Law, Economics and Evolutionary Theory

Edited by Peer Zumbansen, Canada Research Chair in Transnational Economic Governance and Legal Theory, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, Canada and Graff-Peter Calliess, Chair of Private Law, Comparative and International Economic Law and Legal Theory, University of Bremen, Germany

‘Evolutionary theory belongs to the rare species of theories that are simultaneously fundamental and over-arching, implicating as it does numerous life contexts as well as an array of scholarly disciplines. Armed with a profound grasp of evolutionary theory and its implications to social research, Professors Zumbansen and Calliess have mobilized an appropriately diverse and truly stellar group of academics to investigate how this theory may provide new insights about law, economics, and their inter-relations. Cast against an especially broad intellectual backdrop set by the editors, this volume is sure to become a standard reference in literature.’

– Amir N. Licht, Radzyner School of Law, Israel

‘Zumbansen and Calliess have done a wonderful job in assembling papers from the leading scholars in the field, who draw on evolutionary approaches for explaining developments in both economics and the law. Anybody interested in issues of institutional change will be inspired by the wealth of ideas and the diversity of perspectives.’

– Stefan Voigt, University of Hamburg, Germany

Law and economics has arguably become one of the most influential theories in contemporary legal theory and adjudication. The essays in this volume, authored by both legal scholars and economists, constitute lively and critical engagements between law and economics and new institutional economics from the perspectives of legal and evolutionary theory. The result is a fresh look at core concepts in law and economics – such as ‘institutions’, ‘institutional change’ and ‘market failure’ – that offer new perspectives on the relationship between economic and legal governance.

The increasingly transnational dimension of regulatory governance presents lawyers, economists and social scientists with an unprecedented number of complex analytical and conceptual questions. The contributions to this volume engage with legal theory, new institutional economics, economic sociology and evolutionary economics in an interdisciplinary assessment of the capacities and limits of the state, markets and institutions. Drawing as well upon legal sociology and the philosophy of law, the authors expand and transform the known terrain of ‘law and economics’ by applying evolutionary theory to both law and economics from a domestic and transnational perspective.

Legal scholars, evolutionary and regulatory theorists, economists, economic sociologists, economic historians and political scientists will find this cutting-edge volume both challenging and engaging.


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Peer Zumbansen and Gralf-Peter Calliess

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