack of need to settle contradiction in the East, the search between opposites in the West has been said to be central to the development of Western civilisation. Dualism tends to shape Western views with regard to perceived contradictions according to either one or the other position: “when confronted with two apparently contradictory propositions, Americans tended to polarise their beliefs whereas Chinese moved toward equal acceptance of the two propositions” (Nisbett, 2005, p. 192). As Suleimenov (2006) proposes, it is precisely the discomfort with, and tension in facing contradiction (and arguably the resultant motivation to resolve the contradiction) that promoted the unprecedented pace of Western civilisation. Similarly, the lack of this tension could have accounted for the dwarfed development of modern science in the East. For example, Confucians apparently did not find it problematic to sometimes acknowledge the importance of a situation, yet maintain its main advocacy on cultivating virtuous character (Hutton, 2006). However, Western social psychologists and philosophers have entered into an extensive debate in order to settle upon a solution.

A natural result from the discomfort of contradictions is a tendency to swing between perceived opposites and side with one or the other. When one finds the explanatory power of one theory unsatisfactory or inadequate, one seeks possible resolution through its alternative (opposite). This seems to be the case of Mischel (1968), who initiated an era criticising the inadequacy of the traits theory. Although he himself did not suggest seeking comfort in its alternative, situationism, but the field of social psychology as a whole ‘voluntarily’ made this shift, the shift was evidence nevertheless. (This shift could also partly be due to another important assumption under dualism – the zero sum assumption that the less one theory can explain, the more its alternative would.)

I therefore conclude that although the notion of situational forces has become a significant feature in the West, rather than a conscious uptake of the Eastern embrace of situational factors, this development was influenced by personal observations, as well as the frameworks within Western science and thinking. I propose Western dualism and Western scientific principles of observation and empiricism as two primary influences for this phenomenon of increased ‘easternisation’. I propose this as implied ‘easternisation’, instead of explicit ‘easternisation’ as in the case of Campbell’s examples.

ENDNOTES

1. Campbell points out many sources that explain this easternisation process: dissatisfaction with the Western world view and therefore a search for the alternative; the impact from Indian Gurus and Zen masters on icons such as the Beatles and Aldous Huxley; dramatically increased intensity of the interest in the East due to improved information exchange and communication (2007; 2010).

2. This is also closely linked with self-serving bias (the tendency to claim more responsibility for successes than failures), actor-observer bias (tendency to overemphasise the influence of personality and underemphasise the influence of situation for one's own behaviour and do the opposite for others), and negativity effect (attribute positive behaviour to the environment and negative behaviour to inherent nature when evaluating the causes of behaviours of person they dislike).
3. In this article I use the terms *situationism* and *situational force* interchangeably to refer to the position which acknowledges the influence of context as primary.
4. This correlation is typically close to 0.2 as Mischel claims; this figure was later claimed to be between 0.1 to 0.2 by Ross and Nisbett (1991).
5. I did not include Lewin in this part of the discussion because, as stated earlier, it was only in the 1970s and starting from Mischel's publication of *Personality and Assessment* that the 'person situation debate' became a central issue among social psychologists.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE



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