

The power to make your own decisions.

The capacity for voluntary action is seen as essential to human nature. Yet neuroscience and behaviourist psychology have traditionally dismissed the topic as unscientific, perhaps because the mechanisms that cause actions have long been unclear. However, new research has identified networks of brain areas, including the pre-supplementary motor area, the anterior prefrontal cortex and the parietal cortex, that underlie voluntary action. These areas generate information for forthcoming actions, and also cause the distinctive conscious experience of intending to act and then controlling one's own actions. Volition consists of a series of decisions regarding whether to act, what action to perform and when to perform it. Neuroscientific accounts of voluntary action may inform debates about the nature of individual responsibility <sup>1)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup>

Haggard P. Human volition: towards a neuroscience of will. Nat Rev Neurosci. 2008 Dec;9(12):934-46. doi: 10.1038/nrn2497. Review. PubMed PMID: 19020512.

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