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Edited by Joseph P. Forgas, Kipling D. Williams and Simon M. Laham

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1

Social Motivation*Introduction and Overview*

Joseph P. Forgas, Kipling D. Williams,
and Simon M. Laham

INTRODUCTION

One of the most striking characteristics of human behavior that has fascinated philosophers and writers since antiquity is its purposive, intentional quality. Nearly everything we do is done for a reason. In everyday social life, people are constantly pursuing goals and trying to satisfy their desires and wants. It could even be argued that all social behavior and judgment is *motivated* behavior and judgment. The objective of this book is to review and integrate some of the most recent developments in research on social motivation. Specifically, our aim is to explore how various motivational mechanisms can influence, and are in turn influenced by, cognitive and affective variables as people pursue their various social goals in everyday social life.

Of course, not all motivated social behavior is necessarily conscious. Indeed, one of the most interesting recent developments in the social psychology of motivation has been the growing recognition that many kinds of social behaviors are performed in an almost automatic, spontaneous fashion, without conscious awareness. Even more intriguing are a growing number of findings suggesting not only that social actors are frequently unaware of the real motivational reasons for their behaviors, but more strikingly, that when questioned they often come up with clearly incorrect or mistaken causal explanations for their actions (Wegner & Gilbert, 2000). Does this mean that the whole notion of intentional, purposive, goal-directed social behavior should be questioned, and imply a need to revise our deepest philosophical assumptions about human beings as conscious, rational, goal-pursuing creatures? What exactly is the relationship between motivation and cognition, and between conscious and unconscious

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motivational processes in particular? And how do intrinsic and extrinsic, and conscious and unconscious, motivational influences interact in producing social behaviors? These are some of the issues we intend to explore in this volume.

We have divided this volume into three parts. The first part of the book addresses some of the general issues about the nature and characteristics of conscious and unconscious social motivational states (chapters by Harackiewicz, Durik & Barron; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon; Wood & Quinn; Gendolla & Wright, Strack & Deutsch; and Spencer, Fein, Strahan, & Zanna). In the second part, a number of contributors consider the cognitive and affective implications of various social motives (Neuberg, Kenrick, Maner, & Schaller; Aarts & Hassin; Forgas & Laham; Lewicki; Kernis & Goldman; and Liberman & Förster). The third part of the book presents research that explores some of the specific consequences and applications of conscious and unconscious social motivation for important areas of social behavior, such as prejudice, work motivation, social exclusion and ostracism, and self-regulatory processes (chapters by Devine, Brodish, & Vance; Son Hing, Chung-Yan, Grunfeld, Robichaud, & Zanna; Warburton & Williams; Weiss, Ashkanasy, & Beal; and Rhodewalt). Finally, in the concluding chapter, Schooler and Schreiber integrate the topics presented here, and identify some of the key themes of this volume. We will begin, however, with a brief theoretical and historical review of motivation research in social psychology.

MOTIVATION IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: THE BACKGROUND

The term *motivation* appears to have first crept into psychologists' vocabularies in the early 1880s. Prior to that date, the more amorphous concept of the *will* was used by philosophers and social theorists when they discussed the antecedents and features of effortful, directed, and motivated human behavior. Early functionalist philosophers and psychologists adopted the term motivation usually in reference to voluntary action – behaviors that show direction (Bindra & Stewart, 1966). Initially, motivation was considered an entity that compelled one to action. However, by the early twentieth century motivation became increasingly conceptualized in terms of instinct explanations, an approach that seemed to rule out or at least made it unnecessary to consider conscious deliberation, choice, and goal pursuit as part of motivational processes. But the domain was divided. Thinkers such as Darwin (1872), Freud (1915/1957), and McDougall (1908) all considered instincts, or innate motivational forces, to be the prime movers of all directed behavior. Others, however, took a more cognitive or rational approach to purposive behavior, proposing conscious, directed volition as a key motivational force (James, 1890/1950). In

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the light of contemporary debates about the nature and epistemological status of rational, directed human action, it is interesting to note that even in the beginning of social psychology there appeared a clear distinction between what could be considered unconscious and conscious motivational forces.

