

The Socially Extended Mind

Abstract:

In my talk I want to spell out some of the interconnections between extended cognition and social cognition as well as their impact on mental content externalism. I will first adopt a functionalist perspective on extended cognition upon which cognitive extension depends solely on the coupling bandwidth and the degree of integration of the coupling mechanisms between the cognitive system and its external components. As cognitive extension might occur in different domains, it is not only pertinent in the domain of cognitive tool use, but also in the domain of social cognition. I want to argue that, in this respect, joint attention and shared intentionality can be understood as the most profound coupling mechanisms for mindreading as a form of 'extended social cognition'. This also relates to issues of externalism. While extended cognition is usually considered a form of vehicle externalism only, it also has an impact on content externalism. I will outline why and how this impact is of particular interest in the realm of social externalism as a form of content externalism in tune with extended social cognition.