

Talk on Tuesday, 11. October 2025***Start: 10:15 till 11.30 Uhr******in HS 424******The talk will be presented in English***

Mental Files: representing objects and perspectives

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Mental files represent objects, track them over time to store information about them. The term is Philosophy's and unifies cognates discourse referent in Linguistics, object file in Psychology. A file presents its referent object under a specific perspective. To take different perspectives one must be able to deploy multiple files of the same object.

My developmental work shows that children become able to do this between 3 and 5 years, which effects their success on a host of tasks that depend on multiple filing: theory of mind (false beliefs, appearance-reality distinction), language (alternative naming, identity statements), visual media (photographic evidence, misleading direction signs), and This developmental synchrony across knowledge domains challenges the prevalent view of domain specific development. It is also reflected in common brain activation in the left inferior parietal lobe (IPL).

The use of mental files helped see these commonalities across domains; it also shows how social intelligence can grow from basic object cognition without a disembodied theory of mind.