As with so many promising areas in early psychology, however, motivation research was stunted by behaviorism. The early behaviorists' doctrinaire refusal even to consider the mediating role that internal psychological processes may play in behavior eliminated motivation as a construct of serious concern. When motivation was considered at all by behaviorists, it was thought of in terms of the rise and fall in the intensity of fundamental drive states, such as hunger or thirst, almost always investigated in animals other than humans. In those terms, motivation could be readily manipulated by subjecting animals to various degrees of food or drink deprivation to produce motivational changes. There was simply no room for intentional goal pursuit in such simplistic studies of stimulus–response (S–R) relationships. It is interesting to note, however, that even S–R explanations were deeply influenced by ideas such as Thorndike's concept of habit (Bargh & Ferguson, 2000), a concept that is now considered to be much like an unconscious social motive (Wood & Quinn, this volume). Nevertheless, social motivation, whether conscious or not, was not of explicit concern for behaviorists and was largely left out of their explanations of social behavior.

It soon became clear that S–R explanations of human behavior were inadequate, and even neo-behaviorists like Hull and Tolman realized that any sensible account of human social behavior required a consideration of the motivated nature of action. The interactions that people have with their environments are largely influenced by their goals, desires, and wants – their motives. This realization was also reflected in the social psychology of the time. Influential thinkers like Heider, Lewin, and Festinger developed theories of social behavior that had clear motivational components. Their contributions represent a key and enduring influence on contemporary thinking about motivation. As historians of our field note, it is largely thanks to them that even in the darkest days of orthodox behaviorism, social psychology always remained rather cognitive and motivational, and so was spared some of the more damaging consequences of the behaviorist domination that afflicted other fields (Allport, 1968).

In their various ways, Heider, Lewin, and Festinger all placed significant emphasis on the importance of motivational forces, and both conscious and unconscious mental representations about the social world, as the key to human social behavior. Heider, in his balance theory, was among the first to emphasize the fundamental human need for coherent, meaningful mental representations as a force in motivating social thinking and

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behavior. He also developed a comprehensive phenomenological account of how the search for causal explanations can play a key role in social understanding, an idea that led to the contemporary focus on causality in accounting for interpersonal actions. Lewin, in turn, in his field theory, proposed an entirely new, dynamic, motivational account of all social behavior based on social actors' mental representations of their life space, the subjective field within which alternative courses of action can be selected. For Festinger, motivation was, of course, the focal construct in his theory of cognitive dissonance, and he was among the first to propose clearly motivational explanations for many kinds of puzzling, unexpected, and apparently irrational social behaviors. These three classic social psychologists can be credited with creating models that continued to emphasize the importance of motivational forces in every aspect of social behavior, even when much of the rest of psychology was dominated by the absurd restrictions imposed on it by behaviorism. As a result, motivation research in social psychology was never extinguished. By the 1970s, however, the advent of the *cognitive revolution* brought with it a shift in perspective, and for a while, interest in motivation took a backseat to interest in cognition.

In the 1970s and 1980s *cold* social cognition became the dominant approach to the study of social behavior and judgment, and many social cognitive theorists initially tried to explain away motivational accounts of behavior in terms of cognitive, information processing mechanisms (see Forgas, 1981, 1983, for a critique of early social cognitive approaches). For researchers like Bem (1967), Nisbett and Ross (1980), and others, what were previously considered clearly motivational explanations of judgments and behavior became reconceptualized as cognitive errors due to faulty information processing. Many examples of social behavior, such as attitude change, self-serving biases, achievement motivations, and the like were increasingly explained in terms of cold information processing variables (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Trope, 1975). During this time, the study of social motivation was once again relegated to a secondary role in explanations of social behavior.

We are not, of course, arguing that purely motivational accounts of human behavior can ever tell the whole story – far from it. By themselves, so-called hot cognition accounts are often just as inadequate as cold, information processing accounts. We suggest, however, something of an integration of the cognitive and motivational traditions of earlier social psychology, as represented in the classic work of Lewin, Heider, and Festinger, focusing on the interaction of motivational and cognitive processes in the explanation of human social behavior. Thus, we hope that this volume will contribute to a timely reintegration of cognition and motivation in social psychology, developing further the important contributions

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Excerpt

[More information](#)*Social Motivation*

5

made to this process by Sorrentino and Higgins (1986) and by Higgins and Kruglanski (2000).

