



FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

Neural representations of persons and their traits in the medial prefrontal cortex

Public defense to obtain the degree of
DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY
of

Ms. Elien Heleven

which will take place on
13th of June, 12:00
Promotiezaal, D2.01
Campus Etterbeek

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Summary

In our daily lives, we interact with a multitude of people. Some of them are close friends or family members, others are less or unknown to us. To all these people we attribute different characteristics such as goals, belief, personality traits etc. Making these attributions is referred to as mentalizing.

This thesis focuses on how different types of persons and their personality traits are represented in the brain. Is there a special (neural) place for people that are close to us or are they represented no different from unfamiliar others? We focus on the medial prefrontal cortex to look for these person and trait representations, it is the main region involved in all aspects of mentalizing, and thus also in the processing of persons in terms of their traits.

Curriculum Vitae

Elien Heleven graduated from Gent University with a master degree in theoretical and experimental Psychology. Shortly after, she started her PhD. at the Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

During her Ph.D., she focused on mentalizing, more specifically on trait and person representations in the brain using fMRI repetition suppression.

Her first study is published in an international journal entitled Social, cognitive and affective neuroscience.

She participated in national and international conferences to present her studies.