



## *Applications in Cultural Evolution: Arts, Languages, Technologies*

**June 6-8, 2018**, University of Tartu, Estonia

Research in **cultural evolution** has made great advances in creating models that would explain culture. Often, these have been general models (for example, modeling cultural drift or diffusion) that provide the scholars with a common language through which to discuss various cultural phenomena. With some agreement in the fundamentals, the question of **applications** remains: how well do these general models suit every particular domain of culture? As the cultural evolution research becomes more popular and crosses many new disciplinary boundaries, this and other, more particular, questions become increasingly interesting, for example:

- Does cultural evolution work the same way in **different domains** - e.g., arts, technology and language?
- What is the **role and relative influence** of various biases, selection pressures or attractors in our cultural history?
- Has there been **historical times when** these influences have been stronger or weaker?
- Can we make predictions about **future trajectories** of cultural evolution?

We would like to **invite contributors** to a 3-day conference on the cultural evolution in arts, technology, or language in Tartu (Estonia), June 6-8, 2018. The aim of the conference is to present and discuss the case studies in various domains of culture. We hope that a gathering of researchers working on particular topics within cultural evolution may spark new thinking on the commonalities and differences of the cultural evolution mechanics in different contexts. While contact with the research domain of „cultural evolution“ helps, we would welcome researchers of various backgrounds who deal with explaining culture and its evolution in time.

We would like to invite contributions including (but not limited to) the following topics:

- Cultural evolution research focussed on **particular domains**, such as:
  - evolution of arts (music, visual arts, etc.);
  - evolution of stories (folkloristic, literary, cinematic);
  - evolution of technologies (ancient and modern);
  - evolution of languages (spoken, written, etc.);
  - evolution of sign systems of various types;
- evolution of collective intelligence (e.g., accumulation of knowledge, progress in science, etc.).
- **Comparative analyses** of cultural evolution in different domains.
- The importance and **role of the focal concepts** (e.g., cumulative culture, transformation vs. replication, vertical vs. horizontal transmission) for various domains.
- Quantitative modelling/methods in cultural evolution - increasing precision and usability.
- **How do we apply** the evolutionary models in a way that maintains the expertise developed in humanities and cultural studies so far?
- **Collaboration** with related disciplines and among cultural evolution researchers.

Abstracts should be sent to [cultural.evolution.tartu@gmail.com](mailto:cultural.evolution.tartu@gmail.com) by **February 14**. Abstracts should be no longer than 300 words (+ references). The submissions can specify their preferred format to present: 1) 20+10 min presentation; 2) 5 min lightning talk; 3) a poster presentation. The committee will aim for a speedy review and we will return a notification of acceptance by **March 10**. If, for practical reasons, you need quicker feedback, let us know and we will try to provide.

The conference will aim to provide enough **time and settings for discussion** - formal and informal. In addition to showcasing research, one of the goals will be to consider more thoroughly the perspectives and challenges for applied work in cultural evolution.

Confirmed **keynote speakers**:

- **Nathalie Gontier** (University of Lisbon)
- **Jamie Tehrani** (Durham University)
- **Kristian Tylén** (Aarhus University)