SOCIAL MOTIVATION IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Social Motives

We hope we have not painted too dim a picture of motivation research in social psychology. While there has been a general neglect of motivational processes in much social cognition research, there are a number of different fields where motivation did receive reasonable empirical and theoretical attention. Primary among these are studies of goal-directed behaviors that are aimed at, or crucial to, social interaction (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1998). The importance of social motives in everyday life is not surprising given that successful social interaction is a cornerstone of our remarkable evolutionary success as a species (Buss, 1999). Our ability to cooperate and interact with others in complex and mutually advantageous ways is a defining characteristic of *Homo sapiens*, and this ability is driven largely by various social motives. The motivation or need to belong, for example, is certainly fundamental to humans' sociability and gregariousness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). It is both intuitively obvious and empirically evidenced that humans need meaningful social contact, and the motivation for such contact is crucial to the maintenance of a healthy sense of adjustment and a sense of identity. Indeed, so fundamental is this motivation to affiliate that any threat to this basic human need to form and maintain interpersonal relationships can have serious negative psychological consequences, as several chapters here will show (e.g., Warburton & Williams, this volume).

Self-preservation is another important motivation central to the evolutionary success of *Homo sapiens*. The *survival instinct* may indeed be the most basic or fundamental motive that we possess. Some researchers place this particular motivation at the heart of many other social motives, behaviors, and judgments. The desire to keep conscious knowledge of our mortality at bay can lead to symbolic defensive behaviors like maintaining high self-esteem, creating strong social bonds, and embracing others who share our cultural norms and values (see Pyszczynski et al., this volume). Clearly, our motivations to stay alive and to cope with the knowledge of our mortality are a driving force in many of our social behaviors.

Other social motivations have formed the basis of numerous influential theories in social psychology. The need for cognitive consistency, for example, is central to dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) and Heider's balance model (1958). Humans need a social world that makes sense to them, where beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are coherent and consistent. In the absence

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of such consistency, people experience psychological discomfort and have trouble planning and engaging in effective interpersonal relations (Mead, 1934/1970). These motivational issues have a clear impact on the way people perceive and process the social world. In essence, the motive to create and maintain meaning and consistency recruits many cognitive and perceptual processes to its service and shapes our representations of the social world into a coherent and sensible whole. The need for accuracy is another motive that clearly influences cognition and is central to understanding how people effectively function in the social environment (Pittman, 1998). The desire to make sense out of chaos drives many theories of attribution and causal reasoning. Accurate (or relatively accurate) attribution is an important part of interacting successfully with others in a variety of social contexts (Heider, 1958).

Although these motives appear to be fairly universal to the social functioning of all humans, there are numerous other, more specific motivational influences that are more variable and context-dependent across individuals and across situations. Another important distinction that has been made in motivation research is that between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (see Harackiewicz et al., this volume). When a person adopts an intrinsic motivation orientation, she finds rewards inherent in simply engaging in a task; the activity is an end in itself. When external motivation is present, on the other hand, rewards are mediated by the task. Here, the activity serves as a means to an end. These different orientations can have important consequences for social information processing and interpersonal interactions (Pittman, 1998; see also Devine et al., this volume, for a discussion of internal and external motivational orientations relating to expressed prejudice).

In addition to these motivational distinctions, there are more specific motivational orientations aimed at particular social ends that have been explored by researchers. Self-related motivational strategies, for example, are primary among these more specific social motives. Although some authors have tried to dismiss self-serving biases as merely faulty cognitions, others consider them fundamental motivational processes. Particularly strong among these motives is the need for self-esteem (Steele, 1988; Tesser, 1988). A positive self-concept is an important component of a healthy social life and effective social interaction. Self-evaluation processes, for example, rest at the heart of numerous theories of social interaction (Tesser, 1986). The motivation for authenticity (the operation of the core self) is another example of a specific motive central to self-esteem maintenance and subjective well-being (see Kernis & Goldman, this volume). Indeed, some people may even develop a pathological concern with self-image, as highlighted by Rhodewalt's discussion of the vagaries of the narcissistic self (this volume). Clearly, motivations to promote positive conceptions of the self are an important consideration in any review of social motivation.

