

UNDERSTANDING AND SHARING INTENTIONS

REFERENT: PROF. DR. MICHAEL TOMASELLO

We propose that the crucial difference between human cognition and that of other species is the ability to participate with others in collaborative activities with shared goals and intentions: shared intentionality. Participation in such activities requires not only especially powerful forms of intention-reading and cultural learning, but also a unique motivation to share psychological states with others and unique forms of cognitive representation for doing so. The result of participating in these activities is species-unique forms of cultural cognition. Support for this proposal is provided by systematic reviews of empirical research with human children (including those with autism) and great apes.

Michael Tomasello has been Co-Director of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology since 1998. His major research interests are the processes of social cognition, social learning, and communication from developmental, comparative, and cultural perspectives – especially aspects related to language and its acquisition. His current theoretical work focuses on processes of shared intentionality.

Die Veranstaltung wird in Kooperation mit dem Institute for Empirical Research in Economics (IEW) der Universität Zürich durchgeführt.

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