

MARKETING COLLOQUIA

SPRING 2015

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Where: 741 JMHH

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EVOLUTION, MOTIVATION, AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

ABSTRACT: Can we better understand modern consumer behavior by examining its links to our ancestral past? I review evidence that deep-seated evolutionary motives continue to influence much modern behavior, albeit not always in obvious or conscious ways. These fundamental motives include: (1) evading physical harm, (2) avoiding disease, (3) making friends, (4) attaining status, (5) acquiring a mate, (6) keeping a mate, and (7) caring for family. I discuss how, why, and when these motives influence behavior, highlighting that many consumer choices ultimately function to help fulfill one or more of these evolutionary needs. An important implication of this framework is that a person's preferences, behaviors, and decision processes change in predictable ways depending on which fundamental motive is currently active. Consideration of evolutionary motives provides fertile ground for future consumer research, while also helping build bridges between consumer behavior, evolutionary biology, and other social sciences.