Precision Convergence Webinar Series

Linking Brain to Society for Adaptive Real-World Behavior:

The Self, Consciousness, and the Limits on Free Will

By Dr. Roy Baumeister

With High-Level Panel of Leaders in Science, Technology, On-the-Ground Action, and Policy

Tuesday, August 24, 2021 | 11 AM to 1 PM EST (2 hours in duration)

For *Remote Participation*, please register **HERE**

ABSTRACT: The anchor presentation will begin by framing the brain-to-society challenge for adaptive real-world behavior (the theme of this webinar series) in terms of the "cultural animal" perspective: The distinctively human traits arise from adaptations to make culture possible. The human brain is thus designed to learn and use cultural systems. The human self, unique in nature, exists at the interface between the animal body and society, and it emerges as the brain learns to perform culturally defined roles in the social system. The advanced form of consciousness (also unique) made possible by the human brain is another of these adaptations. A massive amount of evidence resolves the ongoing debate about whether conscious thoughts cause behavior: Yes they do, beyond doubt, though there are some important qualifications, and conscious thinking itself always rests on unconscious processing. Instead of viewing conscious and unconscious as separate, competing systems, it is more appropriate to examine how they work together, because almost all human behavior derives from a combination of conscious and unconscious processes. So-called free will includes self-control , rational decision-making, planning, and initiative, all of which consume some of the body's limited energy resources. Co-chaired by Prof. Laurette Dubé (MCCHE) and Dr. Shawn Brown (PSC), the high-level panel of academic and action leaders that will follow will advance research and action to support adaptive real world behavior and context in digital, physical and human collaborative in development in the bio/health/health system and bio/agriculture/food domains through a modular portfolio of projects anchored in open science and innovation, with interfaces with public and private value creation systems.

PRESENTER: Roy F. Baumeister is a psychology professor at the University of Queensland. He received his Ph.D. in social psychology from Princeton in 1978 and did a postdoctoral fellowship in sociology at the University of California at Berkeley. He worked for years at Case Western Reserve University and Florida State University. Baumeister's research spans multiple topics, including self and identity, self-regulation, interpersonal rejection and the need to belong, sexuality and gender, aggression, self-esteem, meaning, and self-presentation. He has received research grants from the National Institutes of Health and from the Templeton Foundation. He has nearly 700 publications, and his 42 books include Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty, The Cultural Animal, Meanings of Life, and the New York Times bestseller Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength. Other scientists have referred in their publications to his work over 200,00 times, making him among the handful of most cited (most influential) psychologists in the world. He has received several major awards, including the William James Fellow award (their highest honor) from the Association for Psychological Science, and the Jack Block Award from the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

About the series: The precision convergence series is launched to catalyze unique synergy between, on the one hand, novel partnerships across sciences, sectors and jurisdictions around targeted domains of real-world solutions, and on the other hand, a next generation convergence of AI with advanced research computing and other data and digital architectures such as PSC's Bridges-2, and supporting data sharing frameworks such as HuBMAP, informing in a real time as possible the design, deployment and monitoring of solutions for adaptive real-world behavior and context.

The McGill Centre for the Convergence of Health and Economics (MCCHE) is a virtual world network of scientist, action and policy leaders promoting the weaving of digital-powered interdisciplinary science into person-centered domain-specific solutions at scale to global challenges faced by traditional and modern economy and society worldwide. The MCCHE stimulates lasting collaborations that bridge the many divides in the market, economy, and society that are at the root of these most pressing modern challenges through collaborative of modular convergence innovation platforms.

The Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center is a joint computational research center between Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh. Established in 1986, PSC is supported by several federal agencies, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and private industry. PSC provides university, government, and industrial researchers with access to several of the most powerful systems for high-performance computing, communications, and data-handling available to scientists and engineers nationwide for unclassified research. PSC advances the state-of-the-art in high-performance computing, communications and informatics and offers a flexible environment for solving the largest and most challenging problems in computational science.

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1