The Generalized Theory of Evolution

January 31 - February 3, 2018
DCLPS, University of Duesseldorf, Germany

For some decades now experts in several fields of the science of human nature, society and culture are using evolutionary models to explain their domain-specific phenomena. This led to the prominent idea, that the historical development of human culture in all or many of its facets should best be described as a Darwinian process that is not based on genes but still driven by the principles of variation, selection and reproduction. At the beginning of the 21st century, a generalized theory of evolution seems to appear as an interdisciplinary theoretical structure finding its place between likewise interdisciplinary frameworks such as system theory or action theory. Subdisciplines like evolutionary psychology, evolutionary game theory, evolutionary epistemology and the theory of a cultural evolution in general seem to provide a set of models and explanatory tools that ultimately can be seen as varieties of one and the same basic theoretical structure: a generalized theory of evolution.

The generalization of the theory of evolution had not only emphatic supporters, but was also exposed to severe critique. In any case, various interesting questions can be raised within the framework. Is a Darwinian theory of cultural evolution a proper candidate to synthesize the social sciences? What is the surplus value of evolutionary explanations? More specifically, e.g., can language, meaning and content be explained in terms of evolutionary signaling games of coordination? Which facets of biological evolutionary systems can be applied for cultural evolutionary systems and where do they differ in relevant aspects? For example, are there any, and if, what is the methodological and ontological status of replicators in the cultural realm?

The conference aims to gather answers to some of these frequently raised questions and explores recent attempts to move beyond mere qualitative theorizing in the domain of generalized evolutionary systems. By bringing together researchers with a common interest but with different backgrounds and toolboxes, we hope to inspire interdisciplinary discussions and new collaborations.

Keynote Speakers:
* Daniel Dennett (Tufts University)
* Eva Jablonka (Tel Aviv University)
* Ruth Mace (University College London)
* Alex Mesoudi (University of Exeter)
* Thomas Reydon (University of Hannover)
* Gerhard Schurz (University of Duesseldorf)
* Brian Skyrms (University of California, Irvine)

Call for papers:
We invite contributions devoted to all fields of The Generalized Theory of Evolution. Abstracts should be suitable for a 20min presentation (plus 10min discussion) and contain not more than 500 words, including some references to important work that will be addressed. They have to be in English and prepared for blind review. The title of the paper as well as the name, affiliation and e-mail address of the author must be included in a separate document. It should be clear from your abstract which authors your paper will address. Files have to be submitted via e-mail to: <christian.feldbacher-escamilla@hhu.de>. The submission deadline is September 1, 2017. Authors will be notified by September 30, 2017.

Organization:

DCLPS, University of Duesseldorf: Karim Baraghith, Christian J. Feldbacher-Escamilla, Corina Stroessner, Gerhard Schurz

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any further information:

<christian.feldbacher-escamilla@hhu.de>

Important dates and links:

* Submission deadline: September 1, 2017
* Notification deadline: September 30, 2017
* E-Mail: <christian.feldbacher-escamilla@hhu.de>
* Website: <http://dclps.phil.hhu.de/genevo/>