

## Summaries

### **Johan Goudsblom**

#### *Change generates Change*

#### *From biological evolution to social-cultural development*

The co-evolution of hominids and other species has been a necessary condition for the development of human society and culture. Since the rise of *Homo sapiens*, however, the major changes in human behaviour have resulted from intra-specific social processes. In trying to explain why certain new forms of behaviour 'stuck' and became lasting, we are well advised to look for shifts in power balances. Those new forms of behaviour ('innovations' as the cultural equivalent of 'mutations') became lasting which either yielded more favourable power positions or provided accommodation (no matter how miserable) to power positions that became less favourable. The accelerating pace of social change can be seen from this perspective to be generated by the increasing pressures of intra-specific competition.

### **Johan M.G. van der Dennen**

#### *Selfish Cooperation and (Violent) Intergroup Competition in Hominoid Evolution*

This article argues that in nature cooperation evolves mainly because it pays (in the evolutionary currency of reproductive success); that cooperation evolves in order to better compete with other cooperating (survival) units; and that on all levels of societal complexity cooperation and competition (in dyadic or polyadic coalitions) are intertwined and interdigitated. Examples of these principles in mammalian and especially primate species are presented. The reciprocally reinforcing roles of intergroup competition and intragroup cooperation in the hominid evolutionary trajectory are also discussed.

### **Joanna Swabe**

#### *Human Social Evolution and Animal Exploitation through Artificial Selection*

This article examines the impact of human social evolution on the development of other species. Working from the neo-Darwinian view of evolution, it explores the idea that humans have in effect functioned as a 'chance' element in the evolution of particular species. It suggests that the manner in which the human species itself has evolved in time, also through natural selection and chance has played a decisive role in the evolution of other animals. The article thus considers how human evolutionary success, cultural development and expansion into new environmental realms led to fundamental

changes in the relationship between species. Furthermore, it highlights the increasing differentiation between humans and other animals, focusing on the domestication process and how human beings have consistently exercised their influence on the genetic development of other species. The discussion spans a relatively 'short' period of time - which is brief at least in terms of both evolution and human history - extending from the earliest and most significant cultural innovations made by our ancestors to the present-day genetic manipulation of other species.

### **Bart van Heerikhuizen**

*Social Evolutionism during the formative Years of Sociology*

The development of the science of society in its early stages and the development of social evolutionism are closely interrelated. The 18th century concept of human progress is treated in this article as the central idea out of which 19th century biologically inspired social evolutionism arose. Condorcet is described as the most important precursor of the evolutionist theories of Saint-Simon and Comte, the man who coined the word sociology. The most important author however is the founding father of sociology, Herbert Spencer, whose subtle social evolutionism was closely related to the ideas Darwin proposed in biology in the same period. The turn of the century Marxists who propagated 'scientific socialism' were in many cases as devoted to Spencer as they were to orthodox marxism. In the Netherlands the first defenders of sociology as an academic discipline were all social evolutionists. It is remarkable, given these beginnings of the sociological enterprise, that sociologists in the 20th century distanced themselves rapidly from social evolutionism. Recently a new interest in evolutionism can be discerned amongst sociologists.

### **Bert Theunissen**

*Social Darwinism*

*Some remarks about an ambiguous concept*

Since it was introduced, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the term Social Darwinism has, as is customary with long-lived 'isms', acquired various meanings. Apart from its polemical use, it has come to cover a wide range of political and social ideas which, in one way or another, all derived their authority from the fact that they were generally accepted as Darwin's evolutionary views. This article presents an historiographic survey of the different meanings of Social Darwinism and of the different ways in which historians have used the concept. I show that Social Darwinism was never a unified and narrowly circumscribed movement or ideology. This is hardly surprising, considering that even Darwin's views on the matter are hard to pin down exactly, and that ideas on the nature of the evolutionary process have undergone considerable changes over time. I discuss a recently published argument to the contrary, which claims that the term can be given a strict definition which enables us to recognise, among the widely varying views of social evolution, a category of 'real'

Social Darwinists. I argue that this attempt is misguided and a-historical. It unites thinkers who, historically speaking, had little in common and never formed a group or movement. Social Darwinism was, and always will be, a typical 'ism', a convenient collective term for historians, not a clearly defined historical phenomenon.

### **Cor Hermans**

*Darwinian Fear and Hope in Sociology, 1880-1914*  
*Social Pathologists and Social Engineers*

The sociological concept of 'social selection', or simply 'selection', is derived from Charles Darwin's 'natural selection'. Both terms, although inspired by Darwinian biology, took on a meaning of their own. For several sociologists, selection became the precondition of social regeneration, while the absence of selection in modern industrialized mass society, in which the weak and unhealthy were no longer eliminated, was seen as the cause of a whole range of social pathologies. The discipline of 'social pathology', considered to be a promising new branch of social science (Paul von Lilienfeld), diagnosed the actual social conditions in organismic, biologicistic and medical terms. Social pathology was linked to the evolutionary pessimism, that manifested itself after 1880 in the works of Wallace, Huxley, Lankester and Galton. They feared degeneration would result from the fact that natural selection did not work properly in modern, cultured society, as a result of which 'the unfit' could reproduce prolifically.

