

ÉCOLE DOCTORALE 261-3CH
« Cognition, Comportements, Conduites Humaines »

FORMULAIRE : CONTRATS DOCTORAUX
THÈMES DE RECHERCHE 2024

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THEMES DE RECHERCHE 2024

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THEME DE RECHERCHE

TITRE DU THEME DE RECHERCHE

(250 caractères maximum)

Intuitive and deliberate thinking |

DESCRIPTION DU THEME DE RECHERCHE

(3000 caractères maximum)

Human thinking often relies on prior knowledge and intuitive beliefs. These intuitions can provide us with valid problem solutions but sometimes also bias our judgment. For example, stereotypical beliefs about Africans or Muslims can severely affect an employer's evaluation of an applicant's job performance. Likewise, when asked whether taking the plane is safer than taking the car many people overestimate the risks of flying because of the dreadful images of crashing planes and terrorist attacks they intuitively think of. My research tries to pinpoint how such stereotypical beliefs and "gut feelings" are precisely affecting peoples' reasoning and why some people, sometimes, manage to refrain from using them. This work is rooted in research on working memory, conflict monitoring, inhibition and dual process theories of thinking. Below I sketch two more specific thesis topics but prospective students are welcome to work on any of my general research interests. Thesis research will typically involve a combination of experimental, neuroimaging, and developmental studies.

... Dual process theories of the mind ...

Should human thinking be described as an interplay of an intuitive and a logical reasoning process? How does the intuitive system work? How do people retrieve prior beliefs during reasoning? How does the logical system work? Are we aware that intuitive and logical problem solutions conflict? How do we detect the conflict? How do we resolve it? Which one of these components is responsible for individual differences in reasoning ability?

... Development of reasoning and decision making ...

I am also running developmental studies that explore the impact of children's growing knowledge base on their reasoning and decision making. Since children lack many of the stereotypes that bias adults' reasoning it has been shown that children are sometimes more logical than adults. Our studies try to clarify what happens when very young children are tested with stereotypes they are familiar with. Special interest goes to the development of the conflict detection and resolution process.

Research website: www.wdeney.org |