

Ancient 'Primitive' Survival Instincts Still Shape Modern Society

The evolutionary roots of human dominance and aggression remain central to social and political behaviour, argues medical professor.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, February 26, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As global conflicts intensify and democracies face increasing challenges, understanding the evolutionary roots of human aggression and dominance is more crucial than ever, according to a prominent medical professor.

In his new book, [A New Approach to Human Social Evolution](#), Professor Jorge A. Colombo, MD, PhD, explores how ancient survival instincts shape modern social and political behavior. Drawing on neuroscience, anthropology, and behavioral science, Colombo argues that primal drives—such as dominance, territoriality, and competition—remain hardwired in human nature and continue to influence global politics, economic inequality, and social structures.

He also warns that without a conscious effort to counteract these instincts, we risk perpetuating the cycles of power struggles, inequality, and environmental destruction that define much of human history.

“In an era marked by rising authoritarianism, economic inequality, environmental crises, and nationalism, understanding how ancient survival mechanisms continue to shape human behaviour is crucial,” he explains. “With increasing polarization in politics, conflicts over resources, and the struggle for social justice, I contend that only through education and universal values can humanity transcend these instincts to foster a more sustainable and equitable society.”

Colombo, a former professor at the University of South Florida and principal investigator at the National Research Council of Argentina (CONICET), contends that human behavior is deeply influenced by our primal instincts. He explains that our brains evolved to prioritize survival, territory, reproduction, and feeding. These instincts still exist in our core neural circuits (mainly in the basal brain) as our basal drives (reproductive, territorial, survival, feeding) and basic responses (fight, flight).

Over time, he explains, thanks to the brain's plasticity, it has added a neurobiological scaffolding on top of our animal drives, allowing for the emergence of traits such as creativeness, cognitive

expansion, artistic expression, progressive toolmaking, and rich verbal communication. Nevertheless, he argues, these traits did not deactivate or suppress those ancient drives and only succeeded in diverting (camouflaging) their expression or repressing them temporarily.

Colombo highlights how these primal instincts manifest in political power struggles, military oppression, and social inequality, as well as in religion and education, where dominance and control often take the form of punishment or thought conditioning. He argues that societies built on dominance tend to lend power to privileged structures, which in turn exacerbates poverty and marginalization.

According to Colombo, without a concerted effort to promote universal values and opportunities for individual and societal growth, inequality and environmental destruction will only worsen. He points to the rise of artificial intelligence as an example of how technological advancements could further entrench social disparities and educational gaps.

“The aggressiveness, cruelties, social inequities, and unrelenting individual and socioeconomic class ambitions are the best evidence that humans must first recognize and assume their fundamental nature to change their ancestral drive,” he suggests. “Profound cultural changes are only possible and enduring if humans come to grips with their actual primary condition.”

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