I am currently writing my PhD thesis at the conclusion of my ESRC/NERC Joint Studentship.

My research focuses on the origins of law as an adaptive, emergent, recursive behaviour suite within the context of Darwin’s two principal theories – Natural Selection and Sexual Selection.

I utilise a socio-biological approach with a comparative and cladistic study of a variety of law or “proto-law” like behaviours found in the trading, social regulation, play and political cultures of three of the extant non-human great apes. My research has been conducted observing captive groups of common chimpanzees (Pan troglodytes), bonobos (Pan paniscus), and orang utans (Pongo pygmaeus) and advance the proposition that this provides us with an evolutionary account of the
emergence of such behaviours in our own closely related species.

In addition I posit that not only is law an evolutionary emergent behaviour but that it is bound to emerge when life evolves to the stage of truly societal cultures in animals – including our own – species.

The mechanism for this is the need to be able to tell “true dealers” from frauds in social relationships and from this it emerges that law is based on the innate ability to deceive in a system where lying as a means to maximising fitness is a coherent strategy. Law is a counter-strategy to deceit and thus has its origins in lying.

I posit that this should hold true wherever life arises and that as such Law is a universal property that transcends not only our own species but also our own planet.

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