

The Institute of Information Processing and Decision Making (IIPDM)







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המכון לעיבוד מידע וקבלת החלטות ומרכז מינרבה מזמינים אתכם להרצאה:

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Conscious perception- Time for an update. A new theoretical framework for subjective experience

Understanding the neural mechanisms underlying subjective representation has become a central endeavor in cognitive neuroscience. Twenty-five years of extensive research have mainly associated conscious awareness with a massive activation of a parieto-frontal network indexed by the P3b ERP component. Lately however, this view has been confronted. On the one hand, the emergence of new behavioral passive paradigms, made some researchers suggest that subjective perception is related to earlier activity. Accordingly, the P3b reflects subjects' engagement in a specific task and is not related to subjective perception per se. On the other hand, a recent study showing that the P3b enhancement could be achieved with a subliminal oddball paradigm undermined the notion that it exclusively reflects processes that underlie conscious perception.

Based on the wealthy general electrophysiological literature associating P3 component to context updating and recent empirical findings, I suggest that sensory information becomes subjectively perceived when it is dynamically updated and recoded within an ongoing perceptual context. The model has weighty theoretical and methodological implications. Importantly, it doubts the central role of strictly unconscious brain processes for explaining perception. It determines that what is considered 'unconscious perception' is the consequence of a failure to continuously represent stimuli within a dynamically changing context, suggesting that the boundary between conscious and unconscious representation is finer than previously thought.

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