Reflection and Impulse as Determinants of Human Behavior

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In this presentation, the variants of human behavior will be explained as a joint function of reflective and impulsive processes. In particular, it is assumed that behavior is controlled by two interacting systems that follow different operating principles. The reflective system generates behavioral decisions that are based on knowledge about facts and values, whereas the impulsive system elicits behavior through associative links and motivational orientations. The proposed model describes how the two systems interact at various stages of processing, and how their outputs may determine behavior in a synergistic or antagonistic fashion. It extends previous models by integrating motivational components that allow more precise predictions of behavior. Applied to economic behaviors, the reflective-impulsive model can be fruitfully related to phenomena such as rational choice, judgmental heuristics, intertemporal choice, or impulse buying.