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De Theatro Motivarum, Motivation: In Search of Essentials. Research on a Theoretical Model of the Process of Motivation and on Critical Determinants of Interference

Mennes, M.A.

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of the Process of Motivation
and on Critical Determinants of Interference*

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Mennes, M.A.

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*Research on a Theoretical Model
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Dr. J.I. van der Rest

In this Dissertation, reference is made to separate Appendices.

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Acknowledgments

Long years ago, as a young child, I made a pledge, expressed in the next pages as a Prologue to this dissertation, a pledge that has been, as its principal 'raison d'être', at the origin of my writings. For many years I carefully kept this childhood dream, both as a treasured secret and as an uneasy promise. And now the time has come to present my findings after many years of research.

Although at first, the research and its funding appeared to be a solitary enterprise, over the years I came to realize I was not the entrepreneur or adventurer needed to accomplish such a mission. The adventure has been a rather fearful experience, and I am deeply indebted to a number of people who stood by my side during these years and without whom the project would have failed.

With greatest affection, I call upon their names...

To my beloved Désirée, zij is mij het licht in mijn ogen, her mere presence gave me courage...

To my parents, who taught me, directly or indirectly through who they were, all there is to know on the essentials of life...

To my children, Sebastian, Constantijn, Boudewijn and Christian, who in many ways paid a heavy price for my inspired ambitions. Voor hun begrip en hun uitzonderlijke mildheid in hun oordeel ben ik hen heel erg dankbaar. As I experienced in recent times, the fulfillment one is given through parenthood transcends everything else...

To my dear friends Tom and Andries, who raised me back on my feet when all lights appeared to go out...

To Oom, who instigated the very thought of starting this journey, many years ago...

In gedachten groet ik jullie allen...

Within a different context, I am indebted to many for their support, both in enabling those long years financially, professionally, or through disclosing their thoughts and feelings as one of the more than 3500 who participated in the various Studies.

Only a few names can be mentioned here...

Among the more than twenty Companies participating, I am especially indebted to Motorola, Philips MOS4YOU, now NXP, and TNT Express, and to the many managers and employees that helped and enabled beyond a sense of duty.

I feel privileged to have been able to write this dissertation within an academic setting at Leiden University, The Netherlands, first at the Center of Business Studies within its Faculty of Law, and later at the Honours Academy. Support, both from the Board of the Honours Academy and staff-members from the LLP Master Program has been considerable, and is very much appreciated.

I am profoundly indebted to both my promotores, Jos Blommaert and Wil Foppen, who followed my 'private project', as it was affectionately called, through many years. In providing guidance to a man in writing his life's work, they expressed extreme patience, gentle steering and respectful mentoring. I am deeply grateful: ik had geen betere promotoren kunnen wensen...

Leiden, June 2016



The atrocities of war, discrimination, genocide and poverty are curses that seem inherent to the human condition.

Much has been publicized on human suffering, mostly in press publications, personal accounts and geo-political studies. In contrast, insights into why these atrocities re-occur seem virtually absent, despite public outrage expressed throughout human history.

At the root of human suffering is a lack of knowledge and understanding of the tragic discrepancy between word, creed and deed. Unveiling the mechanisms that enable atrocities of war, discrimination, genocide and poverty to persist, are the 'raison d'être' of my dissertation. This photograph, reproduced in deep appreciation to its author, Silver Camera 1998 and 2005 laureate Geert van Kesteren, captures the emotional indignation that has led to this study, which, after 28 years of research, contains the essential findings of my life's work.

*Remember,
A tree that fills a man's embrace grows from a seedling,
A tower nine stories high starts with one brick,
A journey of a thousand miles
begins with a single step...*

Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, verse 64
(Star, 2003)

Prologue

In activities man sets about, a purpose, an intention, or an act of will can be seen. And all these intentional acts appear to have a common origin in the will of man to intervene in his destiny and his surroundings both mentally and physically.

Over the last hundred years an astonishing library of ideas, thoughts, debates, insights and 'best-practices' has been produced on the subject, gradually accompanied by empirical research, detailing almost every aspect of 'human motivation', as it has been conceptualized in literature.

Surprisingly, this vast body of knowledge on human motivation has brought us very few elementary insights to have the human condition thrive and prosper in a better world, and prevent us from conflict, discrimination, genocide, poverty and injustice that are all a direct result of 'man's will to intervene in his destiny'.

In August 2005, a photographer took a picture of a child, barely alive, and floating defenselessly, suspended on a scale as it was weighed in a refugee camp of MSF, Medecins Sans Frontieres in Zinder, Niger. The world watched and did virtually nothing. Where words are lacking, it illustrates my point. Humanity seems to let it happen, and, seventy years after the darkest pages in human history account of unthinkable discrimination and genocide we are still witnessing human suffering that remains largely ignored, or poverty and injustice with excessive differences in wealth, or financial institutions deeply affecting prosperity on an unprecedented scale.

