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Title: Causal reasoning and selective trust as rational inference

Abstract: Over the last ten years, there has been renewed interest in children's causal learning abilities. This research program has focused on what children can construct by combining their existing knowledge with observations of the environment. But such a focus is quite limited, as much knowledge (even knowledge that can be learned from observation) is socially constructed.

In this talk, I will first review a line of studies that suggest children's causal learning follows a rational process of integrating existing knowledge with new data. I will then examine how social influences affect that process. Finally, I will discuss whether the same cognitive mechanisms underlie how children learn socially constructed information.