

The Identification of Individual-Specific Conflict Detection Sensitivities

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Recent state of the art research into cognitive biases has revealed that individuals often detect that they are making certain reasoning errors even when they themselves do not, perhaps cannot, articulate the source of the error. Generally, this research has focused primarily on demonstrating the existence of conflict detection tendencies among even the most biased reasoners. A crucial remaining question is whether there are individual differences in this bias detection efficiency. If so, how do these affect reasoning performance. My doctoral project addresses these questions by analyzing three related and unexplored areas of inquiry: (1) subtypes of conflict detection; (2) individual-specific differences among detectors; and (3) the developmental features of these detection subtypes throughout childhood and adolescence. By identifying increasingly fine-tuned detection subtypes, the project aims to explore correlations between particular conflict detection sensitivities and other psychological and behavioral predictors. The results of the first two areas assessed in four experiments indicate that there are, in fact, significant variations between individuals in conflict detection efficiencies. While most individuals consistently detect conflict across three different measures (response time differences and confidence measures), a subset of individuals consistently does not. I offer a partial account of those who do not detect conflict and discuss implications for the debate on human rationality and popular dual process theories.