

# Understanding autism

## The new Perspectives

To understand autism at all and at the same time as the basis for support for AS-people both the change and the addition to the previous perspective are needed. The previous „understanding“ of autism was marked by both static and isolated perspective.

The new perspectives and theories are:

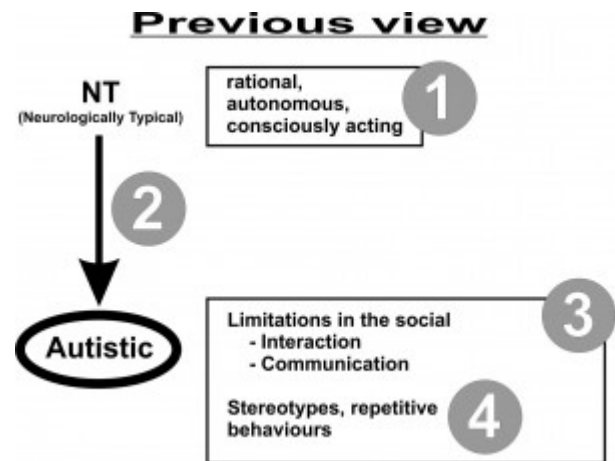
- Socio-psychological View ([Volume 1](#))
- Autism specific Diathesis-Stress-Model
- „Default-Mode“ / „Task-Mode“ Theory

Only on the basis of these new perspectives and theories an understanding of autism and hence the development of assistance and subsidies is possible at all.

## The Socio-psychological View

As shown in Volume 1 [[Bernhard J. Schmidt: Autistic and society. An angry change of perspective: Understandig autism](#)] a new vision based on the results of social psychology is required to understand the phenomenon autism.

Over 70 years of autism research only considered the following view:



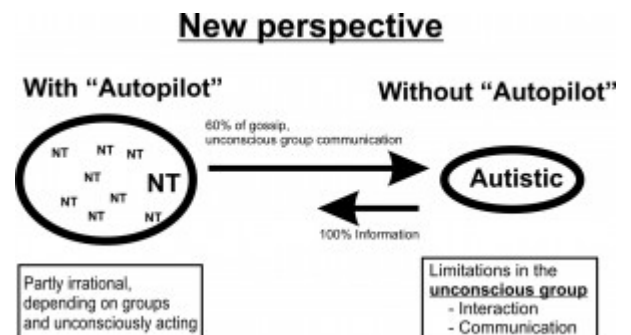
In this hitherto existing perspective, there are four previous assumptions that all need to be considered false:

1. NT-man as acting consciously, rationally and autonomously (CRAAM-Dogma). This has been repeatedly disproved by social psychology. NT people act to a large extent unconsciously, irrationally and dependent on groups [e.g. Bargh (2014)].
2. The perspective of an ideal NT observer on „sick“ autistic to be healed. Instead, the interaction and communication between NT and AS-people must be considered.
3. The designation of the impairment of communication and interaction as a ‚social‘. But with NT-man it is just not social, but strongly dependent on group affiliation. Interaction and

communication quickly find their limits outside of the group.

- The definition of stereotyped and repetitive behaviours as symptoms of autism. But these are, at least for the most part consequences of anxiety and stress.

With the aid of the results of social psychology, the new perspective looks like that:



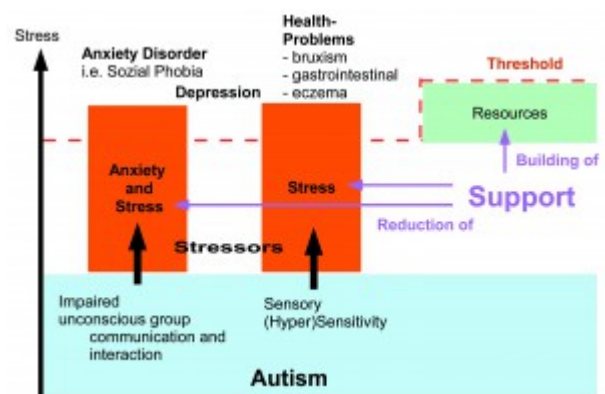
NT people to a large extent act unconsciously. Through facial expressions, gestures and imitation an unconscious group communication takes place. This group communication acts like a ,autopilot'. This means that NT people act unconsciously and depending on the group in many cases.

Autistic are not in a position for this unconscious group communication and interaction. While for NT people gossip makes up a major part of the communication, (as part of the unconscious group communication) autistic communicate almost 100% pure factual content.

The impairment of communication and interaction is not ,social' but an impairment of ,unconscious group, communication and interaction.

## Diathesis (Vulnerability)-Stress-Model

... although autism is not a disease and AS-people in many areas have qualitative strengths and advantages. But on the other hand autistic often suffer from massive problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, health problems, etc. So an autism-specific stress model has to look like that:



Autism is thus, as left-handedness, its own way of being. This is characterized by the impairment of the unconscious group communication and interaction as well as a frequent sensory (over)sensitivity. By affecting the subconscious group communication stress and anxiety occur. Because of sensory sensitivity additional stress arises in an over stimulated environment. From this combination of anxiety and stress then clinically relevant disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders, etc. can occur. And this as a result of interaction and communication with both the socio-

cultural environment in general, as well as various groups in particular.

