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Dynamic integration between self and other of social bargaining across the life span

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Abstract

To succeed in long-term social bargaining, individuals' own perspectives must be dynamically and flexibly integrated with their partners to maximize self-interests and adapt to the other's preferences. While a such form of strategic interaction is critical to the understanding of fairness and cooperation, little is known about its developmental trajectories across the lifespan. Here we examined whether and how people learn to anticipate the other's benefits and act strategically to meet self-interests by using a repeated version of the ultimatum game between two players in a Singapore cohort ranging in age from 6 to 80 y (n = 194). Results show that: children were slower in learning to adapt their offers to their partner's behavior to achieve successful social bargaining, compared to young and old adults; and children were less sensitive to other's preferences and less integrating their own perspectives with those of others than young and old adult groups.