OPTIMAL JUDGMENT AGGREGATION

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Abstract

A necessary condition for a group being taken as a rational agent is that its choices and judgements are ' logically contestable', but this can lead to problems of aggregation, as Arrow impossibility theorem or the discursive dilemma. This paper proposes a contractarian or constitutional approach: the relevant thing is what aggregation mechanisms would be preferred by the members of the group. Two distinctions need to be made: first, judgement aggregation is not aggregation of decisions, and judgement aggregation needs be distinguished from the aggregation of information: we assume that every member of the group has already taken into account the opinions of the other members, by means of a process of public deliberation, but they may end having different opinions; we also assume that the members are rational, so that they have no reasons to accept further changes in their individual opinions. So, from the epistemic point of view, the collective judgment is not a 'better' opinion than those of the individual members. The collective judgement is better seen as a kind of compromise, the outcome of a 'bargain', so to say. Basically, we assume that individuals will have an interest in choosing a specific aggregation function by taking into account how are they affected by the collective actions carried out by the group, and grounded on the chosen collective judgement.

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