August Weismann's neo Darwinism, with its pan-selectionism fiercely denying the inheritance of acquired characteristics, enhanced the pessimistic tendency in sociology, as can be seen in the work of George Chatterton-Hill, Benjamin Kidd, Wilhelm Schallmayer and John Berry Haycraft. Weismann's concept of *panmixia* was at the heart of several social pathological analyses, meaning that non-selective intermixture would inevitably lead to degeneration. The social and economic parasitism in modern capitalistic society, its extreme individualism, its social disintegration leading to increases in crime, alcoholism, syphilis, mental disease and the suicides rate, were all seen as the result of *panmixia* and the ensuing racial degeneration.

However, these pessimistic diagnoses were combined with a scientific optimism that was meant to demonstrate the importance of sociology as a politically useful science. The scientific policies that were suggested often amounted to eugenics. The social 'efficiency' that was needed in a competitive world, could only be reached if 'the welfare of the race' would be accepted as the highest principle of all social actions (Chatterton-Hill).

The Social Darwinism emerging from these sociopathological writings is quite different from the traditional picture of this disputed phenomenon. It is a Sociological Darwinism, that is clearly critical of the disintegrating tendencies of individualism, of the fierce competition for money in modern capitalism, stressing the importance of social integration. Nevertheless, because of its social biological and eugenical content it can be described as an 'unsociological sociology'.

**Randall Collins***The Multidimensionality of Social Evolution and the Historical Pathways of Asia and the West*

Evolutionary theory is a weak model for human social change; species evolution is a history of proliferating species into specialized niches, whereas human social change is recurrently niche-obliterating, through conquest, destruction, and imitation. The concept of progress is a human concept based on the dominance of some social forms over others, whereas biological species are all equally well adapted to their niches. The multidimensionality of social change is illustrated by the problem of whether the European West was more advanced than the East, especially China and Japan, a challenge raised by Gunder Frank. Breaking social advance into subdimensions within economic, political and cultural dimensions, we find there are numerous mechanisms of social change with leading sectors in many parts of the world. A central dimension of change has been shift along the continuum from patrimonial-household structures to bureaucratic organization, contributing to capitalist productivity, state control, and secularized cultural markets. The shift was promoted by religious organizations, especially celibate monasteries, which helped promote entrepreneurial capitalism in China and Japan, just as Christian monasteries did in Europe. A combination of conditions, still not well understood, led to a relatively brief historical moment, ca. 1800-1970, when Europe was dominant over the rest of the world.

**Nico Wilterdink***The Development of Socio-Economic Inequality in the World  
Evolutionary trends and mechanisms*

The article takes as a starting-point the huge income inequalities in the present-day world and purports to explain them from an evolutionary perspective. New calculations on trends in international income inequality (between countries, based on PPP estimates) and global income inequality (the sum of inequalities between and within countries) for 1950-1998 are presented. On the whole, international and global income inequality continued to grow in this period. This conclusion has to be amended, however, if one compares different subperiods and different measures of inequality. The Gini-coefficients of international and global income inequality diminished in the 1980s due to the strong economic growth in some Asian countries, China in particular. On average the gap between rich and poor countries in survival chances (indicated by food consumption and life expectancy) diminished on the average in second half of the 20th century. The trends in this period are regarded as part of a long-term evolutionary development. Three stages in this development are distinguished: a first stage in which socio-economic inequalities within and between societies were small; a second stage, starting with the domestication of plants and animals, in which socio-economic inequalities between and (even more) within societies increased; and a third stage, starting with mechanical industrialization, in which socio-economic inequalities between societies grew much larger and became more striking than those within (national) societies. A fourth, hypothetical stage is added, starting in the second half of the 20th century, in

which socio-economic inequalities between countries are beginning to diminish according to some indications. The long-term development is explained by positing a number of basic mechanisms: the differential accumulation of power resources, exploitation, social adaptation and cultural hierarchization as well as selective diffusion of power resources, increasing interdependence, and cultural dehierarchization. Whereas the first four mechanisms explain growing inequality, the last two imply diminishing inequality; selective diffusion can work both ways. The relative importance of these mechanisms depends on basic conditions which change in the course of social evolution.

**Jelle Visser**

*Evolutionary and ecological theories of organization applied to trade union development*

Following a brief discussion of evolutionary and ecological theory, as applied in organizational sociology and economics, the author takes the development and restructuring process of Dutch trade unions during the past hundred year as his empirical case. For the population of trade unions this development can be described and analysed as an evolutionary process of differential birth, death and survival rates of various routines of collective action of workers embodied by different types of unions. The evolutionary approach helps to understand the seemingly spontaneous, unplanned, wave-like and survival driven merger process through which unions and union leaders prepare for 'life beyond death'. The main selection principle appears to be the search for 'economy of scale', but vicarious selectors like prestige, power and pensions of union officials appear to be at work as well.