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Reasoning about social attitudes with uncertain beliefs

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Abstract

We propose a computational model of social preference judgments that accounts for the degree of an agents' uncertainty about the preferences of others. Underlying this model is the principle that, in the face of social uncertainty, people interpret social agents' behavior under an assumption of expected utility maximization. We evaluate our model in two experiments which each test a different kind of social preference reasoning: predicting social choices given information about social preferences, and inferring social preferences after observing social choices. The results support our model and highlight how uncertainty influences our social judgments.