

The Origin of Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences: a historical outlook

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In the past half century, the evolutionary studies of human psychology and behavior has undergone a rapid growth. Evolutionary explanations, however, have a long and acrimonious history in the social and behavioral sciences. Even since Darwin (1859, p. 488) foretold that “light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history”, various attempts have been made to incorporate Darwin’s insights into analyzing human affairs. In the mid-1970s, Edward Wilson’s Sociobiology ignited a heated controversy and at least its name has fade out. Yet Evolutionary behavioral sciences (EBS) are now flourishing with a handful of overlapping sub-fields: Evolutionary Psychology, Human Behavioral Ecology, and Cultural Evolution. In this talk, I provide non-specialist audiences with a historical introduction to the emergence of EBS, as well as the relationships among its sub-fields.