

**PINA-Kolloquium am 6. Dezember 2017**

***A Pluralist Theory of Social Understanding***

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In my talk I will argue for pluralism in social cognition. Although traditional and alternative accounts that are discussed in the contemporary debate on social cognition also allow for a variety of social cognitive processes playing a role in everyday social understanding, genuine pluralist approaches to the explanation of social understanding challenge some of the core assumptions of these accounts. Traditional accounts such as Theory Theory and Simulation Theory assume that social understanding in terms of mental states is most prevalent in human social cognition, and proponents of both camps account for a single social cognitive process that is based on mental state-attribution and supposed to be typically or even necessarily involved when making sense of another person's behaviour (e.g., theory, or simulation, respectively). In recent years, some pluralist accounts of social cognition have been proposed. A pluralist account challenges the traditional assumptions of there to be a default process of social understanding. Moreover, unlike other alternatives to Theory Theory and Simulation Theory (e.g., Interaction Theory), pluralist accounts do not favour one socio-situational context over another one (e.g., interactive over observational settings). Drawing on a wide range of empirical findings from developmental and social psychology, neurosciences and cross-cultural research, pluralist theorists defend the view that rather than there being a default process of social understanding (e.g., theory, or simulation), a variety of social cognitive processes may come into play in everyday social understanding, dependent on the socio-situational context, the personal or social relationships between the agents, their shared history, the present mood of the understander, etc. What is still missing in the literature is a detailed analysis of the agent-specificities and context-dependencies that determine which (social) cognitive processes come into play in the given situation of social understanding. Also, cognitive factors such as fluency (i.e., the subjective experience of ease or effort associated with accomplishing a mental task) reveal to be important but have been neglected thus far in the debate. In my talk I will account for pluralism in social cognition by presenting a two-stage model that does not only fill these gaps in the literature but also provides a number of suggestions for future research. I will end with discussing some implications of pluralist theory for the debate on joint actions.

**Zeit: 18:00-19:30 Uhr**

**Ort: Campus Fachhochschule Potsdam**

**Theatersaal im Hauptgebäude (HG)**

**Kiepenheuerallee 5, 14469 Potsdam**