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In a discussion of motivation and cognition, we would be remiss not to consider the critical role that affect plays in motivational processes. Along with motivation, affect was neglected in the early days of the cognitive revolution, and many “cold” accounts of social behavior and cognition have since been criticized for excluding emotion and feelings (Forgas, 1981; Zajonc, 2000). Recently, however, numerous researchers have turned their attention to this important domain, with interesting results. Several influential theorists see affective states as essentially feedback signals that indicate the progress of motivated, goal-directed behaviors (Carver & Scheier, 1998). Although affect clearly has such a signaling function, this view of the relationship between affect and motivation appears unnecessarily restrictive to us. Rather, much recent evidence suggests that affective states and moods, however caused, can often be a powerful source of motivated cognition and behavior. For example, even mild mood states influence how people perceive, interpret, respond to, and communicate in social situations (Forgas, 2002; see also Forgas & Laham, this volume).

The motivational consequences of affect are particularly evident in work on affect as an influence on motivated cognitive strategies. Throughout evolutionary history, affective states have come to signal particular environmental circumstances – positive moods and emotions imply benign environmental surroundings, whereas negative affective states suggest an aversive social context. These affective states have thus come to mobilize cognitive strategies adapted to dealing with these environments. Positive affect often facilitates assimilative, top-down, and creative processing, useful in dealing with familiar, threat-free environments. Negative states, on the other hand, seem to promote the use of systematic, detail-oriented, accommodative information processing, a cognitive style more suited to dealing with novel or aversive situations (Fiedler, 2001; see also Forgas & Laham, this volume). In addition to these general mood effects on information processing, specific emotions like fear and anger can have particular influences on perceptual and cognitive processes (see Neuberg et al. and Weiss et al., this volume).

Recent research thus clearly illustrates the importance of studying the interactive relations between motivation, affect, and cognition. Many motivational and affective strategies can only become effective by recruiting cognitive processes to their service (Kunda, 1999). As a consequence, neglecting these hot processes on cold cognition can result only in an incomplete account of social behavior. As we suggested earlier, however, recent developments in social psychological research, have added another layer of complexity to the study of social motivation. Students of social behavior now also need to ask another crucial question: When and why are social motivations sometimes conscious and sometimes unconscious?

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Conscious and Unconscious Social Motivation

There has been a recent trend in social psychological research toward the study of implicit cognitive processes, and this trend has not left motivation research untouched (Bless & Forgas, 2001). It is becoming increasingly apparent that a full understanding of social life requires a careful consideration of the interacting effects between conscious and unconscious perceptual, cognitive, and motivational processes (Bargh & Ferguson, 2000). Whereas many theories have traditionally proposed that conscious awareness is a requirement for the initiation of purposive action, recent challenges to this view assert the importance of spontaneous and automatic cognitive and motivational processes that occur outside of awareness, as several chapters here suggest (see Aarts & Hassin; Liberman & Förster; Strack & Deutsch; Wood & Quinn, this volume).

The notion of unconscious motivation has its roots in the cybernetics of the 1950s and 1960s. This movement maintained that systems could govern their own behavior based on environmental feedback without conscious intervention (see Bargh & Ferguson, 2000, for a review). This meant that systems could exhibit apparently complex, purposive, goal-directed behaviors in the absence of any underlying conscious processes such as choice and reasoning. Recent research in social cognition provides further evidence for the workings of unconscious social motivations in numerous domains including impression formation (Chartrand & Bargh, 1996), task performance (Bargh & Gollwitzer, 1994), and the experience of affect (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). So not only do these unconscious motives impact on various information processing strategies, they also influence clearly observable and apparently purposive and motivated social behaviors. Indeed, the importance of these findings for a comprehensive account of social motivation is echoed by many of the contributions to this volume (see Liberman & Förster; Strack & Deutsch, this volume, for example). Quite simply, the study of social motives is necessarily the study of both the conscious and unconscious worlds of social actors, as most of the chapters presented here will illustrate.

OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUME

The contributions to this volume have been divided into three parts dealing with (a) general issues about conscious and unconscious social motivation, (b) the cognitive and affective implications of social motives, and (c) the consequences and applications of social motivation.

