

Reservation of Judgment and Robust Collective Decisions

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Abstract

This paper studies preference aggregation under ambiguity when agents have incomplete preference relations due to imprecise beliefs. Our main focus is on the “dual” of the Pareto principle, which respects unanimity among individuals, including those with unexpressed opinions. We show that, in most cases, this principle leads to a dictatorial rule in taste aggregation. The source of the impossibility is spurious unanimity that arises even when the individuals have the same prior set. Using a weaker condition, we also characterize novel belief-aggregation rules, under which society does not discard any combination of plausible priors.

Keywords: Preference aggregation, Ambiguity, Pareto principle, Spurious unanimity, (Im)possibility theorem

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