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Neural representations for faces and people

Faces are biologically extremely relevant stimuli, and it is a very much debated question as to whether or not a face-specific system exists in the human brain. Faces can reveal an enormous range of socially relevant information about identity, mood and emotions, age, gender, or the current focus of attention of a person, to mention but a few. I will present our research programme in face recognition, which uses event-related brain potentials (ERPs) and, to some extent, functional neuroimaging methods. We aim at a strong conceptual linkage between neurophysiological work and cognitive modelling of face recognition. In particular, I will argue that the relationship between ERP components (specifically, N170, N250r, and N400) and separable cognitive processes in face recognition is beginning to emerge. Time permitting, evidence from other aspects of person perception (e.g., from voices or names) will also be discussed briefly.