Part I. Conscious and Unconscious Social Motivation: General Issues

In the first chapter of this part, Harackiewicz, Durik, and Barron consider one of the key issues in recent educational and social psychological

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research: Why do some people become involved and interested in their work or studies and why do they remain motivated, whereas others abandon their goals? The chapter examines the variables responsible for the development of interest and continuing motivation for various activities, explores the role of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence optimal motivation, and discusses the difference between performance and mastery goals in motivation promotion. Several experiments show that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors can play a positive role in promoting performance and intrinsic motivation, and the authors propose a multiple goals perspective for the study of optimal motivation. Harackiewicz and her colleagues present clear evidence for the operation of multiple goals in maintaining motivation in tasks ranging from playing pinball to performing well at college. These findings are consistent with a model of motivation that considers intrinsic and extrinsic factors to be complementary forces that can promote optimal motivation.

The next chapter addresses the question of how our fundamental awareness of mortality may motivate specific cognitive and behavioral strategies in humans. In this chapter, Pyszczynski, Greenberg, and Solomon present the most recent research and evidence on the motivational consequences of mortality salience, based on their Terror Management Theory (TMT; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1997). Human beings, alone among all living species, have the unique ability to recognize their own mortality, and as a result, they experience existential terror about their own deaths. Pyszczynski and his collaborators discuss the mechanisms involved in coping with these conscious and unconscious death-related threats, with a focus on the role of the accessibility of death-related ideation and the potential for affect that this produces. They provide extensive recent experimental evidence demonstrating the motivational consequences of mortality salience in areas such as norm formation and maintenance, group identification, and self processes.

Wood and Quinn discuss the conditions under which social behavior can be predicted from implicit, unconscious versus explicit, conscious motivational factors, and focus especially on the distinction between intentional and habitual influences on behavior. In a number of interesting studies, the authors demonstrate the nonconscious nature of habits and the important role that such implicit cognitive mechanisms play in self-regulatory behavior. The chapter also explores implications for behavior change, emphasizing the multiple processes of behavior generation. Past acts are likely to be maintained in the future when habits proceed relatively automatically in stable contexts. However, when contexts change, or when for other reasons people are encouraged to think about their behavior, behavior comes under conscious control. Given sufficient motivation and ability, people can bring their behavior in line with their explicit intentions, which may often differ from the implicit intentions directing established habits.

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Wood and Quinn conclude by outlining a general framework for understanding how the multiple cognitive processes guiding behavior interact in the generation of action.

The construct of effort, or task engagement, figures prominently in explanations of social psychological phenomena. Surprisingly, social psychologists have devoted relatively little attention to understanding fundamental effort processes. In the fourth chapter of this part, Gendolla and Wright examine the question of how effort, or task engagement, can influence social behavior. Based on Jack Brehm's earlier theory on motivational intensity, this chapter challenges commonsense ideas that effort is necessarily proportional to success importance and perceived ability in a performance realm. Gendolla and Wright outline a new framework for predicting momentary task engagement and also propose an empirical means of measuring it in terms of cardiovascular reactions that are hypothesized to change with task engagement. For example, their studies show how social evaluation can impact on effort, reflected in cardiovascular (CV) arousal. They also demonstrate how sex differences in CV response, self-involvement, resource depletion, and challenge and threat appraisals can all influence effort. Many of these findings call into question our commonsense beliefs about effort in social contexts and suggest that people sometimes expend effort nonconsciously.

Strack and Deutsch continue the exploration of conscious and unconscious social motivation with their Reflective Impulsive Model (RIM). These authors suggest that what people do is controlled by two interacting systems that follow different operating principles. While the Reflective System generates behavioral decisions that are based on knowledge about facts and values, the Impulsive System elicits behavior through associative links and motivational orientations. Importantly, Strack and Deutsch focus on the interaction of these unconscious and conscious systems, and discuss how they operate at different processing stages and how their outputs may determine behavior in a synergistic or antagonistic fashion. The implications of the RIM extend beyond those of typical dual-process models. The authors apply this model to a number of domains of mental functioning and integrate cognitive, motivational, and behavioral mechanisms. They highlight the possible applications of the RIM to our understanding of sometimes puzzling social phenomena like mass behavior, vandalism, and aggression, and present new results from their laboratories in support of the conceptual claims of the model.

In the final chapter of the first part, Spencer, Fein, Strahan, and Zanna consider the ways in which social motives can influence cognition. This chapter reviews four lines of research that demonstrate how people's implicitly activated thoughts and their explicit motives can interact. This research shows that implicit thoughts are most likely to influence behavior when explicit motivations make the implicit thoughts applicable to the