

### 1. Interested institution:

[University of Navarra](#) – [Institute for Culture and Society](#) – [Mind-Brain Group](#)

### 2. Brief Description of the Group

Neuroscience is increasingly influential in shaping the contemporary understanding of the human being. Its great merit is to integrate various scientific disciplines through a study on the Central Nervous System. Owing to this process of integration, several important aspects of the human condition – consciousness, subjectivity, freedom etc. – have increasingly moved the center of critical attention, where previously they had been dismissed as being inaccessible to scientific investigation.

The questions posed by neuroscience are seeking a dialogue between the various contemporary philosophical traditions (phenomenology, analytic philosophy, Aristotelian, philosophical anthropology, etc.) which, stimulated by the realism of science, overcomes relativist or skeptical temptations and seeks to integrate advances in biology into a vision of wisdom.

The Mind-Brain Group studies human subjectivity from an interdisciplinary and coherent perspective, drawing simultaneously upon the insights of biology, neuroscience and traditional and contemporary philosophy. In so doing, it takes as its central theme the study of human action and the relationship of action with cognition and agent identity. It is composed of researchers with an individual interdisciplinary background, combining disciplines such as psychology, theology, engineering, physics, biology, anthropology, education, neuroscience, etc. Therefore, it creates a unique environment to discuss subjectivity, intentionality, identity, and other topics related with human cognition and action.

### 3. Please tick the areas of research (as established in Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions)

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry (CHE)                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sciences and Geology (ENV) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC) | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Sciences (LIF)                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Sciences (ECO)                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics (MAT)                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information Science and Engineering (ENG)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Physics (PHY)                            |

### 4. Research / Project Description

The Mind-Brain Group is developing a project to study in depth the role of habits in cognitively enriching human action. The outline of this project is explained in a book published in *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, and edited by Bernacer, Lombo and Murillo (2015). The main purpose of the volume is to discuss the similarities and differences of the concept of habit in neuroscience and different philosophical traditions. From a neuroscientific perspective, a habit is a mere automation of an action. It is, therefore, linked to rigidity and limitation. However, from a classical philosophical account, a habit is an enabling capacity acquired through practice, which facilitates,

**UNAV MSCA FELLOWSHIPS 2018: "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST"  
FOR HOSTING MARIE S. CURIE FELLOWS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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improves and reinforces the performance of certain kind of actions. From neuroscience, habit acquisition restricts a subject's action to the learnt habit; from philosophy, habit acquisition allows the subject to set a distance from the simple motor performance to cognitively enrich the action. For example, playing piano is a technical habit; considering the neuroscientific account, a pianist would just play those sequences of keystrokes that had been repeatedly practiced in the past. However, according to the philosophical perspective, it would allow the pianist to improvise and, moreover, go beyond the movements of their hands to concentrate in other features of musical interpretation.

In other words, a holistic view of habits focuses on the subject's disposition when facing both known and novel situations.

In the following years, we plan to continue this project from an experimental and a theoretical perspective. In particular, we would be interested in a candidate who could bring his/her research experience on one or several philosophical traditions (for example, but not limited to, Aristotelian, Medieval or continental philosophy, phenomenology, existentialism, etc), and who would be willing to dialogue with old and new theories of the philosophy of mind, cognitive science and experimental neuroscience.

The main objectives of this research project are:

- 1) To explore the conception of habits and its role as look cognitive enhancers in different philosophical traditions.
- 2) To discuss those philosophical findings in the context of the philosophy of mind, cognitive science, theoretical neuroscience and psychology.
- 3) To seek for empirical applications of these findings in experimental neuroscience.

The present project, therefore, will have impact on several disciplines. We expect it will end up in several high impact scientific papers, as well as at least one monograph. In addition, the candidate could be involved in the empirical research projects derived from the theoretical research. The results will be presented in different conferences centered on the neurosciences, philosophy of mind, cognitive science, etc. Moreover, as we have done with previous projects, we expect to apply the conclusions to areas with a high social impact, such as addiction, education, emotional management, etc.

## **5. Who can apply?**

### **General requirements:**

At the deadline for the submission of proposals (14/09/2018), researchers (\*):

- shall be in possession of a doctoral degree or have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience.
- must not have resided or carried out their main activities in the country of Spain for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the abovementioned deadline.

### **Specific requirements:**

- in possession of a doctoral degree.
- research experience on either philosophy of mind, cognitive science or experimental human neuroscience, but also interested in any of the other areas.
- Ability for team working and crossing the boundaries between disciplines is a must.