



**University of
Zurich** ^{UZH}

Department of Economics – Neuroeconomics Seminar

December 8, 2022 - 17:00 - 18:00

Amitai Shenhav
Brown University

Embracing the outer loop: Understanding the cognitive and affective processes that parallel (and can sometimes masquerade as) value-based decision-making

Past research has extensively characterized the neural and computational mechanisms by which people integrate the values of their options to make a decision, in particular the evidence accumulation process leading up to a decision. I will present work from our lab that examines these same choice mechanisms, in conjunction with other cognitive and affective processes that co-occur with (and/or support) choice. One line of work distinguishes (early and seemingly choice-independent) affective responses to a set of options versus (later) comparison between these options to make a choice. A second line of work distinguishes evaluation/comparison of one's options in terms of their rewarding qualities versus in terms of their alignment with the current task instruction (e.g., selecting the best one). Finally, I will discuss work that examines the costs of decision-making (e.g., associated feelings of conflict and anxiety) and potential avenues toward reducing those costs. Collectively, this work underscores that research into the neural and computational mechanisms of value-based decision-making will continue to benefit from a better understanding of the multiple levels at which people evaluate their options, and how these evaluations bear on cognition, action, and emotion.