



Call for Papers

Cognition and Evolution in Historical and Social Research

September 23–24, 2025, Lund, Sweden

<https://www.kultur.lu.se/cehsr2025>

Over recent decades, cognitive science have significantly reshaped our understanding of human thought, while modern evolutionary theory has provided robust explanations of the biological origin of *Homo sapiens*. Yet, despite these transformative developments, cognitive and evolutionary perspectives remain under-integrated within mainstream historical and social research. This conference seeks to address this lacuna by exploring how cognitive and evolutionary approaches can enrich our understanding of the human condition in historical and societal contexts.

Recent advances in cognitive science, neuroscience, and genetics compel historians and social scientists to re-evaluate foundational paradigms. Concepts such as the embodied mind, situated and distributed cognition, and conceptual metaphor theory are increasingly applied within the humanities and social sciences, particularly in fields such as linguistics, literary studies, archaeology, and religious studies. Concurrently, emerging research in cultural evolution and cognitive theory has fostered a biologically and culturally grounded view of humans as products of long-standing bio-cultural co-evolutionary processes.

Evolutionary frameworks have gained traction in newly established interdisciplinary domains, including evolutionary cultural studies, evolutionary institutional economics, evolutionary linguistics, and cognitive evolution studies. These perspectives prompt historians and social scientists to re-examine core models and analogies—such as those comparing cultural and organismic evolution—and to investigate the roles of variation, selection, and inheritance (retention) within cultural dynamics.

At the heart of these inquiries lies a key question: how do cognitive processes—perception, memory, conceptualisation, embodied action, communicative practices, and institutional forms—function as mental constructs that contribute to social inertia or transformation? This conference invites scholarly contributions that explore these mechanisms and their implications for historical change and long-term social evolution.

The conference will take place at Lund University, Sweden. The nearest international airport is Copenhagen Airport (Denmark), with direct rail connections to Lund Central Station (approximately 35 minutes).

There is no conference fee. Participants are expected to arrange their own travel and accommodation.

Confirmed plenary speakers:

- Peter Gärdenfors, Professor of Cognitive Science, Lund University, Sweden;
<https://www.fil.lu.se/en/person/PeterGardenfors/>
- Ruth Mace, Professor of Evolutionary Anthropology, University College London, UK;
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology/people/academic-and-teaching-staff/ruth-mace>

Suggested topics for papers include (but are not limited to):

- Cognitive history
- Cognitive archaeology
- Cognitive poetics
- Deep history
- Neurohistory
- Evolutionary culture studies
- Evolutionary institutional economics
- Evolutionary political science
- Bio-cultural co-evolution
- Embodied cognition in history and society
- Situated and distributed cognition in history and society
- Perception, memory, and conceptualisation in history and society
- Cognition, language and communication in history and society

Venue:

- LUX, Lecture hall C121, Helgonavägen 3, Lund, Sweden

Key dates:

- Deadline for abstract submission: 1 September 2025
- Notification of acceptance: 7 September 2025
- Conference starts: 23 September 2025, at 13:00
- Conference ends: 24 September, at 12:00

Submission guidelines:

Abstracts (maximum 300 words), along with a short academic biography, should be submitted to David.Duner@kultur.lu.se no later than 1 September 2025. All presentations will be conducted in English.

Organizing committee:

- David Dunér, Professor of History of Ideas and Sciences, Lund University, Sweden
- Christer Ahlberger, Professor of History, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
- Mikael Sandberg, Professor of Political Science, Halmstad University, Sweden

Please address questions to David.Duner@kultur.lu.se