

The plastic self: using the senses of the body to study self-identity

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Abstract

Empirical research on the bodily self has only recently started to investigate how the link between a body and the experience of this body as *mine* is developed, maintained or disturbed. We put forward a neurocognitive model according to which body-ownership arises as an interaction between multisensory perception, interoceptive awareness and mental representations of the body. The model is based on converging evidence from studies that use multisensory stimulation to manipulate the sense of body-ownership and self-face identity. At the core of this model is the right posterior insula as a converging zone that underpins the *experience* of body-ownership and self-identity. The experience of body-ownership may represent a critical component of self-specificity as evidenced by the different ways in which multisensory integration in interaction with interoceptive awareness and internal models of the body can actually manipulate important physical and psychological aspects of the self.