

**Institut für Philosophie  
Seniorprofessur für Theoretische Philosophie**

**Im Rahmen des Forschungskolloquiums laden wir ein zum Vortrag von**

**Dr. Karim Baraghith  
and Finn Jordan, BA**

**(University of Hannover and HHU Düsseldorf)**

**Dienstag, 13.12.2022  
18:00 – 19:30 Uhr, Raum: 24.53 01.81**

## **A Question of Power: Can Cultural Evolutionary Theory Explain Coercion and Structured Social Asymmetries?**

### **Abstract:**

Cultural evolutionary theory (CET) leaves 'power', understood as a social asymmetry unexplained. We offer a conceptual integration of this crucial phenomenon into CET, which is mostly focused on 'prestige' or prestige bias in this context. Another important facet of power asymmetries is coercion, force, or dominance. This form of power reverses the logic behind the concept of fitness: dominant individuals, unlike prestigious ones, are not imitated more frequently. We will identify cultural prestige and coercion as different forms of selective strategies and stress the common distinction between r- and K selection. If coercion is identified as a cultural K strategy, it becomes more understandable why it is seldom reproduced and is of tremendous influence, nevertheless. We will embed aspects of social structuralism and suggest that the reproduction of structural coercion can be seen as cultural niche construction, where agents find themselves in (and actively build) social asymmetries based on mutual interactions. Such an asymmetry, or cultural niche, might persist even after dominant agents leave the network and are replaced by others.

### **Speakers:**

Karim Baraghith studied philosophy, history and biology. He is an associated member of the DFG research group 'Inductive Metaphysics', led by Gerhard Schurz, HHU Düsseldorf, and applied member of the DFG research group 'Explanatory Scope of Generalized Darwinism', led by Thomas Reydon, University of Hannover. His main research interest lie in generalized - and cultural evolution, philosophy of biology and philosophy of science.

Finn Jordan studied philosophy and sociology at HHU Düsseldorf and was employed at the DCLPS at the Institute of Philosophy, HHU, led by Gerhard Schurz. His research interests are in the field of cultural evolution, philosophy of psychology and ethics.