



**University of
Zurich** ^{UZH}

Department of Economics – Neuroeconomics Seminar

November 10, 2022 - 17:00 - 18:00

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The brain in the social world: Integrating approaches from social psychology, neuroscience, and social network analysis

This talk will cover work integrating theory and methods from psychology, neuroscience, and social network analysis to examine how people track, encode, and are influenced by the social networks that they inhabit. One set of studies tests if, when, and how people retrieve knowledge of familiar others' positions in their real-world social networks when encountering them. Related research tests how this knowledge, once retrieved, shapes downstream processing and behavior. A second set of studies tests if human social networks exhibit assortativity in how their members perceive, interpret, and respond to their environment. Consistent with this possibility, we find that proximity between people within their social networks is linked to similar neural responses to naturalistic stimuli, similar subjective construals of such stimuli, and similar patterns of brain connectivity. A final set of studies examines how shared understanding relates to overall levels of social connectedness within communities. We find that people who process the world in a manner that is more reflective of community norms have greater overall levels of subjective and objective social connection. All human cognition is embedded within social networks, but research on information processing within individuals has progressed largely separately from research on the social networks in which individuals are embedded. The set of findings to be reviewed in this talk suggests that integrating approaches from social psychology, neuroscience, and social network analysis can provide new insights into how individuals perceive, shape, and are shaped by the structure of their social world.