

UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

What senses of agency can infants have?

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6c20f7kx>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 37(0)

Authors

Zaadnoordijk, Lorijn

Hunnius, Sabine

Meyer, Marlene

et al.

Publication Date

2015

Peer reviewed

What senses of agency can infants have?

Lorijn Zaadnoordijk

Radboud University Nijmegen, Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition, and Behaviour

Sabine Hunnius

Radboud University Nijmegen, Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition, and Behaviour

Marlene Meyer

Radboud University Nijmegen, Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition, and Behaviour

Johan Kwisthout

Radboud University Nijmegen, Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition, and Behaviour

Iris van Rooij

Radboud University Nijmegen, Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition, and Behaviour

Abstract: The ‘sense of agency’—the feeling of doing—is a phenomenological experience that cannot be taken for granted in infants. Researching the development of this phenomenon hinges on its conceptualization. Although it may seem natural to ask “When do infants have sense of agency?”, this binary view on the presence (or absence) of a sense of agency seems conceptually problematic. Cognitive phenomenological research reveals that sense of agency is a complex set of agentive experiences with different contents (e.g. ‘the experience of acting’, ‘the experience of volition’) that are often conflated. Given that different contents presuppose different representational capacities, developmental psychology may better target the question “What senses of agency can infants have at different developmental stages?” We show how this re-conceptualization impacts the interpretation of existing empirical findings in infant research, and how it can improve our understanding of the developmental trajectory of infants’ experiences of agency.