CFP: “**Evidential Pluralism and the Social Sciences**” Conference

16 -17 July 2020, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK,

**Plenary Speakers**:

Derek Beach (Aarhus)

Eileen Munro (LSE)

Julian Reiss (Linz)

TBC (John Mingers?)

**Conference Description**

To what extent do the social sciences require diversity of evidence? This conference aims to explore epistemic diversity in the social sciences.

*Evidential Pluralism* provides one example of an account of epistemic diversity. Evidential Pluralism maintains that in order to establish a causal claim one normally needs to establish the existence of an appropriate correlation and the existence of an appropriate mechanism complex, so when assessing a causal claim one ought to consider both association studies and mechanistic studies. This thesis has led to fruitful philosophical work on the role of mechanisms in the biomedical sciences and to suggestions for improvements to evidence-based medicine (‘[EBM+](https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-319-94610-8.pdf)’). The question arises as to whether it can also be applied to the social sciences.

The questions to be addressed include (but are not limited to):

* Can Evidential Pluralism be applied to the social sciences at all? If so, how widely does the Evidential Pluralism thesis hold in the social sciences?
* Are alternative theories any better at accounting for the need for diversity of evidence?
* Can such theories accommodate the co-existence of disparate ontological and epistemological approaches to the social sciences?
* Can such theories be used to provide coherent foundations for mixed methods research?
* Can such theories be used to suggest improvements to evidence appraisal for evidence-based policy in the social sciences?

We especially encourage submissions by members of minority and under-represented groups.

Please submit a 500-word abstract to y.shan@kent.ac.uk. The deadline of submission is 28 February 2020.

The conference is funded by the Aristotelian Society and the British Society for the Philosophy of Science.