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(Over-)Stylizing Experimental Findings and Theorizing with Sweeping Generality

Abstract:

Human decision making is a process guided by different and partly competing motivations that can each dominate behavior and lead to different effects depending on strength and circumstances. ‘Over-stylizing’ neglects such competing concerns and context-dependence, although it facilitates the emergence of elaborate general theories. We illustrate by examples from social dilemma experiments and inequality aversion theories that sweeping empirical claims should be avoided.