## **„Default-Mode“ / „Task-Mode“ and „Autopilot“**

The perception of the two modes „Default“ and „Task“ is central to the understanding of the interaction between NT and AS-people in a technically oriented affluent society. This theory is based on results of brain research with imaging techniques as fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging). By means of this one has identified two separate networks in the brain, the DMN „Default Mode network“ and the TPN „task positive network“ [e.g. Jack (2012), Weng (2010), Assaf (2010)], which are mutually exclusive. That is, either one or the other is active, but never both simultaneously.

Without going further into the neurological details should be noted that the degree of complexity of the statement should not be lower than the degree of complexity of the descriptive behaviour. To want to derive the complex behaviours of DM and TM of two neural networks alone would thus fall short. The investigations into the DMN and TPN thus serve only as inspiration and basis for the following remarks.

The TM „Task Mode“ is responsible for solving problems and tackling tasks. This requires on the one hand of course activity, but also the willingness to new, creative solutions. The basis is a conscious communication via information that is or could be relevant for problem solving or task accomplishment. Until the strong simplification of daily life by the progress of technology, people were mainly in „Task Mode“.

The DM „Default Mode“ is opposite to the „Task Mode“. The two are mutually exclusive. The DM is responsible for group formation and retention. In DM „grooming“ in the form of gossip is operated. In addition, the unconscious group communication takes place. The „Default Mode“ is the power saving mode, the autopilot.

By the technical achievements and the resulting facilitation of daily life NT people are almost entirely in DM.

Even if nowadays problems occur, it will no longer be changed into the TM, but will be tried to solve these problems by chatter thus in the „Default Mode“. For example at each crisis or disaster, the number of thematically related talk shows rockets. ...

Although thanks to technological advances being located in a convenient world AS-people, unlike NT-people still constantly are in Task Mode. That is that autistic people are in a constant state of activity and of the information-related communications. Problem solving, knowledge acquisition, etc. are always in the focus of autistic.

| Default-Mode DM                            | Task-Mode TM                |
|--|-----------------------------|
| „Autopilot“                                | -                           |
| Power Save Mode                            | Energy intensive            |
| Imitation learning / over imitation        | Emulation learning          |
| Group-oriented                             | Task- and solution-oriented |
| Superficiality, gossip                     | Interest                    |
| ▼  | ▼                           |
| <b>NT-people<br/>in affluent societies</b> | <b>AS-people</b>            |
| ▼  | ▼                           |
| In-group / out-group                       | No-group                    |
| Prejudice                                  | No prejudice                |
| Conformity / Obedience                     | Heterogeneity               |
| (Unconscious) groupathy                    | Freedom                     |
| „Pretend play“                             | -                           |
| Synchronisation                            | No synchronisation          |
| No perception of dynamicity                | Perception of dynamicity    |

## With and without Autopilot

NT people have in DM (in which they predominantly are) an „autopilot“, which automatically and unconsciously performs much of the actions and decisions of NT people [e.g. Bargh (2014)].

The basic situation of NT people in an affluent society is similar to a cockpit, reduced in the light and sound and the instruments and switches are barely visible. The autopilot does both flying and navigation. He works on the unconscious contact with the other, surrounding autopilots. So all fly at the same speed in the same direction [see, e.g. Tantam (2009)], although it is the wrong one. By the autopilot NT-people are synchronized with each other in terms of time, speed and direction.

Reason and freedom on the other hand would mean to turn off the autopilot as far as possible, to re-steer by hand and navigate.

This autopilot is missing in people with autism. The impairment of the unconscious (group) interaction and communication is a symptom of the lack.

Thus AS-people see this in comparison in a bright and noisy cockpit, the buttons and tools they see but whose function they did not understand at the beginning. AS-people must therefore learn from the outset to fly not only by manual control, but also to navigate. So to answer the question „How do I keep the aircraft in the air?“ and „Where do I want to fly at all?“

The fact that this learning, answering these questions, is very energy-intensive and time-consuming, and connected with the risk of some crashes and wrong turns, should be understood.

Switching to autopilot is not possible.

The autopilot is part of the „Default Mode“, the automatic and power-saving mode. This is also responsible for relaxation and (unconscious) group communication as a modern form of grooming, internal and external groups delineation, conformity, (blind) obedience ...

The „Default Mode“ is contrary to the „Task Mode“.

Autistic people lack the „Default Mode“ and for them it can be difficult to switch from the „Task“ to „Default Mode“ and therefore they are almost constantly in the „Task Mode“.

The absence of the autopilot has far-reaching consequences for AS-people.

But the autopilot leads to problems in a culturally and technically-oriented environment and blocks reason and freedom. ...

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**And for further information you find here the article:**

**On the way to an autism theory**

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