After the atrocities in the Second World War, hardly any lasting collaborative effort has been initiated to provide comprehensive scientific insights preventing humanity from these excesses to ever happen again. Following recurrent famine and human suffering in the early sixties, leading to sustained extreme poverty in concentrated areas, numerous documents, essays, analyses were written, but no substantial insights were generated to prevent almost identical events to re-occur in the nineteen eighties and nineties. And more recently, institutions entrusted with preserving and safeguarding wealth, were found engaged in activities demonstrating an exceptional departure from their moral

responsibilities. To this day, no substantial and structural changes have been made to prevent a recurring disintegration that led to a prolonged economic recession affecting millions of people, especially younger generations at the start of their career.

From a perspective that these expressions are routed in what has been conceptualized as 'human motivation', precious little has been obtained considering the impact it could have had on tolerance, growth, geo-political stability or a simple basic mutual understanding. In a world gradually expanding, humanity appears increasingly reclusive.

This study aims to initiate further thought and understanding in the field of human motivation. At its core is a fundamental departure from common practice in generating knowledge and insights.

In recent scientific tradition knowledge and insights are generated in small steps, with in-depth focus on detail. The approach seems to be inspired by a theory of logic commonly known as 'deductive reasoning'. From a theoretical construct, a hypothesis is formulated and verified through observation. A conclusion either confirms or rejects the hypothesis, which, in turn, reflects on the theory. The approach has the advantage of being robust: it gradually progresses on verified and validated knowledge that is often being replicated, adding further to the strength of its findings. Where there is debate, it focuses on distinct and precisely formulated issues, with commonality in concepts that are being propagated. But there is a serious threat in the approach, which has strongly affected the field of social sciences in general, and the study of human motivation in particular.

At the start of the twentieth century, the approach to science was different. Darwin had presented his origin of species, and Marx his philosophy of history. At the turn of the century, Freud brought his views on the origin of subconscious drives, Adler on individual psychology. These theories were inferred from simple but repetitive, often personal observations in an approach commonly referred to as 'inductive reasoning'. From a series of observations, a pattern is detected, leading to a tentative hypothesis that is explored, leading eventually to a theoretical construct, or 'model' after empirical validation. The approach lacks the supremacy of a repeated empirical validation and depends heavily on the premises and argumentations used to substantiate the theoretical construct it infers. But the inductive approach has a characteristic that is almost lacking in deductive reasoning: by its nature it provides complete coverage and a creative uniqueness that almost adds a personal touch to the theories developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

This dissertation seeks to integrate both approaches. Outcomes of an inductive reasoning are observed and matched with those obtained from research following a deductive approach, as presented in current literature. Empirical research is presented to validate the inductive findings and to further substantiate joint conclusions.

The approach has led to a new theoretical model of human motivation and to the formulation of determinants that are essential in adequately addressing its intricate mechanisms.

If these findings hold true, they appear to lead to a number of profound implications.

May they serve to initiate further thought and understanding in the field of human motivation, and become a step on a journey of a thousand miles towards a human condition that thrives and prospers in a better world...

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Preamble to the Study

In observing activities man sets about, a purpose, an intention, an act of will can be seen. The one intention is clear, precisely orchestrated and aimed at gratification or achievement, the other seems vague with no clear rationale, obscured by subconscious intentions and, at first sight, not aimed at reaching any particular and apparent objective.

All these intentional acts, however, can be regarded as having a common origin in the will of man to intervene in his destiny and his surroundings both mentally and physically. And where the intervention is aimed at securing and protecting his status quo, it has led to intricate arrangements that are, it seems, at the very heart of human nature. The individual is bound by family, personal circumstances, but also, by rituals, regulations and procedures, by treaties and by laws, by agreements and contracts. The will of man to intervene has led to a multitude of instrumental measures to achieve control, ranging from the areas of law and politics, through sociology and psychology to the fields of economy and business science.

Motivation, as it is commonly referred to in literature, extends over a vast area of human activities, and appears to play an essential role in the human condition. And yet, despite a legacy of almost a hundred years of research, precious little is known about the process of motivation, how it emerges, evolves, and matures, how it instigates emotions, cognitions and actions aimed at intervention and control. And where motivation, besides its positive connotation, has a destructive potential on the human condition, no apparent and substantial insights have been generated to prevent almost identical events to re-occur over time.

The objective of this dissertation is to add to our knowledge on these processes conceptualized as 'motivation'.

The study provides an overview of research on the subject performed within a research Project covering a period of almost thirty years. The purpose of this research Project has been to initiate further thought and understanding in the field of human motivation. It's objective has been two-fold:

- *The Project aimed at providing insights into the concept of motivation,*
- *to enable, as its primary objective, to unveil the elementary processes involved in addressing motivation.*

This dissertation is a condensed version of this extensive research Project. Its objective is derived from the Project and is to aim primarily at motivation:

- *This dissertation aims, as its primary objective, at providing insights into the concept of motivation,*
- *to unveil elementary processes involved in addressing motivation.*

Hence, the focus of the research Project has been mainly practical, or instrumental, aimed at capturing essential elements within motivation to quantify and test the effects of various techniques in addressing motivation. This dissertation precedes the research Project in that its focus is mainly theoretical, and aimed at a verification of an assumed conceptualization of motivation.

The dissertation will refer to the formal Project Report and accompanying Appendices as a primal source for its empirical data and for extensive overviews of theoretical analyses.

A pre-publication of the final report will be used as a reference throughout the study, and will be made available prior to its final version that is to appear in 2016.

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