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THE NEURAL BASES OF VALUE-BASED DECISION MAKING IN SOCIAL CONTEXTS

Thomas Z. Ramsøy (organizer)

The study of value-based decision making is a scientific program in exponential development, a research area also known as “decision neuroscience” or even “neuroeconomics” The realisation that emotions affect behaviour, and that human decision making is fundamentally not rational, or even necessarily conscious, has led to a surge in our understanding of a range of behaviours. Financial decisions, problem solving, social behaviours and political opinion formation have all been shown to be based on these components. Furthermore, from the scarce understanding of frontal lobe functions only a couple of decades ago, the science of the frontal lobes and their relationship to emotional regions involved in aversive and reward related responses, is producing an increasing amount of outputs. Nevertheless, there are still few synthetic approaches.

Ranging from basic response selection to socio-economic and political decision making, this seminar will focus on decision making in both healthy and aberrational states. By doing so, this seminar will present an updated view of emotional processes and their role decision making.

This symposium will first begin with a brief introduction, by Thomas Z. Ramsøy, about the regions thought to be involved in value-based decision making.

Following this, the next talk by Martin Skov will focus on how our experience of beauty is modulated not only by cognitive but also social factors, and how this can be used to study the interlink between social and hedonic processes in the brain. Following this, Hartwig Siebner will present the latest research on how conflicting response tendencies engage particular regions of the brain, and how such conflicts are resolved. In much a similar vein, Sofie Gelskov will present the latest results and insights from a neuroimaging study of pathological gambling, and how positive and negative emotional responses can be influenced, and drive economic decision making. Finally, Susanne Henningsson will talk about the latest research on how social information can influence behaviour and neural responses.

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