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Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in
International Trade and Investment

Call for Memos

Darwin and International Trade Applying an Evolutionary Approach to the Study of Trade Agreements

**May 17-18, 2017
Québec City, Québec (Canada)**

ANALYTICAL THEME

This workshop, which will call upon scholars from different academic fields to work together and across their respective fields, seeks to break new ground in research on international trade by borrowing concepts from evolutionary biology to study trade negotiations, shedding new lights on trade negotiations and their outcome (trade agreements). Heretofore, these have been analyzed from an atomist point of view, be it in the political processes leading to them, their legal content or their economic impact. But they are actually part of an ecosystem that encompasses them and goes beyond them. This ecosystem, structured along networks, provides linkages between the actors and different institutions that evolve and are in constant interaction with one another. And from this breeding ground emerge innovation, learning, and selection processes, in other words, adaptation. By establishing a metaphoric link between the theory of natural evolution and the dynamics within the trading system, this workshop will enable the articulation of a new interdisciplinary approach to the study of international trade.

Among issues to be broached: do interconnections (between States, between corporations, among norms, etc.) actually slow down innovation or does heterogeneity stimulate it? Does the trading system evolve in equilibrium (in its economic, legal and political relations) and can this systemic equilibrium only be altered by exogenous actions? What are the effects of disruptive innovations (ex. NAFTA, e-commerce, etc.) on the evolution of this ecosystem? What are the interactions between diversity and convergence (between or among economies, norms and the types of actors)? Does specialization in a niche (a particular type of agreements, a field, an industry, a mechanism, etc.) promote short-term gains at the expense of resilience over time?

We welcome proposals inspired by evolutionary biology and looking at the structural and systemic characteristics of international trade negotiations, their evolution and their outcomes. Contributions should be original, offer a clear theoretical argument, and provide empirical support.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

The number of participants will be limited to around twelve (12), draft memos will be distributed one month before the event, and authors will only speak at the closure of the one-hour group discussion of their paper. This format offers an opportunity for in-depth discussions, provides authors with detailed feedback, and allows participants to get acquainted in an informal setting.

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SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

To submit a proposal, send a one-page summary, a biographical note, and full contact information by email to cepci-darwin2017@hei.ulaval.ca by **March 15th, 2017**. Authors will be informed by the selection committee of its decision by **April 1st, 2017**.

Selected candidates are expected to send an advance version of their memo (**around 4 000 words in length**) by **May 1st, 2017**. Due to the format of the workshop, authors who fail to send their paper on time will have to be removed from the program.

PRACTICAL DETAILS

Meals and accommodation will be covered for participants.

Upon request and subject to availability, we may also provide a financial contribution for travel costs. When submitting your proposal, please indicate whether you want to apply for such funding and indicate your city of departure.

There is no registration fee.

PUBLICATION

The organizers wish to publish a selection of final papers as a special issue in a leading peer-review journal.

ORGANIZERS

Lota Dabio Tamini (Laval University, Canada)
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The Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in International Trade and Investment (CISITI) <http://www.cepci.hei.ulaval.ca/en>, within the Institute for Advanced International Studies at Laval University, is Canada's most diversified group of scholars and researchers devoted to International Trade. CISITI welcomes a wide range of topics, viewpoints, and interpretive frameworks, and encourages innovative approaches, along with the more traditional ones, in research and writing.