A Brief History of Motivation

- Ancient Greece – tripartite soul
  - appetitive, completive, calculating
  - Hierarchy of motivation

- Grand Theories
  - Will (Man as unique)
  - Instinct (Man as animal)
  - Drive (Man as machine)
  - Tried to explain ALL of behaviour

Mini Theories
- Attention limited to specific motivational phenomena
Will

- ‘Will’ implies that motivation is the result of choices, decision-making, and thought.
- Thus, if free will exists, people’s behavior should be unpredictable.
- But psychologists seek predictable patterns of behavior.
- ‘Will’ is thus too mysterious to be a causal explanation of behavior.

Instinct (late 1800s)

- Darwinian revolution
- Reduced mind-body problem to just the body.
- Ended the man-animal distinction
- Animal behavior was largely unlearned and mechanistic
- The ‘will’ came from a physical substance
- Thus, biology could explain motivation
Instinct

- William James
  - Human behavior can be instinctive
  - Instincts occur impulsively
- A stimulus takes an endowed instinct and translates it into behavior toward a goal
  - E.g., A dog (stimulus) activates a cat’s instinct to run away (goal-directed behavior)

The downfall of instinct theory

1) The nominal fallacy
   - Labeling a behavior instead of explaining it.
   - All behaviors were ‘explained’ in terms of instincts.
   - Over 6,000 instincts were listed!!!
2) Circular arguments
   - Cause explains the behaviour, but the behaviour is evidence for its cause
The downfall of instinct theory

Instinct to aggress → Aggression

Biology as a basis for motivation was attempted

- Phrenology
Drive (1920s)

- The function of behavior is to serve bodily needs
- An imbalance in those needs ‘drives’ us to re-establish balance
- Homeostasis (restoring equilibrium)
- Freud: source, impetus, aim, and object
- Hull: physiological needs predict behaviour

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Internal need
  ↓
  Drive
  ↓
  Activity
  ↓
  Goal
  ↓
  Quiescence
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Hull’s Drive theory

- Like Freud, Hull claimed that drives serve a biological need.
- Motivation could be predicted before it occurred – scientific study of motivation now possible
- Drive depends on bodily need; bodily need depends on deprivation.
- Thus, deprivation produces motivation

Hull’s drive theory

- Drives are energizing forces
- Habit directed behavior
- Thus,
  \[ \text{Behavior} = \text{ Habit} \times \text{Drive} \]
- Third component, $K$ (incentive motivation), was added later
- However, it had shortcomings
  - Motives can exist without a physiological need
  - External factors can produce motivation
Mini-theories (late 50s to the 70s)

- More social/cognitive
- More specific than the broader theories that preceded it.
- Their purpose is to explain some, but not all, of motivated behavior.

Theories of Motivation

**Arousal Theory** (Optimum-Level Theory)

- motivation occurs beyond satisfying biological needs or drives
- There is an optimal level of arousal
  - For a task
  - For an individual

Individual seeks optimal arousal
- Too little = bored
- Too much = anxious

Issue - difficult to tell what that optimal level of arousal is
Why did mini-theories flourish?

- Increasing emphasis in psychology on the active nature of the person
- Cognitive revolution
  - Goals, attributions, expectations, etc. were now acceptable to study
- Crisis stage of Motivation Psychology
  - Shift to viewing behaviour as human and not mechanical
  - New focus on socially relevant problem solving
- Motivation dethroned and forced to disperse among other subfields of Psychology
6 Major Historical Foci of Motivation Theories

- Biological
- Evolutionary
- Behavioral
- Cognitive
- Psychoanalytic
- Humanistic

- Brain & hormonal activity
- Genetics
- Environmental incentives & rewards
- Mental events & thoughts
- Unconscious forces
- Encouraging human potential

Mini Motivation Theories

Examples:
- Cognitive
  - Self-efficacy Theory (Bandura)
  - Self-Schemas (Markus)
- Humanistic
  - Flow Theory (Csikszentmihalyi)
  - Intrinsic Motivation (Deci)
  - Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs