

COGNITIVE MOTIVATION AND MOTIVATED COGNITION: A PREFACE

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This special issue of *Social Cognition* is devoted to the interaction of Motivation and Cognition. While traditionally these were considered to be different fields of study, there is an increasing understanding that they are inseparable. Cognition that is not *motivated* (to the extent that there is such a thing) is not simply the default mode of our mind which we need to study if we want to understand the cognitive system. It is a special case of cognition, one that may or may not be interesting in and of itself, and may or may not be more telling than other states of the mind. Similarly, motivation is not a unique mental sphere or “substance” that merits a level of explanation of its own. It is cognitive in nature, it involves mental representations that interact in ways that are determined by cognitive procedures, and it is intimately related to cognitive resources and executive functions. Importantly, motivation and cognition are brain phenomena. They are implemented in, and executed by, this very special piece of meat that lies between our ears.

The contributors for this volume vary in their foci and specialization: They include researchers who are more motivation-, cognitive-, and brain oriented. All of them share a deep interest in deciphering the workings of the human mind, and in understanding the interaction between cognition and motivation (note that this phrase assumes the very same dichotomy I argued against just one paragraph above. I use it for lack of better terminology). The authors were invited to contribute either a “regular” paper, or a paper that strikes a slightly different balance between theory and empirical examination, one that allows for a wider and more inclusive theoretical part, and an empirical investigation that is narrower. This format, we thought, may encourage authors to do what they usually cannot do in papers. I am glad to say that we were right. The contributors did indeed develop new and big ideas, took risks, and crossed traditional disciplinary boundaries. I hope and believe that the seeds planted in this volume will grow and bloom in the hearts and minds of many readers. They will surely do in mine.

I wish to thank the editorial team of *Social Cognition*, and especially Tory Higgins and Jeff Sherman, for inviting me to edit this special issue, and for providing all the support that one could think of. It has been a privilege, a learning journey, and a joy. I also wish to thank the reviewers of the papers, who made significant contributions to the quality of this volume. Last, but not least, I wish to thank the authors themselves, that took the challenge and provided thought-provoking papers.

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